

Council of Nicaea Documents (English) – Part 5

Sources Used

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Anonymous Church History (pseudo-Gelasius) (CPG 6034)

Greek text: *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte (Gelasius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)*, ed. Günther Christian Hansen. GCS N.F. 9 (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 2002).
English translation by FCC (NJ and RR).

Athanasius, Letter to the Bishops of Africa (CPG 2133)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.8, ed. H.C. Brennecke et al. (Berlin, 2000).
English translation by A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:488-494), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Nicene Definition (de Decretis) (CPG 2120)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1-2:1-45, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1935).
English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:149-172), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Synods of Ariminum and Seleucia (de Synodis) (CPG 2128)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.6-7, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1940).
English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:48-480), updated by FCC (AGC).

Eusebius of Caesarea, Life of Constantine (CPG 3496)

Greek text: *Eusebius Werke* 2. Die Kirchengeschichte, ed. E. Schwartz. GCS 9.1 (Leipzig, 1903).
English translation by A.C. McGiffert (NPNF² 1:73-404), updated by FCC (AGC).

Gelasius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 3521)

Greek Text and English translation: *Ecclesiastical History: The Extant Fragments With an Appendix containing the Fragments from Dogmatic Writings*. GCS, ed. M. Wallraff, J. Stutz, and N. Marinides. Translated by N. Marinides. (De Gruyter, 2018).

Jerome, Dialogue Against the Luciferians (CPL 608)

Latin Text: *Patrologia Latina* vol. 23, coll. 153-182B. ed. J.P. Migne, (Paris, 1883).
English translation by W.H. Fremantle (NPNF², 6:319-34), updated by FCC (AGC).

Philostorgius, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6032)

Greek Text: *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte.*, ed. J. Bidez. GCS 21 (Leipzig, 1913).
English translation by FCC (AGC).

Rufinus of Aquileia, Ecclesiastical History

Latin text: *Eusebius Werke* 2.2. Die Kirchengeschichte, ed. E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen (Leipzig, 1908).
English translation by FCC (AGC).

Socrates, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6028)

Greek Text: ed. G.C. Hansen. GCS N.F. 1, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1995.
English translation by A.C. Zenos (NPNF² 2:1-178).

Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6030)

Greek Text: G.C. Hansen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd ed., GCS N.F. 4. (Berlin 1995)
English translation by C. Hartranft (NPNF² 2:179-427).

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6222)

Greek Text: *Theodoret: Kirchengeschichte.* ed. Parmentier, Léon, GCS N.F. 5. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1998.
English translation by B. Jackson (NPNF² 3:33-159).

The issue of Melitius			
Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
1.9.15b They readmitted the arch-heretic Melitius into communion, permitting him to retain his episcopal rank but divesting him of all authority to act as a bishop. It is for this reason, I suppose, that even at the present time the Meletians in Egypt are separated from the church, because the council deprived Melitius of all power.	1.24.1 After an investigation had been made into the conduct of Melitius when in Egypt, the council sentenced him to reside in Lycus and to retain only the name of bishop and prohibited him from ordaining any one either in a city or a village. Those who had previously been ordained by him were permitted by this law to remain in communion and in the ministry but were to be accounted secondary with regards to dignity of the clergy in church and parish. 1.24.2 When by death a position became vacant, they were allowed to succeed to it, if deemed worthy, by the vote of the multitude, but in this case they were to be ordained by the bishop of the church of Alexandria, for they were prohibited from exercising any power or influence in elections. 1.24.3 This regulation appeared just to the council, for Melitius and his followers had manifested great rashness and boldness in administering ordination. So the regulation also nullified the ordinations of every type which differed from those of Peter. He, when he led the Alexandrian church, fled on account of the persecution then raging, but afterward suffered martyrdom.	1.9.1 After Melitius had been ordained bishop, which was not long before the Arian controversy, he was convicted of certain crimes by the most holy Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who also received the crown of martyrdom. After being deposed by Peter, he did not acquiesce in his deposition but filled the Thebaid and the adjacent part of Egypt with tumult and disturbance and rebelled against the primacy of Alexandria. A letter was written by the council to the church of Alexandria stating what had been decreed against his revolutionary practices. It was as follows:	2.33.8 After this great meeting of the council and their marvelous proclamation of the faith, our holy fathers established complete order in the church and eagerly wrote letters to all the holy churches of God under heaven to disclose all their resolutions, including the events involving Melitius. 2.34.1 [This] Melitius, who was ordained bishop shortly before the Arian delusion, was convicted and deposed by godly Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who later donned the wreath of martyrdom. But Melitius did not comply with his sentence of deposition, instead spreading tumult and distress throughout the Thebaid and the neighboring part of Egypt by revolting against the primacy of Bishop Alexander. The council jointly wrote to the church of Alexandria, describing what they had decided about his revolutionary actions.
The Council’s letter to the church of Egypt			
Gelasius	Socrates	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
F13a (p. 101) A synodical epistle written by the holy synod in Nicaea to those in Alexandria and Egypt and the Pentapolis and to all the holy churches and clergy and laity of the orthodox faith under heaven.	1.8.55b At the same time the council itself also, as one, wrote the following epistle to the church of the Alexandrians, and to believers in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis.	1.9.2 The council’s letter:	2.34.2a The letter of the council to the holy churches of God in Alexandria, Egypt, the Pentapolis, Libya, and everywhere under heaven, and the clergy and laymen of the orthodox faith, from the holy council at Nicaea:
Gelasius	Socrates	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
F13a (p.101) “To the church of Alexandria, holy and great by the grace of God, the dear brothers in Egypt, the Pentapolis, Libya, and everywhere under heaven, and the orthodox clergy and laymen, from the bishops who gathered at Nicaea, forming the	1.9.1 “To the church of Alexandria, holy and great by the grace of God, and the dear brothers in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, from the bishops who gathered at Nicaea, forming the great holy council: Greetings in the Lord.	1.9.2 “To the church of Alexandria, holy and great by the grace of God, and the dear brothers in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, from the bishops who gathered at Nicaea, forming the great holy council: Greetings in the Lord.	2.34.2b “To the church of Alexandria, holy and great by the grace of God, the dear brothers in Egypt, the Pentapolis, Libya, and everywhere under heaven, and the orthodox clergy and laymen, from the bishops who gathered at Nicaea, forming the

<p>holy great council: Greetings in the Lord. Seeing as the great holy council which gathered at Nicaea handled questions about the church’s faith after God’s grace and our God-loving Emperor Constantine summoned us from various provinces and cities, we thought it necessary to send you letters so that you would know what questions we raised and reviewed and what we decided and confirmed.</p>	<p>1.9.2 Seeing as the great holy council gathered at Nicaea after God’s grace and our God-loving Emperor Constantine summoned us from various provinces and cities, it seemed altogether necessary to send to you also letters from the holy council so that you would know what questions we raised and reviewed and what we decided and confirmed.</p>	<p>1.9.3 Seeing as the great holy council gathered at Nicaea after God’s grace and our God-loving Emperor Constantine summoned us from various provinces and cities, it seemed necessary to send to you also letters from the entire holy council so that you would know what questions we raised and reviewed and what we decided and confirmed.</p>	<p>holy great council: Greetings in the Lord. 2.34.3a Seeing as the great holy council which gathered at Nicaea handled questions about the church’s faith after God’s grace and our God-loving Emperor Constantine summoned us from various provinces and cities, we thought it necessary to send you letters so that you would know what questions we raised and reviewed and what we decided and confirmed.</p>
<p>Gelasius</p>	<p>Socrates</p>	<p>Theodoret</p>	<p>Anonymous Church History</p>
<p>F13a (p. 103) First, we reviewed the ungodliness and lawlessness of Arius and his followers before our God-loving Emperor Constantine. We unanimously decided to anathematize Arius, his ungodly opinion, and his blasphemous words and thoughts with which he blasphemed the Son of God by saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not exist before he was begotten, that ‘he did not always exist,’ and that the Son of God is capable of evil or good by his own free will, and by calling him a creature and a product. All this the holy council anathematized, not even bothering to listen to his ungodly opinion, his insane talk, and his blasphemous words. You have certainly heard or will hear about the outcome of his cause, lest we seem to trample a man who has already received the punishment he deserves for his sin. His ungodliness was so strong that it even destroyed Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, for these two had the same outcome as the others.</p>	<p>1.9.3 First, we reviewed the ungodliness and lawlessness of Arius and his followers before our God-loving Emperor Constantine. We unanimously decided to anathematize his ungodly opinion and his blasphemous words and expressions with which he blasphemed the Son of God by saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not always exist, and that the Son of God is capable of evil or good by his own free will, and by calling him a creature and a product. All this the holy council anathematized, not even bothering to listen to his ungodly opinion, his insane talk, and his blasphemous words. 1.9.4 You have heard or will hear about the outcome of his cause, lest we seem to trample a man who has already received the punishment he deserves for his sin. His ungodliness was so strong that it even destroyed Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, for these two had the same outcome.</p>	<p>1.9.4 First, we reviewed the ungodliness of Arius before our God-loving Emperor Constantine. We unanimously decided to anathematize his ungodly opinion and his blasphemous words and thoughts with which he blasphemed the Son of God by saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not exist before he was begotten, that he did not always exist, and that the Son of God is capable of evil or good by his own free will. 1.9.5 All this the holy council anathematized, not even bothering to listen to his ungodly opinion, his insane talk, and his blasphemous words. You have heard or will hear about the outcome of his cause, lest we seem to trample a man who has already received the punishment he deserves for his sin. 1.9.6a His ungodliness was so strong that it even destroyed Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, for these two had the same outcome.</p>	<p>2.34.3b First, we reviewed the ungodliness and lawlessness of Arius and his followers before our God-loving Emperor Constantine. 2.34.4 We unanimously decided to anathematize Arius, his ungodly opinion, and his blasphemous words and thoughts with which he blasphemed the Son of God by saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not exist before he was begotten, that ‘he did not always exist,’ and that the Son of God is capable of evil or good by his own free will, and by calling him a creature and a product. 2.34.5 All this the holy council anathematized, not even bothering to listen to his ungodly opinion, his insane talk, and his blasphemous words. You have certainly heard or will hear about the outcome of his cause, lest we seem to trample a man who has already received the punishment he deserves for his sin. 2.34.6a His ungodliness was so strong that it even destroyed Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, for these two had the same outcome as the others.</p>

Gelasius	Socrates	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
<p>F13a (p. 103) Moreover, when God’s grace freed Egypt from those blasphemous heretics who dared to sow disagreement and division among a people who had always lived in peace, the rash actions of Melitius and of those he ordained were still unresolved. We are reporting to you what the council decided on this matter, dear brothers. Although Melitius, strictly speaking, did not deserve pardon, the council graciously decided that he may remain in his city but may not ordain, appoint, or lay hands on anyone nor appear in the country or another city for this purpose but may merely possess the honorable title. Those whom he appointed, however, are to be accepted after they have been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, with the following conditions. They shall keep their honorable position and shall perform liturgical duties but shall in any case be second to the members of the clergy in every parish and church who were appointed as subordinate to our honorable fellow minister Alexander. Thus they may not appoint those whom they please, make nominations, or do anything at all without the consent of a bishop of the catholic apostolic church subordinate to our pious fellow minister Alexander.</p>	<p>1.9.5 Moreover, when God’s grace freed Egypt from those blasphemous heretics who dared to sow disagreement and division among a people who had always lived in peace, the rash actions of Melitius and of those he ordained were still unresolved. We are reporting to you what the council decided on this matter, dear brothers.</p> <p>1.9.6 Although Melitius, strictly speaking, did not deserve pardon, the council graciously decided that he may remain in his city but may not appoint or lay hands on anyone nor appear in the country or another city for this purpose but may merely possess the honorable title alone.</p> <p>1.9.7 Those whom he appointed, however, are to be accepted after they have been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, with the following conditions. They shall keep their honorable position and shall perform liturgical duties but shall in any case be second to the members of the clergy in every parish and church who were ordained as subordinate to our honorable fellow minister Alexander. Thus they may not appoint those whom they please, make nominations, or do anything at all without the consent of a bishop of the catholic church subordinate to Alexander.</p>	<p>1.9.6b Moreover, when God’s grace freed Egypt from those blasphemous heretics who dared to sow disagreement and division among a people who had always lived in peace, the rash actions of Melitius and of those he ordained were still unresolved. We are reporting to you what the council decided on this matter, dear brothers.</p> <p>1.9.7 Although Melitius, strictly speaking, did not deserve pardon, the council graciously decided that he may remain in his city but may not appoint or lay hands on anyone nor appear in the country or any city for this purpose but may merely possess the honorable title. Those whom he appointed, however, are to be accepted after they have been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, with the following conditions. They shall be able to perform liturgical duties but shall in any case be second to the members of the clergy in every parish and church who were ordained as subordinate to our honorable fellow minister Alexander. Thus they may not appoint those whom they please, make nominations, or do anything at all without the consent of a bishop of the catholic apostolic church subordinate to Alexander.</p>	<p>2.34.6b Moreover, when God’s grace freed Egypt from those blasphemous heretics who dared to sow disagreement and division among a people who had always lived in peace, the rash actions of Melitius and of those he ordained were still unresolved. We are reporting to you what the council decided on this matter, dear brothers.</p> <p>2.34.7 Although Melitius, strictly speaking, did not deserve pardon, the council graciously decided that he may remain in his city but may not ordain, appoint, or lay hands on anyone nor appear in the country or another city for this purpose but may merely possess the honorable title.</p> <p>2.34.8 Those whom he appointed, however, are to be accepted after they have been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, with the following conditions. They shall keep their honorable position and shall perform liturgical duties but shall in any case be second to the members of the clergy in every parish and church who were appointed as subordinate to our honorable fellow minister Alexander. Thus they may not appoint those whom they please, make nominations, or do anything at all without the consent of a bishop of the catholic apostolic church subordinate to our pious fellow minister Alexander.</p>
Gelasius	Socrates	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
<p>F13a (p. 105) However, those who by the grace of God and by your prayers prove not to be involved in schism but are blameless within the catholic apostolic church may make appointments, nominate those who are worthy to be clergy, and generally do</p>	<p>1.9.8 However, those who by the grace of God and by your prayers prove not to be involved in schism but are blameless within the catholic apostolic church may make appointments, nominate those</p>	<p>1.9.8 However, those who by the grace of God and by your prayers prove not to be involved in schism but are blameless within the catholic apostolic church may make appointments, nominate those</p>	<p>2.34.9 However, those who by the grace of God and by your prayers prove not to be involved in schism but are blameless within the catholic apostolic church may make appointments, nominate those</p>

<p>everything according to church law and custom. If such a member of the clergy within the church happens to fall asleep, then those who have recently been admitted shall ascend to the honorable position of the deceased, provided that they are worthy and the people choose them, with the bishop of Alexandria approving and ratifying the election. We made this concession for all the others but did not find the same concession appropriate for Melitius in particular because of his earlier lack of discipline and his hasty and presumptuous attitude. We do not want him to receive any power or authority, for he could cause the same disorderly behavior again. These are the specific resolutions pertaining to Egypt and the holy church of Alexandria. If any other church law or doctrine was defined in the presence of our honorable fellow minister and brother, lord Alexander, he will report it to you more precisely when he returns, for he was an influential participant in our actions.</p>	<p>who are worthy to be clergy, and generally do everything according to church law and custom. 1.9.9 If such members of the clergy within the church happen to fall asleep, then those who have recently been admitted shall ascend to the honorable position of the deceased, provided that they are worthy and the people choose them, with the bishop of Alexandria approving and ratifying the election. 1.9.10 We made this concession for all the others but did not find the same concession appropriate for Melitius in particular because of his earlier lack of discipline and his hasty and presumptuous attitude. We do not want him to receive any power or authority, for he could cause the same disorderly behavior again. 1.9.11 These are the specific resolutions pertaining to Egypt and the holy church of Alexandria. If any other church law or doctrine was defined in the presence of our honorable fellow minister and brother, lord Alexander, he will report it to you more precisely when he returns, for he was an influential participant in our actions.</p>	<p>who are worthy to be clergy, and generally do everything according to church law and custom. 1.9.9 If such a member of the clergy within the church happens to fall asleep, then those who have recently been admitted shall ascend to the honorable position of the deceased, provided that they are worthy and the people choose them, with the bishop of catholic Alexandria approving and ratifying the election. 1.9.10 We made this concession for all the others but did not find the same concession appropriate for Melitius in particular because of his earlier lack of discipline and his hasty and presumptuous attitude. We do not want him to receive any authoritative power, for he could cause the same disorderly behavior again. 1.9.11 These are the specific resolutions pertaining to Egypt and the holy church of Alexandria. If any other church law or doctrine was defined in the presence of our honorable fellow minister and brother, lord Alexander, he will report it when he returns, for he was an influential participant in our actions.</p>	<p>who are worthy to be clergy, and generally do everything according to church law and custom. 2.34.10 If such a member of the clergy within the church happens to fall asleep, then those who have recently been admitted shall ascend to the honorable position of the deceased, provided that they are worthy and the people choose them, with the bishop of Alexandria approving and ratifying the election. 2.34.11 We made this concession for all the others but did not find the same concession appropriate for Melitius in particular because of his earlier lack of discipline and his hasty and presumptuous attitude. We do not want him to receive any power or authority, for he could cause the same disorderly behavior again. 2.34.12 These are the specific resolutions pertaining to Egypt and the holy church of Alexandria. If any other church law or doctrine was defined in the presence of our honorable fellow minister and brother, lord Alexander, he will report it to you more precisely when he returns, for he was an influential participant in our actions.</p>
<p>Gelasius</p>	<p>Socrates</p>	<p>Theodoret</p>	<p>Anonymous Church History</p>
<p>F13a (p. 105) We also bring you good news of the agreement on holy Easter. Your prayers have succeeded in this matter. So all the brothers in the East, who previously celebrated it when the Jews celebrate Passover, will from now on celebrate the holy festival of Easter in harmony with the Romans, with you, and with all of us who have been observing Easter with you since ancient times. In joy at these victories, at the shared peace and harmony, and at the eradication of all heresy,</p>	<p>1.9.12 We also bring you good news of the agreement on holy Easter. Your prayers have succeeded in this matter. So all the brothers in the East, who previously celebrated it when the Jews celebrate Passover, will from now on celebrate in harmony with the Romans, with you, and with all of us who have been observing Easter with you since ancient times. 1.9.13 In joy at these victories, at the shared peace and harmony, and at the eradication of all heresy,</p>	<p>1.9.12 We also bring you good news of the agreement on our holy Easter. Your prayers have succeeded in this matter. So all the brothers of the East, who previously did not celebrate Easter in harmony with the Romans, with you, and with all since the beginning, will from now on celebrate with you. 1.9.13 S In joy at these victories, at the shared peace and harmony, and at the eradication of all heresy, therefore, welcome our fellow minister, your Bishop</p>	<p>2.34.13 We also bring you good news of the agreement on holy Easter. Your prayers have succeeded in this matter. So all the brothers in the East, who previously celebrated it when the Jews celebrate Passover, will from now on celebrate the holy festival of Easter in harmony with the Romans, with you, and with all of us who have been observing Easter with you since ancient times. 2.34.14 In joy at these victories, at the shared peace and harmony, and at the eradication of all heresy,</p>

<p>therefore, welcome our fellow minister, your Bishop Alexander, with great honor and much love. He has gladdened us with his presence and has exerted great effort in his old age in order that you and everyone might have peace. Pray for all of us so that these decisions which we found appropriate might remain firm, for they have come about, we are confident, through the goodwill of God Almighty, his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”</p>	<p>therefore, welcome our fellow minister, your Bishop Alexander, with great honor and much love. He has gladdened us with his presence and has exerted great effort in his old age in order that you might have peace. 1.9.14 Pray for all of us so that these decisions which we found appropriate might remain firm through God Almighty and through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”</p>	<p>Alexander, with great honor and much love. He has gladdened us with his presence and has exerted great effort in his old age in order that you might have peace. Pray for all of us so that these decisions which we found appropriate might remain firm through our Lord Jesus Christ, for they have come about, we are confident, through the goodwill of God the Father in the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. The Trinity is <i>homoousios</i> and everlasting.”</p>	<p>therefore, welcome our fellow minister, your Bishop Alexander, with great honor and much love. He has gladdened us with his presence and has exerted great effort in his old age in order that you and everyone might have peace. Pray for all of us so that these decisions which we found appropriate might remain firm, for they have come about, we are confident, through the goodwill of God Almighty, his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”</p>
<p>Gelasius</p>		<p>Socrates</p>	
<p>F13b (p. 107) The holy fathers and the most pious emperor himself by a unanimous decision ordered that this synodical letter and the emperor's constitution against Arius, as well as his epistle to the Alexandrians, be sent to the entire civilized world, along with the holy orthodox creed that was set forth by the holy fathers, so that all of the laity and clergy would be exactly informed.</p>		<p>1.9.15a This epistle of the council makes it plain that they not only anathematized Arius and his adherents, but also the very expressions of his beliefs, and that after they agreed among themselves respecting the celebration of Easter, they readmitted the arch-heretic Melitius.</p>	
<p>Paphnutius convinces the council not to impose celibacy on married clergy</p>			
<p>Socrates</p>	<p>Sozomen</p>	<p>Anonymous Church History</p>	
<p>1.11.3c The bishops thought it proper to introduce a new law into the church, namely, that those who were ordained to serve as bishops, priests, deacons, and subdeacons who had married while still laymen, should no longer have sexual relations with their wives. 1.11.4 While they were discussing this matter, Paphnutius rose in the middle of the assembled bishops and pleaded earnestly with them not to impose such a heavy burden on these men of the church. “Marriage is in and of itself honorable,” he asserted, “and the marriage bed is pure” [Heb. 13:4]. And so he urged them before God not to harm the church by imposing restrictions that were too stringent. “For not every man,” he said, “can endure a life of total abstinence, nor might the wives always preserve their chastity either.” He defined intercourse between a man and his lawful wife as chastity. 1.11.5 It would be enough, he thought, if those men who were celibate when they entered the ministry remained unmarried, as was the ancient</p>	<p>1.23.2 While they were deliberating about this, some thought that a law ought to be introduced that bishops and presbyters, deacons and subdeacons, should not sleep with the wives they had married before they entered the priesthood. 1.23.3 But Paphnutius, the confessor, stood up and testified against this proposition. He said that marriage was honorable and chaste, and that cohabitation with their own wives was chastity, and advised the council not to frame such a law, for it would be difficult to bear and might serve as an occasion of straying for them and their wives. 1.23.4 He reminded them that according to the ancient tradition of the church, those who were unmarried when they took part in the communion of sacred orders were required to remain so, but that those who were married were not to send</p>	<p>2.32.22 Some of the bishops planned to enact another law, but godly Paphnutius stopped them. I thought it necessary to recount this astonishing event. Some of the bishops thought it appropriate to introduce a new law for the church at the council and pass this law, as the council did with the other affairs of the church. 2.33.1 To this end, they proposed that members of the clergy, be they bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, or other members of the priesthood, should not sleep with their wives, whom they had married when they were laymen. 2.33.2 When they conceived this idea, godly Paphnutius stood up amidst the crowd of bishops and loudly exclaimed, “Do not make the yoke of the clergy burdensome (for Scripture says, ‘Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure’ [Heb. 13:4]), lest you harm the church with excessive strictness.” He said not everyone could practice abstinence.</p>	

<p>tradition of the church. Yet men should not be separated from wives whom they had married while still a layman.</p> <p>1.11.6 And he expressed these sentiments although he himself had no experience with marriage, and, to speak frankly, had no knowledge of women. For from boyhood he had been brought up in a monastery and was especially famous for his chastity.</p> <p>1.11.7 All the assembled clergy agreed with Paphnutius’s reasoning and silenced all further debate on this issue, allowing married clergy to remain abstinent at their own discretion. So much concerning Paphnutius.</p>	<p>away their wives. Such was the advice of Paphnutius, although he was himself unmarried.</p> <p>1.23.5 In accordance with it, the council agreed with his advice and enacted no law about it but left the matter to the decision of individual judgment and not to compulsion. The council, however, enacted other laws regulating the government of the church, and these laws may easily be found, as they are in the possession of many individuals.</p>	<p>2.33.3 “I believe no one will continue in self-control if husbands are deprived of their wives. I maintain that intercourse with one’s lawful wife is noble self-control. So do not separate man from the woman with whom God yoked him, whom he married when he was formerly a reader, a cantor, or a layman.”</p> <p>2.33.4 Paphnutius said this despite being unacquainted with marriage because he had been raised in a monastery. His counsel therefore persuaded the entire assembly of bishops, and they stopped discussing this issue, letting those who by mutual consent wanted to avoid intimacy with their wives decide for themselves.</p>
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Various ecclesiastical rulings

Anonymous Church History

2.30.6 After this, all the bishops set forth various ecclesiastical rulings:

2.31.1 “Let us dwell in the light, that is, Christ, for we are near to him. Let us employ prayers of sanctification as if we see him, for our prayers sanctify us if we pray with the word of God, and the word of God is present where one preserves a pure heart and life in humility. Israel strove to offer the sacrifices. The prophets cried out to God, ‘Send out your light and your truth’ [Ps. 43:3]. They cried out, and we received them. As the Lord said, ‘Others have labored’ [John 4:38], and we have reaped the benefits. The Lord himself came to us, saying, ‘I am the light’ [John 8:12]; ‘I am the truth’ [John 14:6]. We have received grace without effort, but we must guard grace with effort.

2.31.2 Of those who say Christians need not work: Since some who wish not to work but to be busybodies misunderstand the Lord’s holy words, ‘Do not worry about your life, what you will eat’ [Matt. 6:25], to mean that Christians, who follow this order, need not work the ground, we must show that this is not what the Lord meant. We can work without worrying. We know and believe that the Lord himself causes our work to grow and bear fruit, for he said, ‘The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters his seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how’ [Mark 4:26-27].

2.31.3 Of the ordained: The ordained should serve as types and images of heavenly beings. The bishop should occupy the throne of the Lord himself as head, second to the Lord, of the church he has received; the priest that of the seraph; the deacon that of the cherub. The attendant must assist them.

2.31.4 That the laity may not go up into the ambo: The laity may not go up into the ambo, except those appointed to read or sing from the parchment books.

2.31.5 Of Holy Baptism: Our baptism is not to be considered with physical eyes but with spiritual eyes. When you see water, recognize the power of God which is hidden in the water. Holy Scripture teaches that we are baptized ‘with the Holy Spirit and fire’ [Matt. 3:11]. Recognize that by the faith of the baptizer and the faith of the person being baptized, through sacred invocation, the water is full of the Spirit’s sanctification and divine fire, for it says, ‘He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.’ So the person being baptized descends guilty of his sins and subject to ‘the slavery of decay’ [Rom. 8:21], but he ascends free from such slavery and from sin. By God’s grace he has become God’s son and heir, and co-heir with Christ, having clothed himself with Christ, as is written: ‘All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ’ [Gal. 3:27].

2.31.6 Of the table of God and the mystery of the body and blood of Christ, which occurs on it: Likewise, we should not scorn the bread and cup placed on the table of God but should lift up our minds to understand by faith that on that holy table is ‘the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’ [John 1:29], a bloodless sacrifice by the clergy. Since we truly receive his precious body and blood, we believe they guarantee our resurrection. We do not receive much, but little, so that we realize its purpose is not to satisfy our hunger but to sanctify us.

2.31.7 Of the resurrection of the dead: The Lord did not merely give his flesh over to suffering and death for us. His goal was to procure our salvation despite being free from death (as the explanation above has demonstrated). The Lord also predicts through the prophet the coming mystery of his incarnation in flesh: ‘I became like a helpless person, free among the dead’ [Ps. 88:4-5]. But who is free from death besides God? According to the passages cited above, he became flesh due to his love for mankind and became ‘like a helpless person,’ humbling his flesh ‘to the point of death, even death on a cross’ [Philip. 2:8]. It also proclaims that

his flesh arose so that, by making us immortal, he might obtain for us forsaken humans hope for our own resurrection through our firstfruits. Thus we are no longer slaves to eternal death, but free like Christ, our firstfruits, as the blessed apostle Paul says: ‘Christ, the firstfruits, then, when he comes, those who belong to him’ [1 Cor. 15:23]. He also testifies that we expect this very Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God the Father, to come from heaven to raise our bodies from their graves: ‘Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body’ [Philip. 3:20-21]. Thus must the Lord glorify our bodies like his, no longer subject to wickedness nor any sufferings which presently exist, free from death and sin, and holy, so that we can live a new life with him in heavenly light, reigning forever with Christ himself. In this hope we have received holy baptism and receive saving communion with his holy members. This is the doctrine of the catholic church.

2.31.8 That there is one church of God: There is one church in heaven. The same church is also on earth. The Holy Spirit rests on it. The heresies outside of it, to which people adhere, are not the teachings of our Savior nor of the apostles but of Satan, their father the devil. They teach the heresies of Jews and Greeks in a different form to take away true life from people.

2.31.9 Of God’s foreknowledge and the world: The world became lesser because of foreknowledge. God foreknew that humans would sin. Therefore we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, according to the Holy Scriptures, when the appearance and reign ‘of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ’ [Tit. 2:13], will be revealed to us. At that time, as Daniel says, ‘saints of the Most High will receive dominion’ [Dan. 7:18]. The earth will be pure and holy, a land of the living and not of the dead, which David foresaw with the eye of faith: ‘I am confident that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living’ [Ps. 27:13], the land of the meek and humble, for it says, ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth’ [Matt. 5:5]. The prophet says, ‘The feet of the meek and humble will walk on it’” [Is. 26:6].

2.31.10 We have compiled this small selection of the many ecclesiastical rulings our holy fathers set forth.

The conclusion of the council

Eusebius	Rufinus	Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
<p>3.15 About this time he completed the twentieth year of his reign. On this occasion public festivals were celebrated by the people of the provinces generally, but the emperor himself invited and feasted with those ministers of God whom he had reconciled, and thus offered through them, as it were, a suitable sacrifice to God. No bishop lacked anything at the imperial banquet, the circumstances of which were splendid beyond description. Detachments of the bodyguard and other troops surrounded the entrance of the palace with drawn swords, and through the midst of these the men of God proceeded without fear into the innermost of the imperial apartments, in which some were the emperor’s own companions at table, while others reclined on couches arranged on either side. One might have thought that a picture of Christ’s kingdom was thus shadowed forth, and a dream rather than reality.</p> <p>3.16 After the celebration of this brilliant festival, the emperor courteously received all his guests and</p>	<p>10.6b Therefore when they had decreed these in accord with reverence for the divine laws and also affirmed the ancient rule concerning the celebration of Easter to prevent further disagreement on the issue, they passed these decisions on to the churches. With all matters duly settled, the peace and faith of the churches in the eastern and in the</p>	<p>1.13.11a The bishops who were convened at the council of Nicaea, after having written down certain other ecclesiastical regulations, which they usually call canons, again departed to their respective cities.</p>	<p>1.25.1 At the very time that these decrees were passed by the council, the twentieth anniversary of the reign of Constantine was celebrated, for it was a Roman custom to have a feast on every tenth year of a ruler’s reign. The emperor, therefore, thought it to be opportune, invited the council to the festival, and presented suitable gifts to them.</p> <p>1.25.2 When they prepared to return home, he called them all</p>	<p>1.11.1b To those who attended the council, three hundred and eighteen in number, he manifested great kindness, addressing them with much gentleness and presenting them with gifts. He ordered numerous couches to be prepared for their accommodation and entertained them all at one banquet. Those who were most worthy he received at his own table, distributing the rest at the others. Observing that some among them had had their right eye torn out and learning that this mutilation had been undergone for the sake of religion, he placed his lips upon the wounds, believing that he would extract a blessing</p>	<p>2.37.23b He favored those who gathered with words and gifts, and, after having many couches prepared, he entertained them all there, seating the more prominent ones at his table and spreading the rest among the other tables.</p> <p>2.37.24 When he saw some who had no right eyes because they had been gouged out and learned that their steadfast devotion to Christ had caused their suffering, he kissed their wounds, for he believed that by kissing them he would be blessed. After the feast, he gave them other gifts.</p> <p>2.29.1 Emperor Constantine rejoiced in the exposition of the orthodox apostolic faith pronounced by the Holy Spirit through our three hundred holy fathers as if from one mouth, confirmed by all. He rose from his throne before the entire crowd of holy high</p>

<p>generously added to the favors he had already bestowed by personally presenting gifts to each of them according to his rank.</p> <p>3.22 Full of joy at this success, the emperor presented, as it were, pleasant fruits in the way of letters to those who had not been present at the council. He commanded also that ample gifts of money should be bestowed on all the people, both in the country and the cities, in honor of the festive occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his reign.</p> <p>3.23. And now, when all else was at peace, among the Egyptians alone a relentless conflict still raged, so as once more to disturb the emperor’s tranquility, though not to excite his anger. For indeed he treated the contending parties with all respect, as fathers, no rather, as prophets of God! Again he summoned them to his presence and again patiently acted as mediator between them, honored them with gifts, and communicated also the result of his arbitration by letter. He confirmed and sanctioned the decrees of the council and called on them to strive earnestly for peace and not to distract and rend the church but to keep in mind God’s judgment. And these instructions the emperor sent by a letter written with his own hand.</p> <p>3.24 But besides these, his writings on similar subjects are very numerous, and he was the author of many letters, some to the bishops, in which he laid instructions in regards to tending to the advantage of the churches of God; and sometimes the one who was three times blessed addressed the people of the churches generally, calling them his own brothers and fellow-servants. But perhaps we may hereafter find leisure to collect these letters in a separate form, in order that the continuity of our present history may not be impaired by their insertion.</p>	<p>western regions were preserved one and the same.</p> <p>10.5d When certain other issues pertaining to the customs of individual churches had been firmly settled, the council was adjourned. A transcript of the exposition of their faith, which they had agreed upon, is written below.</p>		<p>together and exhorted them to be of one mind about the faith and at peace among themselves, so that no dissensions might creep in among them from then on.</p> <p>1.25.3 After many other similar exhortations, he concluded by commanding them to be diligent in prayer and always to supplicate God for himself, his children, and the empire, and after he had thus addressed those who had come to Nicaea, he bade them farewell.</p>	<p>from the kiss. After the conclusion of the feast, he again presented other gifts to them.</p> <p>1.13.2 What had been decided was committed to writing and was signed by all the bishops.</p> <p>1.13.3 Soon after, the author thus continues the narrative: When matters had been thus arranged, the emperor gave them permission to return to their own dioceses. They returned with great joy and have ever since continued to be of the one opinion, agreed upon in the presence of the emperor, and, though once widely separated, now united together, as it were, in one body.</p> <p>1.13.4 Constantine, rejoicing in the success of his efforts, made known these happy results by letter to those who were at a distance. He ordered large sums of money to be liberally distributed among both the inhabitants of the country and of the cities, in order that the twentieth anniversary of his reign might be celebrated with public festivities.</p>	<p>priests and all who assembled for that holy discussion of the faith.</p> <p>2.29.2 He stretched out his hands, turned his eyes toward God in heaven, and praised God, the Savior and benefactor of us all, because God had made the bishops united, as he desired, and had led them to agree about the true saving faith.</p> <p>2.29.3 The God-loving emperor, who was excellent in every respect, had such concern for the churches of God and for peaceful unity among their shepherds.</p> <p>2.37.29 Now that I have included in this ecclesiastical history, according to my ability, the decisions and determinations of the holy council concerning the catholic orthodox faith, the venerable festival of holy Easter, the regulations of the church’s divine liturgy, and the church laws for good order, I will end this book here for the full security of future readers of this book.</p> <p>2.37.30 I have resolved to present the praiseworthy faithful emperor’s remaining pious acts on behalf of the faith in a third book, to the glory of Christ, the Savior of us all, clearly demonstrating the faithful emperor’s piety.</p>
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Constantine's farewell address to the bishops
Eusebius
<p>3.21 When the council was on the point of being finally dissolved, he summoned all the bishops to meet him on an appointed day and on their arrival addressed them in a farewell speech, in which he admonished them to be diligent in the maintenance of peace, to avoid contentious disputations amongst themselves, and not to be jealous if any one of their number should appear preeminent for wisdom and eloquence. Rather he exhorted them to esteem the excellence of one as a blessing common to all. On the other hand he reminded them that the more gifted should refrain from exalting themselves to the prejudice of their humbler brothers since it is God's prerogative to judge real superiority. Rather should they considerately condescend to the weaker, remembering that absolute perfection in any case is a rare quality indeed. Each then should be willing to tolerate the other for slight offenses, to regard charitably and pass over mere human weaknesses, holding mutual harmony in the highest honor, so that their dissensions might never give a reason for mockery to those who are ever ready to blaspheme the word of God, whom indeed we should do all in our power to save, and this cannot be unless our conduct seems to them attractive. But you are well aware of the fact that testimony by no means brings blessing to all, since some who hear are focused merely on attaining bodily necessities, while others court the patronage of their superiors; some fix their affection on those who treat them with hospitable kindness, others again, being honored with presents, love their benefactors in return. But few are they who really desire the word of testimony, and rare indeed is it to find a friend of truth. Hence the necessity of endeavoring to meet the case of all, and, like a physician, to administer to each that which brings health to his soul, with the hope that all may honor the teaching of salvation. Such was the former part of his exhortation. In conclusion he instructed them to offer diligent prayers to God on his behalf. Having thus taken leave of them, he gave them all permission to return to their respective countries, and this they did with joy, and from then on that unity of judgment at which they had arrived in the emperor's presence continued to prevail, and those who had long been divided were bound together as members of the same body.</p>