

## A SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

YEAR	NAME	DESCRIPTION
50	Council of Jerusalem	This Council, described in Acts 15:1-31, convened to settle the issues of whether or not Gentiles must live as Jews in order to be Christian.
325	Council of Nicea	This Council was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine and (1) repudiated Arianism, (2) declared that "Christ is <i>homoousios</i> with the Father" [of the same substance as the Father], (3) fixed the date of Easter, (4) recognized the sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, and granted the see of Jerusalem a place of honor, and (5) adopted the Nicene Creed as the fundamental statement of the Christian faith.
364	Council of Laodicea	This Council ordered that religious observances were to be conducted on Sunday, not Saturday. Sunday became the new Sabbath so that Christians were instructed not to be idle on Saturday but to work.
381	First Council of Constantinople	This Council was convened by Theodosius I, then emperor of the East and a recent convert to Christianity, and (1) confirmed the victory over Arianism and declared that Christ is "born of the Father before all time," and (2) repudiated Macedonianism and revised the Nicene Creed to defend the full divinity of the person of the Holy Spirit.
394	Council of Carthage	This was the first Council to uphold the doctrines of prayers for the dead and purgatory.
431	Council of Ephesus	This Council (1) denounced the teachings of Nestorius (d. 451) who argued that Christ was one person with two completely separate natures, one human and one divine, (2) proclaimed the Virgin Mary to be the <i>Theotokos</i> , that is, the "mother of God" or the "bearer-of-God," (3) repudiated Pelagianism, and (4) reaffirmed the Nicene Creed.
451	Council of Chalcedon	This Council (1) repudiated monophysitism and affirmed that Christ was simultaneously "truly man and truly God" and (2) adopted the Chalcedonian Creed which describes the hypostatic union of Christ as both human and divine. This is the last of the Councils to be officially recognized by the Anglican community.
553	Second Council of Constantinople	This Council was convened by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I to settle the dispute known as the Three Chapters. In an attempt to reconcile moderate Monophysite parties to orthodoxy, Justinian had issued (544) a declaration of faith. The last three chapters anathematized the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa for Nestorianism.
680-81	Third Council of Constantinople	This Council was convened by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IV to denounce Monothelitism which taught that while Jesus had two natures he had only one will, his human will being controlled and in fact subsumed by his divine will.
787	Second Council of Nicea	This was the last of the seven church councils commonly accepted as authoritative by both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The Council voted to allow the veneration but not the worship of icons and repudiated iconoclasm.
869-70	Fourth Council of Constantinople	This Council has never been accepted by the Orthodox Church, which instead recognizes the council of 880 that supported Photius. The Council of 869 was convened at the suggestion of Basil I, the new Byzantine emperor, to confirm the restoration of St. Ignatius of Constantinople and to the see that Photius had resigned.
1085	Council of Clermont	The First Crusade (out of a total of eight official crusades) was called by Pope Urban II (c. 1035 - 1099) against Muslims in the Holy Lands.

1123	First Lateran Council	This Council was convened by Pope Calistus II to signal the end of the investiture controversy by confirming the Concordat of Worms (1122). It was held in the Lateran Palace in Rome making it the first council to be held in Western Europe. Many of the Council's decrees became part of the evolving corpus of canon law.
1139	Second Lateran Council	This Council was convened at the Lateran Palace in Rome by Pope Innocent II. The Council attempted to heal the wounds left by the schism of the antipope Anacletus II (d. 1138) and condemned the theories of Arnold of Brescia.
1179	Third Lateran Council	This Council was convened at the Lateran Palace in Rome by Pope Alexander III after the Peace of Venice (1178) had reconciled him with Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I. It included an envoy from the Orthodox Greeks. The most important legislation was the first canon, which confirmed that the election of the pope was to be in the hands of the cardinals alone, two thirds being necessary for election.
1215	Fourth Lateran Council	Pope Innocent III organized the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome in order to discuss and define central dogmas of Christianity. It is one of the most important Councils ever held, and its canons sum up Innocent's ideas for the church. It established the doctrine of transubstantiation and the seven sacraments of the church which, in their view, are necessary for salvation.
1408	Council of Oxford	This Council prohibited translations of the Scriptures into the vernacular unless and until they were fully approved by Church authority, a decision sparked by the publication of the Wycliffe Bible.
1409	Council of Pisa	This Council attempted to end the Great Schism by declaring both rival popes deposed and electing a third: Pope Martin V.
1417	Council of Constance	This Council, which was the largest Church meeting in medieval history, officially ended the Great Schism. It replaced a papal monarchy with a conciliar government which recognized a council of prelates as the pope's authority and mandated the frequent meeting of Councils. This new period was known as the "Italian Territorial Papacy" and lasted until 1517. John Hus traveled to the Council of Constance to propose his reforms for the Church. However, upon his arrival at the Council he was tried for heresy and burned. His death encouraged further revolt by his followers.
1545-63	Council of Trent	This Council was the commencement of the Catholic counter-reformation which attempted to meet the Protestant challenge by defining official Catholic theology. It is therefore one of the most important Councils in church history.
1869-70	First Vatican Council	This Council affirmed the doctrine of papal infallibility, that is, when a pope speaks ex cathedra on faith or morals he does so with supreme apostolic authority which no Catholic may question or reject.
1962-65	Second Vatican Council	This Council was convened by Pope John XXIII in 1959 and produced 16 documents which became official after approval by the Pope himself. Its stated purpose was to renew "ourselves and the flocks committed to us" (Pope John XXIII). It "upgraded" Protestants from heretics to "wayward brothers" and allowed for the mass to be conducted in the vernacular.