

But when the Pro-Consul pressed him and said: "Take the oath and I let you go, revile Christ," Polycarp said: "For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

110 - 140 AD

§ 3

Brothers, I write these things to you concerning righteousness {not on my own initiative},¹⁵ but because you requested [it] of me. 2 For neither I nor another like me is able to follow after the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was with you in the presence of the people at that time, he taught the word of truth accurately and reliably, who also being absent he wrote letters to you regarding which, if you examine [them], you will be able to build yourselves up in the faith given to you, 3 which is the mother of all of us,¹⁶ while hope follows after [and] the love which [is] for God and Christ and for the neighbor goes before. For if {anyone is in their company},¹⁷ he has fulfilled the commandment of righteousness, for he who has love is a long way from all sin.

§ 4

But the beginning of all difficulty [is] the love of money.^{18 19} Knowing, therefore, that we have brought nothing into the world, and neither are we able to take anything out,²⁰ let us arm ourselves with the weapons of righteousness and let us teach ourselves first to follow in the commandment of the Lord. 2 Then also [teach]²¹ your wives [to walk]²² in the faith given to them, and in love and in purity, feeling affection for their own husbands in all fidelity and loving all others equally in all chastity,²³ and to instruct their children with the instruction of the fear of God. 3 The widows, being sensible concerning the faith of the Lord, interceding unceasingly for everyone, being far removed from all slander, evil speech, false witness, love of money, and every kind of evil, knowing that they are an altar of God, and that each [sacrifice]²⁴ is examined for blemishes

Constantine 272-337 AD (Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus)



Emperor 306-312 over Eastern Roman Empire
312-337 Roman Empire

The Edict of Milan was issued in AD 313, in the names of the Emperor Constantine, who ruled the western parts of the empire, and Licinius, who ruled the East. The two Augusti were in Milan to celebrate the wedding of Constantine's sister with Licinius.

A previous edict of toleration had been recently issued by the emperor Galerius from Serdica and posted up at Nicomedia on 13 May 311. By its provisions, the Christians, who had "followed such a caprice and had fallen into such a folly that they would not obey the institutes of antiquity", were granted an indulgence.

Wherefore, for this our indulgence, they ought to pray to their God for our safety, for that of the republic, and for their own, that the commonwealth may continue uninjured on every side, and that they may be able to live securely in their homes.

Their confiscated property, however, was not restored until the Edict of Milan was signed. The Christians' meeting places and other properties were to be returned:
...the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception...

It directed the provincial magistrates to execute this order at once with all energy, so that public order may be restored and the continuance of the Divine favor may "preserve and prosper our successes together with the good of the state."

According to this version, Constantine with his army was marching (Eusebius does not specify the actual location of the event, but it clearly is not in the camp at Rome), when he looked up to the sun and saw a cross of light above it, and with it the Greek words "Ev Τούτῳ Νίκα". The Latin translation is *in hoc signo vinces*—"In this sign, you shall conquer"

Julian attempted to bring back the ancient religion to the people of the Roman world, but Christianity had become too deeply ingrained. He removed various advantages that Christian priests and churches had enjoyed since Constantine and bestowed them upon Pagans instead. Christian teachers were also removed from their occupations in many cases. Though, for the most part he avoided open violence against the Christians, he did encourage the growth of non Catholic or Orthodox sects. The fight, which could be brutal at times, for religious supremacy evolved between these various factions, but Paganism was a dying part of the dominant culture. Even temples re-established by Julian were simply overrun by fanatic Christian mobs. Despite Julian's efforts, hindered by his short reign of 2 years, Paganism continued on the path to virtual extinction. The final death knell of the Pagan faith came only a generation later, under the rule of Theodosius. An ardent Christian, and recognizing the amazing growth of the still relatively young faith, Theodosius and his western counterpart Gratian, recognized Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in 380 AD. Gratian too, likely at the partial behest of Theodosius refused the title of Pontifex Maximus (head priest) and it was bestowed instead on the Catholic Pope in Rome. Severe punishments for Pagan, and especially 'heretic' Arianism were enforced and the established Church prospered. In 390 AD, a massacre ordered by the Emperor of 7,000 people who revolted in Thessalonica resulted in his own 8 month penance. By the beginning of the 5th century, after just 400 years, the Church grew from a fledgling mystery cult into a power on nearly equal terms with the Roman Emperor himself.