**Lesson #13**

**Guided Reading**

**Early Christian and Byzantine Art**

**The Fall of the Roman Empire-**

* Divided the country into two (2) empires
* Were invaded repeatedly when the country was in shambles
* Ended in the 5th century

**Early Christian Art-**

* 313 ACE- Emperor Constantine signed the Edict of Milan
	+ **Edict of Milan-** legal document which legally changed the official religion to Christianity and made Christianity legal to practice
	+ **Catacombs-** underground passageways that were created so Christians could practice their religion, bury their dead and hide from the Romans. Also contained paintings and images that depicted or told a story of their religion.
	+ **Iconography-** a system of symbols that use symbolism to tell a story through imagery or pictures.
	+ **Symbolism-** an image that has a specific meaning
		- **Examples:**
		- Green Ivory- eternal life
		- Dog- loyalty
		- Lamb- God
		- Rivers- the four (4) Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
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* **Basilica-** a style of building that the Romans used to transact business
* **Nave-** central section of the church and leads to the high altar
* **Apse-** a semi-circular area at the end of the nave, we usually see mosaics in this area
* **Campanile-** a bell tower



Here is a diagram of a typical Byzantine Basilica…

* Notice where the apse is located, in the front of the church where we see the alter and mosaics
* Look at the nave area, this is the walkway up to the apse or alter. Think of the nave as the walkways in a Basilica
* **Mosaics-** a style of decoration made out of small pieces of glass, stone or glazed ceramic tiles that are set in cement
	+ Creates an image or scene
	+ Looked glossy or had a glittery sheen

**Key Characteristics of Byzantine Mosaics-**

* Outlined in black tiles
* Jesus always has a halo around his head
* Jesus usually has his hands in the “peace sign” position
* Clothing has lots of folds in the fabric
* Elongated nose
* Usually in frontal position
* Figures or people look flat or stiff, almost like they are frozen in place



* **House of Mystery**- slang term for the churches during the early Christian era
	+ Because the churches were filled with candles, light flickering from the windows, the mosaic tiles seemed to glow and glitter, producing a mysterious effect

**Byzantine Art and Culture-** the Eastern half of Constantinople

* When the Roman Empire was at a decline, Byzantine started to flourish
* Artists were influenced by Greek, Roman and Eastern cultures
* Artists were commissioned by the Catholic Church and the Pope
	+ All art was religion based during this time period

**Power Grows in the Catholic Church-**

* Because Christianity became the new religion, the Pope and the Catholic Church’s power grew.
* People were devout or dedicated to their religion and would do anything to get into heaven
* There was no separation between church and state
	+ In the US, we have separation between the church and our government

**Byzantine Architecture and Mosaics-**

* **The Hagia Sophia**- means “The Church of the Holy Wisdom of God”
	+ Built in the 6th century in Constantinople
	+ Huge dome the rests on piers or large pillars
	+ Architects were able to create more windows and thinner walls
	+ Dim light reflecting off the walls, where mosaics were positioned, allowed people to see the religious images from a great distance
	+ Used symbols/symbolism to tell religious stories on the mosaics



**Ravenna-** Western half of the Byzantine Empire

* Became the capitol of the Roman Empire in the 5th Century ACE
* **Emperor Justinian-** became the ruler of Ravenna in 540 ACE
	+ Recaptured Ravenna from the Barbarians
	+ Had The San Vitale built
	+ Married to **Empress Theodora**



**Mosaic in the San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy**

* Notice the similarity of the crowns
* Think about how there was no separation between church and the government…
* This is why we see images of rulers in the churches