Name: _____ Date: _____

SG#24 The Later Roman Empire

The Diocletian Reforms. In the late A.D. 200s and early 300s, the emperor Diocletian changed the Principate into an absolute monarchy. In order to restore order, individual freedom was sacrificed, and rigid reforms were instituted with regard to society and the government. Diocletian grouped provinces under four governors, called **prefects**, and gave his full attention to the defense of the empire. Commerce and manufacturing were geared toward defense, while taxes financed the new administration and the army.

Diocletian also divided the empire. He ruled the eastern half and appointed a co-emperor to rule the west. Both had assistants called caesars, who would eventually succeed peacefully to the throne. When Diocletian retired in A.D. 305, his co-emperor retired as well. Soon the two new emperors began fighting and sent the empire into civil war until A.D. 312, when Constantine, the son of one of the original caesars, won and restored peace. He maintained rigid control, converted to Christianity, and established a second capital, Constantinople, "the city of Constantine," in Byzantium.

The Triumph of Christianity. Constantine's conversion was apparently triggered by a vision he had in A.D. 312. In A.D. 313 he made Christianity legal throughout the empire with the **Edict of Milan**. As a result, Christians soon grew to make up a majority of the population. In A.D. 391, Theodosius the Great outlawed all religions but Christianity. Polytheistic religions eventually disappeared from the empire.

Those who performed the special ceremonies and rituals of the church became priests, a separate class within Christianity. They derived their authority from the apostles, who received theirs from Jesus himself. This **apostolic succession** distinguished these members of the church from its general congregation. Soon, officials called **bishops** oversaw church affairs and exerted authority over other priests in entire provinces. By the A.D. 300s the **patriarchs**, the heads of the five oldest and largest Christian congregations, were overseeing bishops and leading in the development of doctrine. The bishop of Rome grew in power, and in A.D. 445 emperor Valentinian III gave him authority over the other patriarchs, naming him the **pope**, from the Latin word for "father."

After becoming the state religion of Rome, Christianity developed a hierarchy of authority and experienced disputes over doctrine. In A.D. 325 Constantine summoned the first Council of Nicaea to establish a uniform doctrine regarding the Holy Trinity. Their conclusion was that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were at the same time separate and one.

Monasticism. To recapture the humble spirit of Christianity, in the A.D. 300s many people turned to **monasticism**, becoming monks and living solitary lives of religious devotion and self-denial. Some monks lived lives of isolation or self-torture, while others like Saint Basil

decided that a community approach to devotion would be more productive. He developed plans and rules for monastic communities. Instead of self-denial, he suggested that hard work, prayer, and contemplation would better serve the needs of both the individual and the Lord.

The End of the Roman Empire. During the A.D. 300s and 400s increasing pressures on the empire's frontiers from Germanic tribes caused its collapse. In the late A.D. 300s the Huns, a Central Asian people, began to invade from the west. In A.D. 402 the Visigoths, a Germanic tribe fleeing the Huns, moved into Italy. By A.D. 410 the Visigothic king Alaric captured and sacked Rome. Another Germanic tribe, the Vandals, crossed into North Africa, and later attacked Rome in the A.D. 450s. In the mid- A.D. 400s Attila, the Huns' leader, attacked Gaul. In A.D. 451 the Roman army, allied with the Visigoths, defeated the Huns at Châlons-sur-Marne in what is now France. When the Huns turned to attack Rome, Pope Leo I met them at the city gates. He warned Attila of the epidemic of disease within the city, and the Huns withdrew. This event enhanced the prestige of the popes. Despite the Huns' withdrawal, Germanic tribes controlled most of the western provinces, including Italy. In A.D. 476, Odoacer, the leader of the Ostrogoths, overthrew Romulus Augustulus, conquering the Western Roman Empire.

Answer the questions below in your own words and in complete sentence. Highlight your evidence.

1. What did Diocletian require the people of the empire to sacrifice to restore order?

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2. How did Diocletian reorganize Roman government?

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3. How did Christianity change after it became the state religion of Rome?

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4. How did monasticism attempt to combat those changes?

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5. What caused the collapse of the western empire?

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6. What saved the city of Rome from invasion by Attila?

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