

## 6. Diocletian's Persecution (284-313)

- a. Diocletian's persecution was the last and greatest (12)
- b. Marcellinus - Bishop of Rome disgraced the church, recanted, and sacrificed to the Roman gods.

## 7. Argument concerning Bishop of Rome

- a. The great writers of early church were not bishops of Rome.
- b. The great formulators of policy or doctrine were not bishops of Rome.
- c. The bishops of Rome although capable administrators and frequently able martyrs were also frequently fallible, witness Zephyrinus and Callistus, and Marcellinus.

### III The Period from 313 to

#### A. The Changed Attitude of the Empire

1. The changed attitude of the Roman empire toward Christianity was not the result of the decision of one man, but the result of the gradual growth of a new force within the empire. Since persecution had failed to destroy Christianity, the empire adapted itself to the new force.
2. Constantine: (313-337) The son of Constantius (ruler of Britain, France and Spain under Diocletian), and a divorced Christian mother, Constantine in contesting for the throne claimed to have seen a vision and vowed to further the Christian cause. By 323 he had quelled all opposition to Christianity.

"By this sign you shall conquer" →

#### Was Constantine a true Christian?

- a. He was certainly never an intelligent Christian, nor a consistent one, yet he was a consistent church goer and often conducted his own services.
- b. He remained Pontifex Maximus i.e. head of the Roman paganism, and was wholly tolerant of paganism feeling Christianity should make its own converts.
- c. He was responsible for the murder of his wife and son and upon his death was elected one of the gods of Olympus by the Roman Senate.
- d. Yet he evinced on many occasions a sincere desire to promote Christianity. He presided over church meetings although unbaptized. He withheld his baptism until