

## **The Papacy: An Overview of Its History and Nature**

The Papal Church is a magnificently rich, splendidly housed political and ecclesiastical power headquartered in Rome. It stands in stark contrast to what started there in the first century with some pastors ministering to small congregations. The differences are graphic. The early home churches under their pastors looked to the authority of the Word as received in the gospel accounts of the life of the Lord and the writings of the Apostles, together with the Old Testament. These pastors and churches had a true and living faith in God's grace through the Gospel. From the letter of Paul to the Romans one sees that the Gospel was faithfully treasured in those early Roman congregations. At the beginning of his letter, the Apostle commends the believers at Rome for their faith, "*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son...*"<sup>1</sup> Such approvals are infrequent with the Apostle Paul. The faith of the churches of Rome continued to be well known and faithfully lived for two hundred fifty years more under very adverse situations, including extreme persecutions, the most famous of which took place under Emperor Nero in the 64 A.D. Totally unimaginable for these early believers in Rome would be the present concept of "the most holy Roman Pontiff." Unthinkable likewise would be the belief that rituals could confer the grace of the Holy Spirit and that Mary, the mother of the Lord, could be addressed in prayer as "the All Holy One".<sup>2</sup> In the fellowship of believers, a top heavy hierarchical system, from layperson to priest, from priest to bishop, from bishop to cardinal and cardinal to Pope would have been totally abhorrent, as from the world and not from Christ who said, "*One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*"<sup>3</sup>

The spread of the Christian faith during the first three centuries was extensive and rapid. In the providence of God, the main reasons for this were the fidelity and zeal of the preachers of the Gospel, the heroic deaths of the martyrs, and the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of the Roman world. Under Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) Christians suffered appallingly. The most severe persecution was under the Emperor Diocletian and his co-regent, Galerius, during the years 303-311. The historian Philip Schaff states that, "all copies of the Bible were to be burned; all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil rights; and last, all, without exception, were to sacrifice to the gods upon pain of death."<sup>4</sup> Yet far from exterminating the Christians and the Gospel, the persecution purified those who preached and increased their ability to give the Gospel message.

The persecution of Christians ended in 313 A.D. when the emperors Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East proclaimed the Edict of Milan. This decree established the policy of religious freedom for both paganism and Christianity. Four vice-prefects governed the Roman Empire under Constantine. Accordingly, under his authority the Christian world was to be governed from four great cities, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome. Over each city there

---

<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:8-9

<sup>2</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), Para. 2677, "By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the 'Mother of Mercy,' the All Holy One."

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 23:8.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, Second Period, p. 34

was set a Patriarch, who governed all the elders of his domain. (This was later to be called a diocese.) The mind and purpose of Constantine was that the Christian churches were to be organized in a fashion similar to the government of the Empire.

The respect enjoyed by the various Christian elders was usually in proportion to the status of the city in which they resided. Since Rome was the most powerful and prestigious city in the world at the time, it stood to unbiblical reason that the most prominent and influential bishop should be the Bishop of Rome. Gradually the honor and respect given to the Bishop of Rome grew, and these bishops in turn desired this adulation from bishops of other cities. The church was in such decline that with the passing of third and fourth centuries the bishops of Rome began to demand recognition for the exalted position they now considered their possession.

### **Gradual rise of papal Rome**

In the fourth and fifth centuries as the true Gospel was watered down, its place was taken by ritualism and ceremony. The true worship of God and the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit gave way to formal rites and idolatry. Pagan practices were also introduced, white washed with an external form of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> From the beginning, the Gospel produced an internal unity among the believers, but with the substitution of ritualism for the Gospel came the insistence on an external, visible unity for the church. As the historian D'Aubigne relates,

“Various circumstances early contributed to originate and develop the idea of the necessity of an external unity. Men accustomed to the ties and political forms of an earthly country transferred some of their views and customs to the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ...The semblance of an identical and external organization was gradually substituted for the internal and spiritual unity which forms the essence of genuine religion. The precious perfume of faith was left out, and then men prostrated themselves before the empty vase which had contained it. The faith of the heart no longer uniting the members of the Church, another tie was sought, and they were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, ceremonies, and canons. The living Church having gradually retired into the hidden sanctuary of some solitary souls, the external Church was put in its place, and declared to be, with all its forms, of Divine institution....It was maintained that it [salvation] was transmitted

---

<sup>5</sup> The history of the Vaudois, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Paulicians, and others shows that it is the Church of Rome that removed herself from the biblical faith. The history of the Papacy is the history of this removal and the profound effects thereof throughout the centuries from its genesis to the present. Nevertheless, the Lord has maintained a true witness to the Gospel throughout the centuries. See particularly George Stanley Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses* (Fleet Street, London: Seeley & Burnside, 1838) Reprinted by Church History Research & Archives (CHRAA) (P O Box 38, Dayton, OH: 1990); also Peter Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Church of Piedmont and of the Albigenses* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1821) Reprinted by CHRAA, 1989; Jean Paul Perrin, *History of the Old Waldenses Anterior to the Reformation*, 1618 (Reprint by CHRAA, 1991); J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, originally published in 1878 (Kilkeel, N. Ireland: Mourne Missionary Trust, 1985), re-published in four volumes by Hartland Publications, Rapidan, VA, 2002); J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, A New Translation (New York: John B. Alden, Publisher, 1883); Sir Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont*, 2 vols. (London: 1658) Reprinted by The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., #1 Iron Oaks Drive, Paris, AR 72855, ISBN 1-5557978-541-7. See also Appendix excerpt from E. H Broadbent's *The Pilgrim Church*. Yet Vatican Council II Document No. 32 on Ecumenism holds to the old Roman Catholic view that it is the Evangelicals who first separated from Rome—in spite of the persistent clear historical facts to the contrary.

by means of the forms which had been devised, and that no man could possess it if he did not receive it through this channel....As soon as the error as to the necessity of a visible unity of the Church was established, a new error was seen to arise—viz., that of the necessity of an external representative of this unity.”<sup>6</sup>

The clergy-laity division of the church became the accepted base. This further devolved into a hierarchy of the ruling clergy. By the end of the fifth century, a sacrificing priesthood in which the priest presumed to mediate between God and men had replaced the early ministers of the Gospel who had taught the Scripture. The Church was no more the fellowship of believers under Christ Jesus, united by the Gospel, true worship, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but rather an institution dominated by a hierarchy of bishops and elders.<sup>7</sup>

Simultaneously, from early to mid-fifth century, the city of Rome was beset first by Alaric the Goth, who captured it in 410 but did not stay to rule; Attila the Hun, who in 452 was persuaded by Leo, the then Bishop of Rome (440-461), to stop his advance and leave Italy altogether; and finally Genseric, leader of the Vandals, who captured the city, but was persuaded by Leo to spare the lives of Romans.<sup>8</sup> Leo’s fame as Rome’s protector grew enormously as a result.

The position of Imperial Roman emperor by now had become clearly vacant. A vacuum had been established because the Imperial leadership had left Rome and none of the barbaric leaders had tried to set himself up in that position. Leo, as the Bishop of Rome, saw the opportunity that lay in front of him,

“Leo began to feel that the time had come to materialize the claims of Augustine regarding the temporal millennial kingdom of Christ, and with his avowed vested powers of loosing and binding openly to declare his right to the vacant throne as the fitting seat of Christ’s universal kingdom. In this way the Roman church pushed its way into the place of the Western empire, of which it is ‘the actual continuation.’ Thus the empire did not perish; it only changed its form. The pope became Caesar’s successor. This was a long stride forward.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Bishop of Rome becomes the Pope**

The removal of the seat of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330 A.D. enhanced marvelously the Bishop of Rome’s power. The ecclesiastical contest which had been going on for some time between Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome as to which was the greatest was now for most part confined to the dioceses of Rome and the new contender, Constantinople.

The barbarian invasions of the Western Roman Empire helped immeasurably to build the whole structure of papal Rome. The ten barbarian kingdoms that were a serious threat were the Alamanni, Franks, Visigoths, Burgundians, Suevi, Anglo-Saxons, Lombards, Heruli, Vandals, and the Ostrogoths.<sup>10</sup> The Emperor of Rome now lived in Constantinople; yet his armies up-

---

<sup>6</sup> J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, A New Translation (New York: John B. Alden, Publisher, 1888) Vol. I, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, originally published in 1878 (Kilkeel, N. Ireland: Mourne Missionary Trust, 1985) Vol. I, Book I, pp. 3-14. See also D’Aubigne, Book I, pp. 1-34.

<sup>8</sup> LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1950) Vol. I, p. 498.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> The first seven are now known as Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, England, and Italy respectively.

rooted and destroyed the Vandals and the Heruli, while simultaneously contending with the Ostrogoths, who continued their siege of Rome.

Clovis, King of the Franks, was the first of the barbarian princes to accept the faith proposed by the Church of Rome. In fulfillment of a vow that he had made on the battlefield when he defeated the Allemanni, Clovis was baptized in 496 A. D. in the Cathedral of Rheims. The Bishop of Rome gave him the title of “the eldest son of the Church.” In the sixth century, the Burgundians of Southern Gaul, the Visigoths of Spain, the Suevi of Portugal, and the Anglo-Saxons of Britain all followed suit in joining themselves to the religion of the Bishop of Rome. These barbaric kings and their peoples accepted easily the faith of Rome, which because it lacked the Gospel, was not very different in form and substance from their own pagan worship. All of these conversions advanced the power of the Roman Bishop. Then, too, these barbaric nations more easily accepted the religion of Rome because this city had traditionally been the seat of authority of the Caesars as masters of the world. The bishops of Rome now played their role as rightful heirs to the Caesars. The city that had been the seat of power for the Empire became the place for the Bishop to exercise his authority. More and more nations accepted his position.

Emperor Justinian I (527-565) was the one, more than anyone else, to establish the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. He did it in a formal and legal manner by bringing purely ecclesiastical edicts and regulations under the control of civil law. Froom summarized,

“[One of Justinian’s] great achievement[s] was the regulation of ecclesiastical and theological matters, crowned by the imperial Decretal Letter seating the bishop of Rome in the church as the ‘Head of all the holy churches,’ thus laying the legal foundation for papal ecclesiastical supremacy.”<sup>11</sup>

Justinian’s official civil codex of law was to be enforced civilly throughout the Roman Empire, although that did not come about immediately.

“Hence, in accordance with the provisions of these Councils, we order that the Most Holy Pope of ancient Rome shall hold the first rank of all the Pontiffs, but the Most Blessed Archbishop of Constantinople, or New Rome, shall occupy the second place after the Holy Apostolic See of ancient Rome, which shall take precedence over all other sees.’...Thus the supremacy of the Pope over all Christians received the fullest sanction that could be given by the secular master of the Roman world. From this time, then, is to be dated the secular acknowledgment of the Papacy’s claims to ecclesiastical primacy, which became effective generally in 538, by the freeing of Rome from the Ostrogothic siege.”<sup>12</sup>

Justinian’s decree did not create the office of the Pope but rather set the legal foundation for advancement in ruling power by the bishops of Rome. The Emperor had his purposes,

“Justinian improved the advantage afforded by his reconquest of Italy to achieve his design of *a universal conformity in religious matters* that would exclude heresy and schism, as well as strengthen his own authority over the Western kingdoms. His object was to secure a unity of the church which should embrace both East and West. He considered that there was no surer way of reducing them all to one religion than by the advancement of the authority of

---

<sup>11</sup> Froom, Vol. I, p. 507.

<sup>12</sup> Novella 131 of Justinian, 9th collection, title 6, chap. 2 (numbered title 14, chap. 2 in Scott’s tr. here quoted) in Froom, Vol. I, p. 513, including Froom’s comment.

ecclesiastical Rome, and by acknowledgment of the head of that church as the promoter of unity among them, whose business it should be to overawe the conscience of man with the anathemas of the church, and to enforce the execution of heavy penalties of the law. From about 539, the sovereign pontiff and the patriarchs began to have a corps of officers to enforce their decrees, as civil penalties began to be inflicted by their own tribunals.”<sup>13</sup>

Thus to allay the demise of the Imperial Empire, ecclesiastical unity was to be imposed by coercion if necessary, not the first time nor yet the last that religion would be used to buttress political positions. As proclaimed head of the Empire’s church, the job fell to the Bishop of Rome. The title of “Pope” began to fit the one who sat as “Bishop of Rome”, who now was free to use the civil sword of coercion given him by Justinian’s decree. Formerly, ecclesiastical unity came by the moral persuasion of the Gospel and the Scripture alone to save individuals who then would be salt and light to their civil societies. But such unbiblical ideas and methods as the Bishops of Rome had so willingly sought after and received could hardly produce something other than worldly corruption. It is no surprise then that soon the Bishop of Rome desired to reign like a king with worldly pomp and worldly power. The very thing that the Lord had warned against was now transpiring. *“And he said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them...but ye shall not be so...”*<sup>14</sup>

The Empire continued to crumble. The Emperor Phocas reigned in Constantinople from 602 to 610 A.D. Boniface III, who became Pope in 607, had known him previously, for Boniface had been a legate to the Emperor Phocas before becoming pope. Boniface showed great skill in obtaining further official recognition from the Emperor.

“He [Boniface] sought and obtained a decree from Phocas which restated that ‘the See of Blessed Peter the Apostle should be the head of all the Churches’. This ensured that the title of ‘Universal Bishop’ belonged exclusively to the Bishop of Rome, and effectively ended the attempt by Cyriacus, Bishop of Constantinople, to establish himself as ‘Universal Bishop’.”<sup>15</sup>

Pope Boniface III shrewdly took hold of two measures to secure papal hegemony in the ecclesiastical domain of the failing empire. First, he made excellent use of the conjecture that Peter was the First Bishop in Rome.<sup>16</sup> Second, his acquisition of the title of “Universal Bishop”, granted to him by Emperor Phocas, accorded him dominion and power to reign in ecclesiastical supremacy from the central city of Rome to the utmost reaches of the Empire. This twofold stratagem has continued throughout history.

---

<sup>13</sup> Froom, Vol. I, p. 509. Italic is in the original.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 22:25-26

<sup>15</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Pope%20Boniface%20III> 5/29/04 “[Emperor] Justinian...The recognition of the Roman see as the highest ecclesiastical authority (compare *Novellae*, cxxxi.) remained the cornerstone of his policy in relation to the West, although he thus grievously offended those of the East, and though he felt himself entirely free to show a despotic front toward the popes (witness his behavior toward Silverius and Vigilius)” <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Justinian> 5/29/04

<sup>16</sup> The Scripture is utterly silent about the Apostle Peter going to Rome. The notion remains purely a conjecture. Nevertheless, according to Froom, “Innocent I (d. 417) had maintained that Christ had (a) delegated supreme power to Peter and (b) made him bishop of Rome, and that as Peter’s successor he was entitled to exercise Peter’s power and prerogatives...” The same was claimed by the legate of Pope Celestine at the Council of Ephesus in 431, which was allowed to stand unchallenged. Vol. I, p. 499

## **Fraudulent documents and the rise of the Papacy as a temporal power**

It was not until the middle of the eighth century that the outlandish claim was made that the Emperor Constantine had transferred his power, authority, and palace to the Bishop of Rome. The fraudulent “Donation of Constantine” was purported to be the legal document in which the Emperor Constantine bestowed on Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome (314-335), much of his property and invested him with great spiritual power. The enormity and grandeur of the bequest allegedly given by Constantine to Sylvester in the spurious document is seen the following quotation from the manuscript,

“We attribute to the See of Peter all the dignity, all the glory, all the authority of the imperial power. Furthermore, we give to Sylvester and to his successors our palace of the Lateran, which is incontestably the finest palace on the earth; we give him our crown, our miter, our diadem, and all our imperial vestments; we transfer to him the imperial dignity. We bestow on the holy Pontiff in free gift the city of Rome, and all the western cities of Italy. To cede precedence to him, we divest ourselves of our authority over all those provinces, and we withdraw from Rome, transferring the seat of our empire to Byzantium; inasmuch as it is not proper that an earthly emperor should preserve the least authority, where God hath established the head of his religion.”<sup>17</sup>

The “Donation of Constantine” was most likely forged a little before 754 A.D. Of it, the historian Wylie says, “In it Constantine is made to speak in the Latin of the eighth century, and to address Bishop Sylvester as ‘Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ’. During more than 600 years Rome impressively cited this deed of gift, inserted it in her codes, permitted none to question its genuineness, and burned those who refused to believe in it. The first dawn of light in the sixteenth century sufficed to discover the cheat.”<sup>18</sup>

It was also in the eighth century that civil power came within the grasp of the Papacy. The kings of Lombardy, once barbarian and now believers in the Arian heresy, were intent on the conquest of all Italy, threatening even Rome itself. At the same time, the Muslims had overrun Africa, conquered some of Spain, and were also endangering Rome. Pope Stephen II looked to France for help. He called on Pepin the Short. Pepin, the son of Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer) and the father of Charlemagne, was the chief steward of the king’s lands and army. Pepin had just usurped the throne from Childeric and needed approval for his new position. He therefore crossed the Alps with an army and was able to defeat the Lombards. The conquered towns he conceded to the Pope for his possession. Thus in 755 A.D. Pepin the Short made material the temporal power of the popes, and achieved papal approval for himself.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from copy of the document in Pope Leo’s letter in Hardouin’s Collection, Epistola I., Leonis Papae IX; *Acta Conciliorum et Epistolae Decretales*, tom. 6, pp. 934; Parisiis, 1714. The English reader will find a copy of the pretended original document in full in *Historical Essay on the Power of the Popes*, Vol. II, Appendix, Tr. from French, London, 1838 in Wylie, Vol. I, Book First, Ch. 3, p.11.

<sup>18</sup> Wylie, Vol. I, Book First, Ch. 3, p. 11. See also reknown Roman Catholic historian Ignaz Von Döllinger [Janus, pseud.], *The Pope and the Council*, Auth. Tr. from German, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1869) §7 “Forgeries”, pp. 94-142.

<sup>19</sup> Wylie points out, “The Pope was nominally subject to the Emperor, but in many vital points, the *first* was *last*...The popes had not yet advanced a direct and formal claim to dispose of crowns and kingdoms, but the germ of such a claim was contained, *first*, in the acts which they now performed. They had already taken it upon them to sanction the transference of the crown of France from the Merovingian [Childeric] to the Carolingian [Pepin the Short] family. And on what principle had they done so?...The principle on which he [the Pope] proceeded was

Charlemagne, Pepin's son, continued to strengthen the temporal power of the Pope. The Lombards were again about to besiege Rome. The Pope again looked to France for help and this time to Charlemagne, who answered the call and defeated the Lombards. He confirmed and enlarged cities and lands given by his father, Pepin, to the Church of Rome. Later, on Christmas Eve 800, Charlemagne, as master of nearly all the Romano-Germanic nations, knelt before Pope Leo III. The Pope placed on his head the crown of the Western Empire. This act exhibited the Pope's growing power. In 538 the Emperor Justinian had given the Bishop of Rome the title of Pontifex Maximus. Two hundred sixty-two years later, it was the Pope who was crowning an emperor.<sup>20</sup>

The fraudulent "Donation of Constantine", less than fifty years old, was already proving to be one of a number of very useful tools.<sup>21</sup> Pope Nicholas I in 865 drew from this and other forgeries a way to demand submission from bishops and princes and to amass tremendous riches to the Papacy. The arrogance of the popes grew from this time onward, as did their treasury. Popes became intoxicated with their own pride, some in their teens and twenties, losing their senses in nefarious practices. Infamous women of history, Theodora and Marozia, for many years governed the papal throne. As they desired they installed and deposed their lovers, sons, and grandsons as so-called masters of the Church. That unholy See, which pretended to rise above the majesty of kings and princes, descended into dregs of sin. For two centuries, the papacy was one wild arena of bedlam as the most powerful families of Italy disputed and fought over it like a possession. As Wylie recounts,

---

plainly this—that in virtue of his spiritual character he was superior to earthly dignities, and had been vested in the power of controlling and disposing of such dignities....It was the usual manner of the Papacy to perform acts which, as they appeared to contain no principles hostile to the rights of society or the prerogatives of princes, were permitted to pass unchallenged at the time; but the Popes took care afterwards to improve them, by founding upon them the most extravagant and ambitious claims...." J. A. Wylie, *The Papacy: Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*, (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1888) pp. 59-60.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Wylie states, "The principle on which the whole system of the popes was founded virtually implied their supremacy over kings as well as over priests. They claimed to be the successors of Peter and the vicars of Christ....If their claim was a just one—if they were indeed the vicars of Christ and the vicegerents of God, as they affirmed—there were plainly no bounds to their authority, either in temporal or spiritual matters....According to their theory, there was strictly but one ruler on earth—the Pope....The pontiffs judged it premature to startle the world as yet by undisguised and open avowal of this claim: they accounted it sufficient, meanwhile, to embody its fundamental principles in the decrees of councils and in the pontifical acts, and allow them to lie dormant there, in hope that a better age would arrive, when it would be possible to avow in plain terms and enforce by direct acts, a claim which they had put forth only inferentially as yet." Wylie goes on to observe, "Hitherto the pontiff had been raised to his dignity by the suffrages of the bishops, accompanied by the acclamation of the Roman people and the ratification of the emperor. For till the imperial consent had been signified, the newly-elected pontiff could not be legally consecrated....When the Carolingian line was decimated of strength, the Papacy shrewdly traded off their support to Charles the Bald in return for a grand purse and the surrender of all rights of the Emperor to interfere with the election to the pontifical throne. The trade off was quickly put into force. From mid tenth century on, the pontiffs ascended the pontifical throne without interference."

<sup>21</sup> "In 774, Charlemagne confirmed the donation of his father, Pepin the Short; moreover, to give the papal claim to temporal power greater antiquity, the so-called Donation of Constantine to Pope Sylvester I was forged. On its basis later popes also claimed suzerainty over Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia." [www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0860226.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0860226.html) 6/1/04

“The candidate who was rich enough to offer the largest bribe, or powerful enough to appear with an army at the gates of Rome, was invariably crowned emperor in the Vatican....The popes did not trouble the world with any formal statement of their principles on the head of the supremacy; they were content to embody them in acts. They were wise enough to know that the speediest way of getting the world to acknowledge theoretic truth is to familiarize it with its practical applications—to ask approval of it, not as a theory, but as a fact. Thus the popes, by a bold course of dexterous management, and of audacious but successful aggression, laboured to weave the doctrine of the supremacy into the general policy of Europe.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Lusts of the mind followed by murder and torture**

The year 1073 was a turning point from the centuries of gross immorality. Rigorous discipline now became the norm of the Papacy. Reaching above the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of papal minds continued to clutch at total dominion, both ecclesiastical and civil. By this time, the line of Charlemagne had grown too weak to keep papal ambitions in check, and the Pope Gregory VII (also known as Hildebrand) was ambitious beyond all who had preceded him. He was convinced that the reign of the Pope was in fact the reign of God on earth and determined to subject materially all authority and power, both spiritual and temporal, to the “chair of Peter”. It was Gregory VII who envisioned what was to become the vast structure of the Papacy. His goal was to be the supreme ruler and judge of all leaders both Church and state. Wylie summarizes,

“Gregory rekindled, with all the ardour and vehemence characteristic of the man, the war between the throne and the mitre. The object at which Gregory VII aimed was twofold: 1. To render the election to the pontifical chair independent of the emperors; and, 2. To resume the empire as a fief of the Church, and to establish his dominion over the kings and kingdoms of the earth. His first step towards the accomplishment of these vast designs was...to enact clerical celibacy. His second was to forbid all ecclesiastics to receive investiture at the hands of the secular power.”<sup>23</sup>

Gregory VII advocated the notion that the Pope is Christ’s Vicar. This supremacy, which he claimed by divine right, demanded sure dominion over both emperors and kings.

“The overthrow of the empire contributed most materially towards the elevation of the Bishop of Rome; for, *first*, it took the Caesars out of the way...*Second*, it compelled the bishops of Rome, now deprived of the imperial influence which had hitherto helped them so mightily in their struggles for pre-eminence, to fall back on another element...which constitutes the very essence of the papacy, and on which is founded the whole complex fabric of the spiritual and temporal domination of the popes...[the idea that] the Bishop of Rome is the successor of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and in virtue of being so, is Christ’s Vicar on earth.”<sup>24</sup>

This idea had been circulating for some time. “The primacy had been promulgated by synodical decrees, ratified by imperial edicts; but the pontiffs perceived that what synods and emperors had given, synods and emperors might take away. The enactments of both, therefore, were discarded, and the *Divine right* was put in their room, as the only basis of power which neither lapse of years nor change of circumstances could overthrow. Rome was henceforward indestructi-

---

<sup>22</sup> Wylie, *The Papacy*, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> Wylie, *The Papacy*, Book I, Chapter IV, p. 74. <http://www.wayoflife.org/papacy/01-04.htm#21> 6/1/04

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. Emphasis in the original.



ble.”<sup>25</sup> The material supremacy of such a notion was not won in a day. But it was Gregory’s astute grasp of the notion and his crushing ambition, coupled with the enormous wealth that the Roman Catholic Church by then possessed, that made its implementation possible. These shrewd enactments began to bear fruit even in Gregory’s own rule from 1073-1085.

The pontiffs that followed him developed the structures he had established. They continued his projects and strove by deceit, by crusades, and by interdicts<sup>26</sup>, to place the world under papal political control. For two centuries from the time of Gregory VII’s reign, the papacy increased in power and glory, always at the price of thousands of destroyed lives, many deposed kings and princes, numerous ruined cities, and countless homesteads and farms utterly wasted, all in the name of the religion of Rome.

Popes Innocent III (1198-1216) and Boniface VIII (1294-1303) put the final touches to papal triumph of spiritual and temporal power. Pope Innocent III proclaimed a crusade against the Albigenses<sup>27</sup> and offered to all who would engage in it the pardon of all sins to get to heaven without passing through purgatory. It was a war perpetrated with unimaginable cruelty. Whole villages and towns were indiscriminately butchered; thousands of others were burned alive at the stake, while others were subjected to the most hideous torture. The history of these horrendous deeds of cruelty and murder are established by numerous accounts.<sup>28</sup> Pope Boniface VIII “was stubborn, ambitious, intelligent, vain, and unscrupulous. He believed deeply that the pope was

---

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>26</sup> An interdict was a papal decree whereby citizens were released from their oaths of allegiance to their prince or king, who had been placed under interdict. If the people did not obey the decree, all religious services were stopped including infant baptism and services for the dead. Only the Gospel could break such an iron grip on the lives of men.

<sup>27</sup> The Albigenses were a group of Christians, influential for their godly lives, who were condemned by the Church of Rome. George Stanley Faber, writing in 1838, provides an example of Papal work, “According to the plan adopted by the Inquisitors of Languedoc, it was morally impossible for any of the accused Albigenses to escape [the charge of Manichæism]. By the twenty-second canon of the Council of Narbonne, which sat in the year 1244 for the purpose of aiding and abetting the recently-established Holy Office of Holy Dominic in its project of exterminating the reputed heretics of Southern France, Inquisitors...were forbidden to reveal the names of witnesses; by the twenty-fourth canon, it was enacted that the testimony of infamous persons, of criminals, and of those who confessed themselves to have been accomplices, should be received in the process of the Inquisition against the Albigenses; and by the twenty-sixth canon...it was decreed that he, who shall have been convicted by witnesses, or through any other proofs, shall henceforth be always reputed a heretic, even though he should deny the truth of the allegation. Hist. Gener. De Langued. Par un Benedictin. Livr. Xxv. §81. Vol iii p. 445’ Deeply steeped in infamy as is the Pontifical Church, we can scarcely theorise a lower depth than this glaring and scandalous prostitution of justice. One benefit, however, may be said to result from it...No rational being can, by any conceivable possibility, believe a syllable of the tales of Manicheism related of the Albigenses, when those tales rest upon such a foundation as that which has been laid by the Council of Narbonne.” *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, pp. 107-108. Emphasis in original.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Paul Perrin [a Waldensian pastor], *History of the Ancient Christians* (1618); Sir Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont*, (1658); J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism* (1878); D’Aubigne, *History of the Great Reformation* (New York: Robt. Carter, 1842); Edward B. Elliot, *Horæ Apocalypticæ* (London, 1860); *Foxe’s Book Of Martyrs* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1926); John Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland*, orig. written between 1559 and 1571 (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1898, 1982); Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Ascension of James II* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1861); and elsewhere.

literally the Vicar of Christ on Earth and that he held extraordinary powers. Anyone who opposed him opposed God and therefore must certainly be wicked.”<sup>29</sup> He is most famous for a statement in his papal bull *Unum Sanctum*, “We declare, say, define, and proclaim to every human creature that they by necessity for salvation are entirely subject to the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>30</sup> Seventy-five popes, one after another, from Pope Innocent III to Pope Pius VII, approved of torture, murder, and burning at the stake, and the confiscation of the property of believers in the horrific centuries of the Inquisition. Many of those slain were true Bible believers.

### **More than 600 years of Papal Inquisition**

The Inquisition is a term that historically applies specifically to the time when the Popes of Rome took the initiative in attempting to stamp out by torture, imprisonment, and death what they called “heresy”. Before the popes began to decree such torture and death, a type of persecution involving incarceration and confiscation of property was practiced at the parish level and at the diocesan level in the Roman Catholic Church. The prophecies of Scripture had predicted what indeed happened, “*and it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.*”<sup>31</sup> This text is fulfilled in the wars against the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and the other followers of the Lord at the time of the Papal persecutions. This prophecy is the same as what is found in the book of Daniel, “*the same horn [that] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.*”<sup>32</sup>

During the Inquisition, “the most ghastly abomination of all was the system of torture. The accounts of its cold-blooded operations make one shudder at the capacity of human beings for cruelty. And it was decreed and regulated by the popes who claim to represent Christ on earth. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV solemnly authorized it. Confirmatory or regulatory decrees about it were issued by Alexander IV, Clement IV, Urban IV and Clement V.”<sup>33</sup> The Papacy had become “*drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*”<sup>34</sup> No other kingdom or power has ever drunk so deeply of this blood as has Papal Rome. The facts are undeniable.

“From the birth of Popery in 600, to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that more than FIFTY MILLION of the human family, have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors, an average of more than forty thousand religious murders for every year of the existence of Popery.”<sup>35</sup> The torture chambers of Inquisition, which lasted

---

<sup>29</sup> <http://history.boisestate.edu/westciv/babylon/04.htm> 8/29/03

<sup>30</sup> Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. by Roy Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition of *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Revised by Karl Rahner, S. J. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), #469.

<sup>31</sup> Revelation 13:7

<sup>32</sup> Daniel 7:21

<sup>33</sup> William Shaw Kerr, *A Handbook on the Papacy* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1950) p. 239.

<sup>34</sup> Revelation 17:6

<sup>35</sup> “No computation can reach the numbers who have been put to death, in different ways, on account of their maintaining the profession of the Gospel, and opposing the corruption of the Church of Rome. A MILLION of poor Waldenses perished in France; NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND orthodox Christians were slain in less than thirty years after the institution of the order of the Jesuits. The Duke of Alva boasted of having put to death in the Netherlands, THIRTY-SIX THOUSAND by the hand of the common executioner during the space of a few years. The Inquisition destroyed, by various tortures, ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND within thirty years. These are a few specimens,

more than 600 years<sup>36</sup>, were all across the nations controlled by Rome. The instruments of torture were horrendous. If you are sensitive you ought to pray for courage to read on these in the account by Wylie:

“We pass on into the chamber, where more dreadful sights meet our gaze. It is hung round and round with instruments of torture, so numerous that it would take a long while even to name them, and so diverse that it would take a much longer time to describe them. We must take them in groups, for it were hopeless to think of going over them one by one, and particularizing the mode in which each operated, and the ingenuity and art with which all of them have been adapted to their horrible end. There were instruments for compressing the fingers till the bones should be squeezed to splinters. There were instruments for probing below the finger-nails till an exquisite pain, like a burning fire, would run along the nerves. There were instruments for tearing out the tongue, for scooping out the eyes, for grubbing-up the ears. There were bunches of iron cords, with a spiked circle at the end of every whip, for tearing the flesh from the back till bone and sinew were laid bare. There were iron cases for the legs, which were tightened upon the limb placed in them by means of a screw, till flesh and bone were reduced to a jelly. There were cradles set full of sharp spikes, in which victims were laid and rolled from side to side, the wretched occupant being pierced at each movement of the machine with innumerable sharp points. There were iron ladles with long handles, for holding molten lead or boiling pitch, to be poured down the throat of the victim, and convert his body into a burning cauldron. There were frames with holes to admit the hands and feet, so contrived that the person put into them had his body bent into unnatural and painful positions, and the agony grew greater and greater by moments, and yet the man did not die. There were chestfuls of small but most ingeniously constructed instruments for pinching, probing, or tearing the more sensitive parts of the body, and continuing the pain up to the very verge where reason or life gives way. On the floor and walls of the apartment were the larger instruments for the same fearful end—lacerating, mangling, and agonizing living men; but these we shall meet in other dungeons we are yet to visit.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Indictment on the Inquisition**

The best summary statement on the papacy’s Inquisition is that of the renowned Catholic historian Lord Acton. He declares,

“The Inquisition is peculiarly the weapon and peculiarly the work of the Popes. It stands out from all those things in which they co-operated, followed or assented as the distinctive feature of papal Rome. It was set up, renewed and perfected by a long series of acts emanating from the supreme authority in the Church. No other institution, no doctrine, no ceremony is so distinctly the individual creation of the Papacy, except the dispensing power. It is the principal thing with which the Papacy is identified, and by which it must be judged. The principle of the Inquisition is the Pope’s sovereign power over life and death. Whosoever disobeys him should be tried and tortured and burnt. If that cannot be done, formalities may be dispensed

---

and but a few, of those which history has recorded; but the total amount will never be known till the earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain.” (Scott’s Church History) Quoted in John Dowling, *The History of Romanism* (Classic Reprints No. 57, Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 2002; originally publ. 1845) Book 8 Ch. 1, p. 542.

<sup>36</sup> From its inception under Pope Innocent III in 1203 A.D., until its final dissolution in Spain and Portugal in 1808, is 605 years.

<sup>37</sup> Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Book 15, Chapter 11.

with, and the culprit may be killed like an outlaw. That is to say, the principle of the Inquisition is murderous, and a man's opinion of the Papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion of religious assassination."<sup>38</sup>

The Papacy inflicted excruciating torture and cruel death on true believers. It was like the sufferings recorded in the Old Testament, "*others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy.*"<sup>39</sup> Arthur Pink comments, "Papists have exceeded pagans herein: witness their cruel massacres in France and other places: well may the Holy Spirit represent the whore Babylon as being '*drunk with the blood of the saints*' (Revelation 17:6)..."*Of whom the world was not worthy*"...the most merciless, conscienceless, cruel, and inveterate persecutors of God's elect have been *religious* people!"<sup>40</sup>

### **Characteristics of the Reformation and the Papacy compared**

The Reformation period was full with historical figures and an enormous amount of theological debate. However in the midst of all the doctrinal issues and events there were five biblical principles accepted among the Reformers. In all matters of faith and morals, the final authority is the Bible alone. Before the all-holy God, an individual is saved by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone. Following on this, all glory and praise is to God alone.

For an overview of the distinctiveness of Reformation history, we have obtained an extended quotation,

"The Protestant Reformation possessed definite characteristics, many of which set it apart from any other revolution in history. One of the distinguishing features was its territorial scope. It began simultaneously and independently in various European countries. About the time that Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the church door in Wittenberg in 1517, John Colet, dean of St. Paul's in England, was denouncing the abuses of the Catholic Church and upholding the supremacy of the Bible as the rule of faith. Lefevre in France and Zwingli in Switzerland were at the same time preaching against the evils of the church and pointing to Christ as the door of salvation. Although Luther is called the originator of the Reformation, the other Reformers discovered and preached the same message that he did, without having received knowledge of it from him.

"There was a power, however, that brought the Reformation into existence and made its progress possible—and that was the Holy Scriptures. The Greek New Testament prepared by Erasmus was a help to scholars all over Europe in learning the way of truth and life. After the Reformation once got under way, there existed a great friendship and fraternization among the Reformers. There was frequent interchange of ideas, and hospitality was freely extended. One of the surprising features of the Reformation was this extent of contact and cooperation among the Reformers as they encouraged each other in their efforts. The Reformation spread with great rapidity. Of course, consolidations, refinements, and extensions needed to be made; but that so tremendous a revolution, on such a vast scale, could be exe-

---

<sup>38</sup> "Letters to Mary Gladstone" by Lord Acton, in Kerr, p. 235.

<sup>39</sup> Hebrews 11:36-38

<sup>40</sup> Arthur Pink, *Exposition of Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1954) commentary on Hebrews 11:37, 38, pp. 881-882.

cuted in so short a time, bringing with it a complete change in thought and habit, still remains one of the amazing events of history.

“The Protestant Reformation actually began in Europe’s citadels of learning, her universities. There were scholars, such as Luther and Melancthon at Wittenberg; Erasmus, Colet...at Oxford; Bilney, Latimer, and Cartwright at Cambridge; and Lefevre and Farel at Paris. Almost without exception the leaders of the Reformation were highly trained men of that generation. In some instances, as Beza and Tyndale, they ranked high as men of letters. Others, like Cranmer and Valdes carried responsibilities at court...

“Why was this so necessary at that time, when in other ages men of lesser abilities and education have been used effectively to preach the gospel with power? At least two answers can be given: Only the educated knew the Hebrew, Latin, and Greek necessary to read the Bible as it then existed. Then, too, it was essential that the Bible be translated into the vernacular of each country so that the common people could have the privilege of reading the Scriptures in their own tongue. This task demanded scholarship.

“All the preaching of many Luthers, Latimers, Zwinglis, Knoxes, and Wisharts would have failed to accomplish the Reformation if, at the same time, the Bible in the vernacular had not been provided for the common people. If at the moment Latimer was preaching at Cambridge it had not happened that Tyndale, who had fled to the Continent, was smuggling back thousands of copies of the English New Testament so that every Englishman could read the way of salvation for himself, there would have been no Reformation in England. A similar situation occurred in Germany, France, and other countries.

“With these two phases must be combined the indispensable third—the invention of printing, which had made possible the publication of the translations of the Bible and had brought the price within range of the common man’s purse. Within a ten-year period many of the nations of Europe had received translations of the Bible in their own tongue. Luther had translated it for Germany in 1522, Lefevre for France in 1523, Tyndale for England in 1525, Brucoli for Italy in 1532. Within the next ten years Francisco Enzinas had translated the Bible into Spanish, and Petri had translated it into Swedish. Shortly after, Karoli, one of the most energetic of Magyar preachers, had done the same in the Magyar tongue. Another noteworthy characteristic of the Reformers was the basic agreement on important doctrines. The tenet upon which all Reformers agreed was justification by faith. They believed that salvation is not obtained by works, fasting, money, or penance, but that it is God’s free gift. This doctrine formed the cornerstone of the Reformation. Agreement also existed on the supreme and sufficient authority of the Scriptures, Communion in both kinds, and the disavowal of saint worship, images, relics, purgatory, mass, celibacy, and the pope as head of the church....

“The Reformation proper, the break with Roman Catholic authority, was accomplished in a relatively short time; but not all the papal teachings were abruptly terminated....The Reformation was a continuous, all-enveloping movement of action and reaction, accruing more glory by the addition of more light. It was a glorious spiritual awakening...”<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Gideon & Hilda Hagstotz, *Heroes of the Reformation* (Rapidan, VA: Hartland Publications, 1951) pp. 12-16, by permission

## The Papacy and modern times

What had looked like a mortal wound to Papal power took place in 1798.<sup>42</sup> A general of Napoleon's army entered the Vatican, removing Pope Pius VI from his throne. With that, the Papacy lost its basis as a civil power. From the year 1846 Pope Pius IX, not having territorial or civil power, sought to re-establish the papacy to its former power and glory. An important part of his strategy was achieved by the declaration of papal infallibility. With remarkable ingenuity against not only the absurdity of the notion, but also in spite of the historical fact of heretical popes, papal infallibility was made a binding dogma of belief at Vatican Council I in 1870.<sup>43</sup> Further, the Papacy re-established itself internally by re-organizing Roman Catholic law into the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*.<sup>44</sup> In 1929 when Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty with Pope Pius XI officially conceding Vaticanus Mons (Vatican Hill) to the Pope, the wound that had been inflicted was healed; the Papacy once again became a sovereign civil state. The legal agreement with Mussolini was just the beginning of many civil concordats, one of the most infamous being that between Pope Pius XII and Adolf Hitler.<sup>45</sup> The Papacy had again consolidated its power from within by the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* and from without by legal concordats with the various nations. Thus the Vatican, with its own citizens as part of a "fifth column" within sovereign nations across the world and with her civil agreements with the same nations, has a double cord of power. The individual Catholic, fearing for his salvation, and laden with his first allegiance being to "holy Mother Church", is a pliable pawn in the hand of the Papacy.

---

<sup>42</sup> "Edward King, insightful in 1800 wrote about this defeat as the mortal wound or end of Pontifical Power, "THIS IS THE YEAR 1798.—And just 1260 years ago, in the very beginning of the year 538, Belisarius put an end to the Empire, and Dominion of the Goths, at Rome...He had entered the City on the 10th of the preceding December, in triumph, in the name of Justinian, Emperor of the East: and had soon after made it tributary to him: leaving thenceforward from A.D. 538 NO POWER in Rome, that could be said to rule over the earth, excepting the ECCLESIASTICAL PONTIFICAL POWER." "Remarks on the Signs of the Times" (Philadelphia ed., 1800) pp. 18-19 in Froom, Vol. II, p. 767.

<sup>43</sup> For Catholic sources, see Catholic historians August Hasler, *How the Pope Became Infallible: Pius IX and the Politics of Persuasion*, originally published in German under the title *Wie Der Papst Unferhbar Wurde*, 1979; English translation by Peter Heinegg (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981) and Ignatius von Döllinger, *The Pope and the Council* (London: Rivingtons, 1869). A fascinating account of the arguments facing the Papacy at this point, including an extended history on the rise of the Papacy, is laid out by von Döllinger.

<sup>44</sup> Roman Catholic writer John Cornwell states, "At the turn of the century [1900], Pacelli [later Pope Pius XII]...collaborated in redrafting the Church's laws in such a way as to grant future popes unchallenged domination from the Roman center. These laws, separated from their ancient historical and social background, were packaged in a manual known as the Code of Canon Law, published and brought into force in 1917. The code, distributed to Catholic clergy throughout the world, created the means of establishing, imposing, and sustaining a remarkable new 'top-down' power relationship. As papal nuncio in Munich and Berlin during the 1920s, Pacelli sought to impose the new code, state by state, on Germany...." *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York, 10014: Viking, 1999) p. 6-7.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Cornwell also states, "In 1933 Pacelli found a successful negotiating partner for his Reich Concordat in the person of Adolf Hitler. Their treaty authorized the papacy to impose the new Church law on German Catholics and granted generous privileges to Catholic schools and the clergy. In exchange, the Catholic Church in Germany, its parliamentary political party, and its many hundreds of associations and newspapers 'voluntarily' withdrew, following Pacelli's initiative, from social and political action. The abdication of German political Catholicism in 1933, negotiated and imposed from the Vatican by Pacelli with the agreement of Pope Pius XI, ensured that Nazism could rise unopposed by the most powerful Catholic community in the world..." p. 7

### **Modern cruelty through wars and intrigue**

A partial list of Roman Catholic dictators with whom the Vatican had alliance in twentieth century is the following. Benito Mussolini in Italy, from 1922 to 1943; Adolf Hitler in Germany, 1933 to 1945; Francisco Franco in Spain, 1936 to 1975; Antonio Salazar in Portugal, 1932 to 1968; Engelbert Dollfuss and Kurt von Schuschnigg in Austria, 1932 to 1934; Juan Peron in Argentina, 1946 to 1955. Possibly the most brutal and bloodthirsty of all was Ante Pavelic in Croatia, 1941 to 1945.

### **The Papacy and Hitler's Germany**

Adolf Hitler was baptized into the Catholic Church as an infant in Austria. He was both a communicant and an altar boy. To the day of his suicide, he remained a Catholic. His dealings with the Catholic Church show how far the Vatican will go with the powerful dictators. The alliance worked both ways. It established Catholicism more deeply in Germany while promoting the objectives of Nazi movement. Of it, John Robbins writes,

“The fountainhead and stronghold of the Nazi movement in Germany was Bavaria in south Germany, Roman Catholic Germany, not Protestant north Germany. German Roman Catholics joined the Nazi Party en masse and enthusiastically supported the Hitler regime. Over half of Hitler's troops were Roman Catholic. At the height of his power in 1942, Hitler ruled over the largest Roman Catholic population in the world. They were accustomed to authoritarian government in their religious lives, which made them unquestioning and enthusiastic supporters of authoritarian civil governments as well. Of course, Roman Catholic laymen were simply following the example and the instructions of their religious leaders. Pius XI was the first head of state to recognize Hitler's government in 1933. Pius XI praised Hitler in public, even before he extended official recognition to the Hitler regime. In 1933, Pius XI told Hitler's Vice Chancellor Fritz von Papen, also a Roman Catholic, ‘how pleased he was that the German Government now had at its head a man uncompromisingly opposed to Communism....’ Not only did Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* influence Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, it apparently persuaded German Chancellor Franz von Papen to bring Hitler to power in Germany.”<sup>46</sup>

Regarding its involvement with Nazi Germany and other nations, the Vatican has repeatedly refused to open up its archives to scholars. Nevertheless, evidence outside the Vatican's archives shows that the Papacy encouraged, supported, and collaborated with both the Mussolini and Hitler regimes, and set up its own totalitarian state in Croatia during the Second World War. The Vatican's legal agreement with the Nazism of Germany and the Fascism of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, and Latin America are the consequences of the Papacy's economic and social teachings, and legal agreements between the Vatican and these nations.<sup>47</sup> The Crusades and the 605 years of the Inquisition have stopped, but the power of the Papacy to influence and to control governments, social, economic, political life and the destinies of peoples, has continued.

---

<sup>46</sup> John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church* (Unicoi, TN 37692-0068: The Trinity Foundation, 1999; ISBN: 0-940931-52-4) Ch. 16, pp. 163-4. For a similar estimation, see Roman Catholic historian August Bernard Hasler's *How the Pope Became Infallible: Pius IX and the Politics of Persuasion*, pp. 255-261.

<sup>47</sup> For fuller documentation, see Robbins.

## **Power through concordats, laws, universities, welfare services and a Council**

Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, associate professor of sociology at the University of Montreal, has written a book entitled *Papal Power: A Study of Vatican Control over Lay Catholic Elites*. After a perfunctory passing remark that the Inquisition's burning of heretics and the crusaders' holy wars were "but two more of the extreme forms of hierocratic coercion during the late feudal period"<sup>48</sup>, Vaillancourt makes some salient observations,

"[After 1789 when the Roman Catholic Church was] no longer able to use the repressive power of the state, Church authorities became more and more interested in using the legal and ideological power of the state through the laws enshrined in the concordats, through education of youth in schools and universities and through welfare services such as hospitals and charity organizations. In fact, the [Catholic] Church increasingly became an ideological apparatus which fulfilled for the state and for the ruling class the functions necessary for their own growth and reproduction...Inside the Church, the bishops and priests became functionaries of the central organization, with little individual freedom of their own. An awakening laity was itself turned into a pawn in the papacy's frantic efforts to retain its position of absolute power in Europe and especially in Italy...The question of control of the laity became a key issue, because any initiative of the faithful at the grass-roots level which was not tightly controlled was seen by many Church officials as leading to the ideological and organizational breaking up of the Church."<sup>49</sup>

While the Papacy no longer has the military might by which to enforce its will, it has in no way renounced its sovereign control over men's minds and bodies, as Catholic law shows. Of necessity then, to reintroduce coercion of any consequence, there must first be enacted absolute law within the Catholic system. Second, it is necessary to ensnare the civil authorities in such a way that they are again subservient to Catholic purposes.<sup>50</sup>

The Catholic Church made this major change of tactic visible in its Vatican Council II (1962-1965). That Council moved from a position of separation from other religions to their new program of false ecumenism, not only with the religions of the world, but more importantly with Bible believers in particular.<sup>51</sup> "Separated brethren" was the term coined for those who were always before considered heretics (and who in spite of the new terminology still remain on the books as heretics), while the pagan religions of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism now became

---

<sup>48</sup> Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, *Papal Power: A Study of Vatican Control over Lay Catholic Elites* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980) p. 270.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271-273. See also John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, in which he speaks of the internal re-organization of Roman Catholic laws during the nineteenth century, culminating in the *Code of Canon Law* in 1917, and the consequences thereof.

<sup>50</sup> On September 12, 2005 FoxNews.com brought to light some of the tactics mentioned by Vaillancourt in its article, "Ontario Rejects Use of Islamic Law". "Ontario, the most populous province in Canada, has allowed Catholic and Jewish faith-based tribunals to settle family law matters on a voluntary basis since 1991. The practice got little attention until Muslim leaders demanded the same rights. Officials had to decide whether to exclude one religion, or whether to scrap the religious family courts altogether. McGuinty said such courts 'threaten our common ground,' and promised his Liberal government would introduce legislation as soon as possible to outlaw them in Ontario. 'Ontarians will always have the right to seek advice from anyone in matters of family law, including religious advice,' he said, 'But no longer will religious arbitration be deciding matters of family law.'" The Catholic Church's foothold into Canadian civil law has suffered a set-back for the moment by this decision of Premier McGuinty.

<sup>51</sup> Flannery, Vatican Council II Document No. 32, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism), 21 November 1964, Vol I., § 21, p. 468.



to the Papacy accepted ways to God.<sup>52</sup> This new approach was established by the Roman Church to win the world to herself by many avenues, one main way being dialogue, the rules and goal of which she has carefully spelled out in her post-Conciliar Document No. 42 on ecumenism, which states that, “dialogue is not an end in itself...it is not just an academic discussion.”<sup>53</sup> Rather, “ecumenical dialogue...serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-Catholic] communities. In this way, it **aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible.**”<sup>54</sup>

Pope John Paul II consolidated the dictatorial powers afforded him by the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* and by purported infallibility bequeathed him by Vatican Council I. This he did by revising the 1917 *Code*, making it even more conservative than it had been. He had also been careful to appoint new cardinals and bishops in line with his centralized way of thinking.

Like another Pope Gregory VII, John Paul II was determined to build, with both Church and civil law, the structure by which the Papacy will again wield supreme might and power among the nations. The same Pope John Paul II was adamant in his efforts to update the laws of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the days of Gregory VII, the Papacy has seen the necessity of making iron and inflexible church laws before attempting to control both her subjects and those not Catholic by compulsion and coercion, if necessary. In 1983, John Paul II’s revision of the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* added greater severity to the Roman Catholic laws. For example, it was decreed the following, “The Church has an innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions.” If one rejects submission of his intellect and will to the Pope’s doctrine, there are also new decreed penalties. These are spelled out Canon 1371, Para. 1. “The following are to be punished with a just penalty: 1. a. person who...teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff...”<sup>55</sup> Canon 1312 outlines specified penalties that are to be imposed, Para. 2. “The law can establish other expiatory penalties which deprive a believer of some spiritual or **temporal good** and are consistent with the supernatural end of the Church.” The perverse vindictiveness of these laws contravenes the repeated scriptural commands that the leaders of the body of Christ are not to be despotic, as the rulers of this world are. Nonetheless even today—as it has been for the last 1,400 years—Catholic law, decrees and coercion supersede grace and the Gospel.

### **The outcome and the lesson**

From its formal inception through the decrees of the Emperor Justinian I in the sixth century, the Papacy has grown enormously, nation by nation, in wealth and political influence by means of laws, intrigue, deception, and sacraments. The Papacy has always tried to cover itself with a veneer of Christianity, yet this pagan ritual religion has ever repressed and persecuted true godliness and true believers. The history of the Papacy shows unequivocally that it is a power struc-

---

<sup>52</sup> Flannery, Vatican Council II Document No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, Vol. I, p. 739. Through papal acceptance of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, the influence of these pagan religions is being moved more effectively into the Western world via the respectability of Catholicism. Under the term New Age Movement, these old pagan religions have a home both outside of and now within the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>53</sup> Flannery, Post Vatican Council II Document No. 42, “Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue”, S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, Vol. I, p. 549.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541.

<sup>55</sup> Emphasis added by this author.

ture built on usurped authority both spiritual and temporal, forgeries, craft, persecution, a false gospel, church law, civil power, and concordats. Nonetheless, the Papacy for most of its history has succeeded in deluding millions. Present day Catholicism continues to insist that the Papacy represents God. The world, for the most part, while not necessarily believing this claim, certainly gives recognition to her shrine and to her Pontiff—for the Papacy is still a powerful force with which they must reckon.

Jesus Christ deposed the overbearing hierarchy of the Pharisees, and gave to His disciples an immediate relationship with the divine fountain of life. In the words Scripture believers are the “*elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*”<sup>56</sup>, “*are sanctified in Christ Jesus*”<sup>57</sup> and are the “*assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.*”<sup>58</sup> The Vatican, however, presents the Church as a vast hierarchical empire. It consists of the pope, cardinals, patriarchs, major archbishops, archbishops, metropolitans, coadjutor archbishops, diocesan bishops, coadjutor bishops, episcopal vicar, eparchs (bishops of the Eastern Churches), apostolic vicars, apostolic prefects, apostolic administrators and vicars general.<sup>59</sup> The early bishops of Rome were subject to the Roman Emperors, and later to French and German emperors. The taste of power, however, brought with it addictiveness, and in time, she was able to recognize no authority other than her own. She still looks upon herself as Master of all, and boldly proclaims, “The First See is judged by no one.”<sup>60</sup> Christ Jesus did not sanction any such absolute supremacy outside of Himself.

What has been so tragic in the history of the Papacy and still remains today is that this massive power system has substituted for the Gospel. Through this enormous structure men have imposed as divine their own decrees on the consciences of other men. In place of direct contact with the source of life in Christ Jesus, the hierarchical structure substitutes a sacramental system over which it has absolute control. The voice of the Church of Rome is said to be the voice of God Himself and as such, it holds influence and mastery over mind, will and soul—by tradition and by coercion, when necessary and possible.

The revealed Gospel teaches that salvation comes from God alone; that it is a gift from heaven; from the one and only Sovereign Ruler. “*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*”<sup>61</sup> Christ Jesus the Son is life; eternal life is of His own essence. He is eternal life to the true believer, to whom He gives life. Eternal life and salvation are in Him **alone** and not in any system. The difference between the clarity of the Gospel and the Roman hierarchical structure is that of light and darkness. The key question before you now is this: where do you personally stand? Can you for your own part declare with the Apostle, “*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committ-*

---

<sup>56</sup> I Peter 1:2

<sup>57</sup> I Corinthians 1:2

<sup>58</sup> Hebrews 12:23

<sup>59</sup> For more details, see *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac* 2003, “Hierarchy of the Catholic Church” (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc) pp. 279-302.

<sup>60</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English edition, New English Translation (Canon Law Society of America, 1983, 1999) Canon 1404

<sup>61</sup> I John 5:11

*ted unto Him against that day.*<sup>62</sup> Those who trust on Christ Jesus know in whom they trust. The salvation of their souls is entrusted to Him and to Him alone. An active obedient faith in Jesus Christ is the only surety that will keep a person all days of this life until that day of final reckoning. *“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard...”*<sup>63</sup>

The lesson from history that one learns concerns the very nature of the Papacy and its *modus operandi*. The mystery of iniquity spoken of in Scripture is not the evil lives of atheists, prostitutes, drunkards and the like, but rather the evil of false religion.<sup>64</sup> The Scripture reveals both a *“mystery of godliness”*<sup>65</sup> and a *“mystery of iniquity.”*<sup>66</sup> The parallels between the two are both informative and frightening. Just as the Lord God sends His angels to seal His servants in their foreheads,<sup>67</sup> so also there is another who by his agents sets a mark in the foreheads of his devotees.<sup>68</sup> Christ Jesus performed miracles, so there is another who performs false signs.<sup>69</sup> The Savior is seated upon a throne in majesty, yet there is also a seat for one in opposition to Him.<sup>70</sup> Christ Jesus has His people, His Church; there is however another who also has his synagogue and his own false teachers.<sup>71</sup> Christ Jesus is truly the Light of the world; yet in opposition to Him there is one who is *“transformed into an angel of light.”*<sup>72</sup>

### **Key feature of the Papacy and the assurance given in Christ**

Deliberate unbelief is a refusal to submit to the righteousness of God and His authority. Often what follows is the establishment of a religion that has its own means of salvation. The self-importance of the Vatican is proverbial. It attempts to establish its own righteousness by devising the importance of merit, indulgences, purgatory and the observance of its sacraments. The folly is that Christ Jesus has come and has brought in an everlasting righteousness. He is the object of faith, and His followers belong to fellowships of believers, comprising His Church. No assembly of believers can ever substitute for the Lord, and no group of believers can assume onto themselves His authority. In history, this attempted replacement has been the key factor in the life of Catholicism and its hierarchy. It is the very same issue that negated the way of salvation to the Pharisees and their followers, *“for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”*<sup>73</sup> This the Apostle calls a seeking for righteousness *“as it were by the works of*

---

<sup>62</sup> II Timothy 1:12

<sup>63</sup> Colossians 1:21-23

<sup>64</sup> Matthew 7:15, 24:24-25; II Thessalonians 2:3-12; I Timothy 4:1-2, Acts 20:29, II Peter 2:1

<sup>65</sup> I Timothy 3:16

<sup>66</sup> II Thessalonians 2:7 See J. A. Wylie, *The Papacy Is the Antichrist: A Demonstration* (Edinburgh: George M’Gibbon, no date) Photocopy of original produced by Still Waters Revival Books, Edmonton, AB, Canada.

<sup>67</sup> Revelation 7:3

<sup>68</sup> Revelation 13:16

<sup>69</sup> II Thessalonians 2:9

<sup>70</sup> Revelation 2:13

<sup>71</sup> Revelation 2:9, II Peter 2:1

<sup>72</sup> II Corinthians 11:14

<sup>73</sup> Romans 10:3

*the law*<sup>74</sup>, not directly, “but as it were” by the works of the law, substituting one thing for another.

As human creatures, each one of us has a supernatural and eternal end. We are therefore bound to answer to the Lord God in the total obedience that He requires. We soon discover, however, that all our efforts at achieving perfect obedience are fruitless, and that of ourselves it is impossible to meet the standards of divine perfection. This righteousness is found in the Lord Christ alone, who in the words of the Apostle, “*is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*”<sup>75</sup> Christ Jesus the Lord totally satisfied the justice of God so that we might be partakers of righteousness by faith, “*for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”<sup>76</sup> It is insufficient to be not guilty; we must also be actually righteous in God’s sight. Not only all sin must be forgiven, but also all righteousness must be fulfilled. All the perfection that God requires of us is found in Him on whom we trust. The actual obedience, which Christ lived in keeping whole law of God, is the righteousness whereby we are saved. If you are found in Him, not having your own righteousness but rather having the righteousness that is of God by faith, then indeed your life is hid with Christ in God and when Christ shall appear, you also shall appear with Him in glory.<sup>77</sup>

Richard Bennett of “Berean Beacon” WebPage: <http://www.bereanbeacon.org>

Permission is given by the author to copy this article if it is done in its entirety without any changes.

Permission is also given post this article in its entirety on Internet WebPages.

---

<sup>74</sup> Romans 9: 32

<sup>75</sup> I Corinthians 1:30

<sup>76</sup> II Corinthians 5:21

<sup>77</sup> Colossians 3:3-4 “*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*”