

Ep. 13 – The Papacy (2)

PLAN OF THE CONFERENCES:

1. The primacy of Peter
 - a. Fittingness
 - b. Proof from scripture
 - c. Proof from Church Fathers, ancient liturgies
2. This primacy is perpetuated in his successor, the Pope, bishop of Rome
 - a. Arguments *a priori* that it must have been perpetuated
 - b. Historical proof:
 - i. Peter established his See at Rome and died there
 - ii. The bishops of Rome always claimed to be Peter's successors in the primacy
 - iii. Acknowledgment of this primacy by the Church (by appealing to Rome to adjudicate conflicts and condemn heresies; by the universal adoption of papal decisions; by the submission of ecumenical councils to the directives of the Pope; etc.)

2. Perpetuation of the Primacy in the Bishop of Rome

ARGUMENTS *A PRIORI*

Christ established a hierarchy and intended it to endure until the end of time. The Apostles chose successors who became the diocesan bishops, as we see from the pastoral letters of St. Paul and St. Ignatius of Antioch. Why would St. Peter not have a successor who would continue to govern the universal Church in his stead? If Peter, in his role of confirming his brethren in the faith, is the rock or foundation-stone of the Church, how could the Church continue without her foundation, without someone set in charge of the universal Church to shepherd it and ensure that the gates of hell do not prevail against it?

1. **Negative argument** from the continuation of the hierarchy in general: why would the petrine primacy be the only element or defining characteristic of the original hierarchy not to persist?
 - a. The hierarchy in general continues:
 - i. We see that Christ established a hierarchy in his church (he chooses 12 apostles, 72 disciples; he sets Peter over the other apostles): and he commissioned them to preach the gospel to the whole world.
 - ii. This is an enormous project that cannot be fully accomplished in their lifetime, and will require them to choose collaborators—as St. Paul

chooses Timothy, Titus, etc.—and eventually successors; it is inevitable.

- iii. **A priori:** Why would Christ establish a well-defined hierarchy only for it to collapse or peter out? It would be irrational and contrary to his infinite wisdom not to provide for the future (especially given his promise to be with the Church « all days, even to the end of the world » [Mt. 28]).
 - iv. It would also be unreasonable for Christ to create **false expectations** by establishing one form of government only for it to be replaced by another form of government completely different—whether this new form of government be a pure aristocracy [think of the Orthodox where the patriarchs are heads of autocephalous churches], or even a democracy [think of most Protestant denominations, where the rulers—if they can even be said to rule; they are rather presidents of the assembly—are elected by popular vote.
 - v. **A posteriori** (historical confirmation): We see already in the pastoral Epistles of St. Paul that he is making provision for the continuance of the hierarchy, giving instructions to Timothy and Titus on how to select worthy candidates to the offices of bishop and deacon; he instructs Timothy not to rashly lay hands on any man, and he tells Titus that he is left in Crete to set things in order and ordain priests in every city.
 - vi. We see in the many pastoral epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch, martyred at the start of the second century, that Christian community is ruled by a bishop assisted by his presbyterate and his deacons.
- b. So, why would the primacy of Peter be an exception?
- i. Why would we grant that other elements of the hierarchy established by Christ—such as the body of bishops who succeed to the Apostolic college—are willed by Him to continue until the end of time, but not the Petrine primacy?
- c. **Fittingness** — In fact, everything that we have said in the previous conference about the fittingness of a monarchical constitution for the Church serves as an argument for the perpetuation of Peter's primacy.

- i. A monarch is more apt to represent God, whereas a democratically elected legislative body is more apt to represent « the people. »
 - ii. A monarchy is more efficacious for maintaining unity in belief and action.
 - iii. This is what God has historically preferred.
 - iv. Our Lord has promised that there would be « one fold and one shepherd. » He has made Peter the universal shepherd in his stead: « feed my sheep, feed my lambs. »
 - d. If the Petrine primacy disappears with Peter, the Church loses her monarchical constitution and degenerates into another form of government; but God has always shown a preference for monarchical government for the reasons we have explained. A monarchy is what is best for the Church.
2. **Positive argument** from the nature of the primacy – In fact, if we consider the nature of the Petrine primacy, we see that Christ *could not* have established it as a merely temporal institution destined to be « phased out. »
- a. Christ calls Peter the rock upon which He will build his Church, and thanks to whose stability the gates of hell will never prevail against it. Who lays a foundation only to change it out partway through building the edifice? As long as the building stands, the foundation must remain the same beneath it. Especially since it is precisely this foundation that makes the Church hell-proof, so to speak.
 - b. Now, Christ knew that Peter was a mortal man; far from promising him immortality, he predicted Peter’s martyrdom. Obviously, then, Christ did not establish Peter as the foundation-stone *insofar* as he is this individual; it is rather the petrine *office* itself that is the foundation of the Church.
 - c. With equal reason, Christ did not entrust to Peter the keys of the kingdom only to take them back after his death; he did not appoint Peter to feed his entire flock only to leave the flock without a universal shepherd after Peter dies.
3. Confirmation from a prophecy of Ezechiel:
- a. Ez. 37 : « Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take of the children of Israel from the midst of the nations whither they are gone: and I will gather them on every side, and will bring them to their own land. And I will make them **one nation** in the land on the mountains of Israel, and **one king** shall be

king over them all: and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided any more into two kingdoms... And **my servant David** shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd: they shall walk in my judgments, and shall keep my commandments, and shall do them... and David my servant shall be their prince for ever.

- b. Who is David here?
 - i. Not the historical David who is dead, but one of whom David was an archetype. (Somewhat as John the Baptist was prophesied to come « in the spirit and power of Elias » [Lk. 1,17] and Christ told his disciples, « I say to you that Elias also is come » [Mk. 9,17]).
 - ii. David is firstly Christ: « the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father » (Lk. 1,32).
 - iii. But David was promised everlasting successors: cf. Ps. 88: « I have sworn to David my servant: Thy seed will I settle for ever. And I will build up thy throne unto generation and generation. » —And in fact this prophecy was fulfilled: there was always a descendant of David to rule over the house of Juda (an uninterrupted succession of some 400 years) until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity, which is a figure of the end of the world.
 - iv. Now, Christ has no successor: « for that he continueth for ever, [he] hath an everlasting priesthood » (Heb. 7,24)
 - v. But Christ chose a vicar, Peter, to feed his sheep: to be, in his place, the new David, the universal shepherd of his earthly flock. And Peter can have successors. How else will Christ continue to rule the flock visibly if not through the successors of Peter?
 - vi. As David had successors until the destruction of Jerusalem, Peter will have successors until the end of the world.

HISTORICAL PROOF THAT PETER ESTABLISHED HIS SEE AT ROME

1. It is part of longstanding Church tradition that Peter established his see (or episcopal chair) first at Antioch, and later Rome.
2. Before proving this latter, the question arises: why Rome?
 - a. First, for practical reasons: the Apostles preferred to evangelize the big cities (as Christ had made, not Nazareth, but Capharnaum, a prosperous trade city,

- the center of his missionary work) in order to reach the greatest number of people.
- i. In this way Christ's *modus operandi* was quite different from that of St. John the Baptist, who remained always in the desert; Christ however associated with everyone, even eating « with publicans and sinners. »
 - ii. The country people (*pagani*, from *pagus* for countryside) were the last to be evangelized; hence « pagan » became synonymous with non-Christian).
 - iii. This is also very different from the attitude of the Amish and Mennonites...
- b. Rome is the center of an empire: convert Rome, you will convert the whole empire.
- i. We see the same tactic used by later missionaries: e.g., St. Patrick in Ireland goes straight to the kings to convert them.
- c. Secondly, this is the fulfillment of an OT prophecy.
- i. Dan, 2: Nabuchodonosor has a dream where he sees a statue whose head is of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. Then a stone is cut out of a mountain without hands and strikes the feet of the statue, resulting in its total collapse, and in its place the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.
 - ii. Daniel's interpretation: the four parts of the mountain represent four kingdoms that succeed each other chronologically, each one inferior in quality to the previous one (although stronger and more universal). « But in the days of those kingdoms, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people: and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms: and itself shall stand for ever. »
 - iii. These four kingdoms are commonly understood to be (cf. Taylor Marshall's *The Eternal City*—the dates correspond to when these empires dominated Judea):
 1. Babylonian Empire (ca. 587-539 B.C.)
 2. Medo-Persian Empire (ca. 539-331 B.C.)
 3. Greek Empire (ca. 331-168 B.C.)

4. Roman Empire (ca. 63 B.C.-A.D. 70)

- iv. The rock obviously represents the kingdom of Christ, a messianic kingdom which strikes down the pagan Roman Empire and establishes itself in its place.
 - 1. The mistake of the Jews was thinking that this new empire would be political rather than religious in character.
 - 2. But they were right that the Messianic kingdom was destined to destroy and replace the Roman empire.
 - 3. And that is precisely what happened—there was a combat to the death, Rome perceiving Christianity as a threat and struggling for three centuries to suppress it; then Christianity triumphing, becoming not only tolerated (Constantine, 313) but established as the official religion (Theodosius, 380) and the Empire in the West disintegrating (476, Romulus Augustulus deposed by a Germanic barbarian king, Odoacer) until the Pope in Rome was the *de facto* ruler of that territory (452, Pope Leo saves Rome from Attila the Hun; by 590, when Gregory the Great becomes Pope, he is for all practical purposes the secular ruler).
- v. So, when Peter goes to Rome and sets up his episcopal throne there, he is simply fulfilling what has been prophesied: the prince of the Apostles is bringing the Empire of Christ to the capital of the Pagan Roman Empire: the battle begins...

3. Historical evidence:

- a. Scripture: Peter writes (1 Pt. 5,15): « The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you. And so doth my son, Mark. » Babylon = code language for Rome, the new Babylon.
 - i. Accords with St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Adv. Haereses* III, 1, 1, c. 189): « Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. »
 - ii. Clement of Alexandria (c. 200): « When Peter preached the Word publicly at Rome and declared the gospel by the Spirit, many who

were present requested that Mark, who had been a long time his follower and who remembered his sayings, should write down what had been proclaimed » (recorded in Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 6, 14:1)

b. Fathers ([source](#)):

- i. 110 – Ignatius of Antioch: « Not as Peter and Paul did, do I command you [Romans]. » (*Letter to the Romans* 4:3)
- ii. 189 – Irenaeus of Lyons: « But since it would be too long to enumerate ... the succession of all the churches, we shall...[point] out here the succession of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul... For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority (*propter potentiolem principalitatem*)... (*Adv. Haereses* III, 3, 2)
- iii. 200 – Tertullian: « But if you are near Italy, you have Rome, where authority is at hand for us too. What a happy church that is, on which the apostles poured out their whole doctrine with their blood; where Peter had a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John [the Baptist, by being beheaded] » (*Demurrer Against the Heretics* 36 [A.D. 200]).
- iv. 367 – Optatus: « You cannot deny that you are aware that in the city of Rome the episcopal chair was given first to Peter; the chair in which Peter sat, the same who was head—that is why he is also called Cephas [‘Rock’]—of all the apostles; the one chair in which unity is maintained by all » (*The Schism of the Donatists* 2:2)

c. Archaeology:

- i. Peter’s primacy:
 1. Peter is represented on archeological monuments 212 times, then Paul 47.
 2. He is recognizable from the form of his beard and hair. From the end of the 2nd century he is represented with the keys, as a teacher, or as sitting on a rock and reading; from the 4th century, as sitting on an episcopal chair (*cathedra*) and teaching.

3. In addition to the 212 times already mentioned, Peter is often represented under the image of Moses.
 - a. 30x – Christ is giving Peter a scroll entitled « the law of God »
 - b. 100x – Peter is striking a rock with his staff and waters flow out, often with Roman soldiers drinking from them (this imagery is found from the beginning of the 2nd century in Rome and countless other cities)
 - c. Sometimes Peter is shown carrying sheep (Moses was a shepherd).
- ii. Peter buried in Rome:
1. Tradition always held that Peter, after his martyrdom (according to St. Jerome he was crucified upside down in Nero's circus), was given a poor man's burial in the pagan necropolis on the Vatican Hill. The Emperor Constantine erected a marble monument over his grave. St. Peter's basilica was built over the monument.
 2. Eusebius of Caesaria wrote in the 4th century: « It is recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and Peter, likewise, was crucified, during the reign [of the Emperor Nero]. The account is confirmed by the names of Peter and Paul over the cemeteries there, which remain to the present time. And it is confirmed also by a stalwart man of the Church, Gaius by name, who lived in the time of Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome. [c. 220 a.d.] This Gaius, in a written disputation with Proclus, the leader of the sect of Cataphrygians, says this of the places in which the remains of the afore-mentioned apostles were deposited: 'I can point out the trophies of the apostles. For if you are willing to go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church'" (*Disputation with Proclus* [A.D. 198] in Eusebius, *Church History* 2:25:5)
 3. This tradition was confirmed by the excavations performed beneath the Vatican in the 1940's under Pius XII. The excavations revealed a necropolis, and directly under the high

altar, a memorial building (*aedicula*) and, in a niche inside one of the walls of the memorial, some bone fragments along with fragments of fabric dyed purple and interwoven with threads of gold. On a nearby wall fragment was discovered the inscription « Πετρος εν(ι) » meaning Peter is inside. — One can read more in the work, « [The Fisherman's Tomb](#) »; also, a summary [here](#).

iii. Even the rationalists admit it.

1. Harnack: « Peter's martyrdom at Rome was attacked at one time as the result of the a priori prejudices of the Protestants and later as a result of the a priori prejudices of the critics... But that both were in error is now clear as day to every scholar who doesn't deliberately blind himself to facts. » *Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, I, 244; 709.

THE BISHOPS OF ROME CLAIMED TO SUCCEED TO PETER IN THE PRIMACY AND WERE ACKNOWLEDGED AS SUCH BY THE WHOLE CHURCH

1. The bishops of Rome claimed the primacy, first of all, by exercising it. Early papal interventions include:
 - a. Letter of Clement to the Corinthians (end of 1st century):
 - i. Toward the end of the 1st century, Clement, the successor of Peter after Linus and Anacletus, sent a letter to the Church of Corinth correcting abuses and commanding them to submit to their legitimate pastors.
 - ii. He writes: « You, therefore, the prime movers of the schism, submit to the presbyters... But should any disobey what has been said by Him [Christ] through us, let them understand that they will entangle themselves in transgression... You certainly will give us the keenest pleasure if you prove obedient to what we have written through the Holy Spirit... We are sending trustworthy and prudent men... that they may be witnesses between you and us » (47.6, 57.1, 59.1-2, 63.2-3)
 - iii. St. Irenaeus calls this « a most powerful letter » (Adv. Haereses, III.3.3).
 - iv. Even Harnack (a rationalist) admits: « This letter proves that already at the end of the first century the Roman community . . . watched over the far distant communities with motherly concern, and that at the

time it knew how to use language which is an expression all at once of duty, of love, and of authority. » —*Dogmengeschichte*, I (3rd ed.), 444.

b. **Easter controversy** (end of 2nd century) :

- i. **Pope Victor I** (189-199) wanted to fix the date of the celebration of Easter for the whole Church.
- ii. The churches of the Roman province of Asia (proconsular Asia) were celebrating the commemoration of our Lord's death, rather than his resurrection, and always on the 14th day of the Jewish lunar calendar month Nisan, no matter what day of the week it fell on. Pope Victor, after consulting with the leading bishops of other districts and learning that they celebrated Easter, that is, the Resurrection, always on the first Sunday after the 14th Nisan, as Rome did, decided to impose this same practice on proconsular Asia.
- iii. He threatened their bishops with penalties, even excommunication, if they did not comply (cf. Eusebius HE 5.24). There was initially some resistance, but eventually all the churches fell into line.

c. **Absolution controversy** (c. 220 AD)

- i. In the early Church the penitential discipline was very rigorous; often great sinners had to do a lifetime of penance and were only absolved on their deathbed. Some rigorists, like Tertullian (cf. his *De Penitentia*), wanted to exclude certain sins—notably idolatry, murder and fornication—from forgiveness entirely.
- ii. Pope Callistus (217-222) issued a decree affirming that the Church has the power to forgive all sins.
- iii. Tertullian reacted: « I also hear that an edict, indeed a peremptory one, has been issued. The sovereign pontiff, that is, the bishop of bishops, issues an edict: « I forgive the sins of adultery and fornication for those who have done penance » (*De Pudicitia* I, 6).

d. **Baptism controversy** (c. 255 AD)

- i. Regarding the re-baptism of heretics, **Pope Stephen I** issued a decree against St. Cyprian and other African bishops reminding them of the « rank of his episcopate » and insisting that he was the « successor of Peter, upon whom the foundations of the Church were placed » (St. Cyprian *Epistula* 74, 1 and *Epistula Firmiliani ad Cyprianum*, 17)

- ii. Once again, the Church followed the Pope's view (recognizing the validity of baptism conferred by heretics) rather than St. Cyprian's (who believed that heretics should be rebaptised).
2. Popes have the right to **adjudicate disciplinary cases**:
- a. **Pope Julius I** (337-352) insisted that **St. Athanasius** be restored to his See of Alexandria; both Athanasius and the usurper Eusebius had appealed to him. He did the same for other bishops that Eusebius had deposed.
 - i. Pope Julius wrote to the party of Eusebius: « Do you not know that the usual procedure is that letters be first sent to us and that a just decision be passed from here? If, then, any such suspicion fell upon the bishop there, notice of it should have been sent to the bishop of this place. » (St. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 20; 35).
 - ii. **The Council of Sardica** (343/4) in Moesia had already codified this right of appeal to Rome as follows: « When any bishop has been deposed by the judgment of those bishops who have sees in neighboring places, and he shall announce that his case is to be examined in the city of Rome, no other bishop shall in any wise be ordained to his see after the appeal of him who is apparently deposed, unless the case shall have been determined in the judgment of the Roman bishop » (*Mansi* III, 32)
 - iii. Socrates, an early church historian, records: « At the same time, Paul, the bishop of Constantinople, Asclepas of Gaza, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Lucius of Adrianople, all having been charged with various offences and evicted from their churches, arrived in the imperial city. There each presented his case before Julius, bishop of the city of Rome, and he, in accordance with the church of Rome's special prerogative, sent them back to the East backed up by commendatory letters. He restored to each of them his see and at the same time reprimanded those who had been so rash as to depose them. » (*Historia Ecclesiastica* II, 15).
 - iv. Sozoman, another early church historian, records: « the Bishop of the Romans, having examined the accusations against them (St. Athanasius and other Eastern bishops), and having found that they all agreed with the faith of the Nicene Synod, admitted them to

communion with himself. And since the care of all belonged to him because of the rank of his see, he restored to each one his Church » (*Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 8; cf. PG 67.1052).

- b. St. Athanasius narrates the following: « When Dionysius the bishop [Patriarch of Alexandria, d. 264]... moved by zeal for religion, had written to Ammonius and Euphranor against the Sabellian heresy, some of the brethren... betook themselves to Rome and accused him before his namesake, Dionysius, bishop of Rome. When he [Dionysius of Alexandria] had heard these things, he sent a letter to Dionysius [of Rome] to acquaint him of the things of which he was accused by these men. In order to prove his innocence, Dionysius [of Alexandria] set about at once to edit the books which he entitled *Elenchus* and *Apologia* » (St. Athanasius, *In Sententiam Dionysii*, PG 25.499).
 - c. **St. John Chrysostom**, having been unjustly deposed by a council of bishops convened by the patriarch of Alexandria, wrote to **Pope Innocent I** (402-417) : « I beg you to write that these deeds so unjustly perpetrated have no force—as, in fact, they have no force by their very nature—and that they who have been caught acting in this unjust fashion be subjected to the penalties prescribed by ecclesiastical law » (*Epistula prima ad Innocentem*, I).
3. Popes have the right to **settle doctrinal questions**:
- a. **Pope Liberius** (366), having returned to Rome from exile, condemned the Arian creed published at Constantinople and received the abjuration of 59 bishops who had subscribed to the heretical creed.
 - b. Moreover, **Pope Damasus** (366-384) overturned the Semi-Arian Council of Rimini (359) and published a formula of faith that all the eastern bishops were obliged to subscribe to.
 - i. Damasus also condemned the eastern heretics Eustatius and Apollinaris and deposed Maximus the Cynic from the See of Constantinople, confirming the election of Nestarius in his stead (Jaffé, *Regist. Episcoporum*, 237, 238).
 - ii. In a decree of 382 Pope Damasus wrote: « The Church of Rome was not raised above the other churches by any synodal decree, but received the primacy by virtue of the words of Our Lord and Savior recorded in the Gospel: *Thou art Peter*, etc. » (PL 59.159).

- iii. **St. Jerome** writes: « Several years ago, while I was assisting Damasus, bishop of the City of Rome, in the office of the Church archives, I used to reply to synodical matters referred both from the East and from the West » (*Epist. ad Ageruchiam*, PL 22.1952).
- iv. **St. Basil the Great** wrote to Damasus in 371 as follows: « I have looked upon the visit of Your Mercifulness as the only possible solution of our difficulties... I have been constrained to beseech you by letter to be moved to help us... In this I am by no means making any novel request, but am only asking what has been customary » (*Epist. ad Damasum*, PG 34.434). In another letter he writes: « I implore you... to write to all the churches of the East, that those who have perverted these doctrines are in communion with you if they amend, but that if they contentiously determine to abide by their innovations, you are separated from them » (*Epist. ad Damasum*, PG 32.982).
- c. **Pope Innocent I** (417) condemned the heresy of Pelagius who denied the existence of original sin and the necessity of grace and baptism.
 - i. Pelagius had already been summoned before various bishops' councils, but these councils produced contradictory verdicts. Finally two African synods (at Carthage and Mileve) appealed to Rome to settle the question.
 - ii. In reply, Pope Innocent began by stating that the resolutions of provincial synods have no binding force until they are confirmed by the Apostolic See; then he explained Catholic doctrine, condemned the error of Pelagius, and excommunicated him.
 - iii. St. Augustine, who had participated in the synod of Mileve, announced the Pope's decision from the pulpit of his own church in Hippo: « Two synods having written to the Apostolic See about this matter, the replies have come back; the question is settled (*causa finita est*—hence the saying, *Roma locuta, causa finita est*) » (Serm., cxxxi, 10 in P. L., XXXVIII, 734).
- d. **Pope St. Celestine** (422-432) condemned the heretic Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, for teaching that there are two persons in Christ and Mary is not the mother of God.

- i. St. Cyril of Alexandria writes to Celestine, describing the errors of Nestorius, and concludes: « But we do not plainly and openly separate ourselves from his communion before indicating these things to your Holiness. Deign, therefore, to declare to us what seems good to You, and tell us whether we should be in communion with him for some time, or whether we can freely declare that no one should be in communion with one who thinks and teaches such things. For it is necessary that the decision of your Holiness on this matter be manifested in writing, both to the most beloved of God and most loving bishops of Macedonia, and also to all the prelates of the East » (P.L., *Celestine*, letter 8).
 - ii. Celestine writes back to Cyril: « If we cannot correct him as we would like to, we must remove him from the sheepfold. Let there be hope of pardon to him if he corrects himself... Unless he do this, let your Holiness know, who are about to provide for that Church, that he is by all means to be removed from our body... (letter 11).
 - iii. Celestine writes to Nestorius: « Know plainly, then, that this is Our sentence: that, unless you preach concerning God our Christ what the church of Rome, and of Alexandria, and the whole Catholic Church holds—even as the most holy church of the city of Constantinople held perfectly up until you—and, with a clear written profession, given within ten days, which are to be numbered from the day on which you receive notice of this, you repudiate this perfidious novelty, which strives to separate what the venerable Scripture joins; you are cast off from the communion of the universal Catholic Church » (letter 13).
- e. **Pope Leo the Great** (450) condemned the heresy of Eutyches (that there is only one nature in Christ) and required the Patriarch of Constantinople, Anatolius, to clear himself of suspicion of heresy by signing Leo's own profession of faith, the « Tome. »
- i. Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, had summoned Eutyches to come clear himself of suspicion of heresy. He was found guilty and condemned. Dioscoros, patriarch of Alexandria, held his own synod in which he cleared Eutyches. Eutyches also appealed to Rome. Pope Leo wanted to hear Flavian's side. Flavian wrote to him and set forth the accusations against Eutyches.

- ii. Leo replied to Flavian in a document called the « Tome » in which he approved Flavian's action against Eutyches and declared « that which the Catholic Church universally believes and teaches about the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord » (cf. Reply to the emperor Theodosius of June 13, 449).
 - iii. Meanwhile, Dioscoros (patriarch of Alexandria) held his own council at Ephesus where he deposed Flavian, who died in exile (after sending off another appeal to Rome for help). The emperor Theodosius appoints a successor to Flavian: Anatolius.
 - iv. Leo refused to recognize Anatolius until he cleared himself of suspicion of heresy by signing Leo's « Tome » in the presence of his clergy and the people, which Anatolius does.
4. Popes preside over **ecumenical councils**:
- a. The Council of **Ephesus** (431)
 - i. Celestine appoints St. Cyril to preside over the council as his delegate until the arrival of his legates.
 - ii. When the papal legates arrive, they read to the council a letter of Pope Celestine, saying: « In our solicitude we have sent the holy brethren, our fellow-ministers... Bishop Arcadius, Bishop Projectus and the Presbyter Philip to take part in the proceedings and to carry out what we have already decreed. We do not doubt that Your Holiness will give assent thereunto » (*Epist. ad Synodum Ephesinam*, PL 50.511).
 - iii. In the second session, the priest Phillip addressed the bishops as follows: « No one has the slightest doubt—in fact, it has been known in all ages—that our most blessed St. Peter, prince and chief of the apostles, pillar of faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ. He continues to live and to rule to this very day, and always will, in the person of his successors. It is his present successor and vicar, our holy and most blessed Pope Celestine, bishop, who has sent us to this holy synod to make up for his absence » (*Mansi*, IV, col. 1295).
 - iv. The bishops of the council prefaced their condemnation of Nestorius in these words: « Constrained by the sacred canons and the letter of our holy father and co-minister, Celestine, the bishop of the church at

Rome... we have necessarily reached this painful decision against him [Nestorius]. »

b. The Council of **Chalcedon** (451)

- i. In 449 the emperor Theodosius called a council at Ephesus and made Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria and a proponent of the Eutychian heresy, preside. The papal legates were treated contemptuously and were not even allowed to read the « Tome » or letter of Pope Leo that they had brought. In reaction, the Pope dubbed the council a « Robber council » and annulled its acts. In its stead another council of about 600 Eastern bishops was convened at Chalcedon.
- ii. Bp. Paschasinus, the senior legate of Pope Leo I, upon arriving at Chalcedon and seeing Dioscorus sitting among the council fathers, addressed the assembly of bishops as follows: « We hold in our hands letters from that most blessed and Apostolic man, the Pope of Rome, who is head of all the churches. His Apostolic Excellency commands by these letters that Dioscorus shall not have a seat in the council and shall only be admitted for a hearing. It is necessary that these instructions be carried out. » Then turning to the imperial officers, he continued: « Your Excellencies will order this man to leave, or we go out. »
- iii. When asked for the reason of this action, Lucentius, another legate, replied: « Because he has dared to hold a council without authority from the Apostolic See, a thing that was never done before, and is not lawful to be done » (cf. *Mansi*, VI, coll. 579-582).
- iv. Accordingly, Dioscorus was removed from his place and given a place in the nave of the church.
- v. On the second day, the legates read the Tome of Leo, to which the council fathers respond, « It is Peter who says this through Leo. This is what we all of us believe. This is the faith of the Apostles. »
- vi. The council adopted Leo's formula: « in Christ there are two natures united, inconvertible, inseparable. »
- vii. The council fathers pronounced sentence against Diodorus in these terms: « Leo, the most holy and blessed Archbishop of the great and elder Rome, through us and through this holy Synod, together with the

thrice blessed and most praiseworthy Apostle Peter, who is the rock and support of the Catholic Church and the foundation of true faith, has stripped Dioscorus of his episcopal dignity, and also removed him from all priestly ministration » (cf. *Mansi*, VI, col. 1047).

viii. The council fathers write afterward to Leo, « you led us as the head guides the limbs of the body, » and lament how Dioscoros « raved insanely against even him to whom the care of the vineyard has been entrusted by the Saviour, that is, against even your Apostolic Holiness » (cf. Phillip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*).

c. The Fourth Council of Constantinople (870)

i. Pope Adrian II required the bishops of this council to subscribe to a profession of faith drawn up by **Pope Hormisdas** (517) in the following terms: « ...in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept unsullied... Following, as we have said before, the Apostolic See in all things and proclaiming all its decisions, we endorse and approve all the letters which Pope St. Leo wrote concerning the Christian religion. And so I hope I may deserve to be associated with you in the one communion which the Apostolic See proclaims, in which the whole, true, and perfect security of the Christian religion resides. »

ii. In the year 518, Pope Hormisdas had obliged the Emperor Justin, the Patriarch of Constantinople Severus, and all the bishops of the empire to sign this same formula, thus ending the Acacian schism.

APPENDIX: RECOGNITION OF PAPAL PRIMACY IN THE EASTERN LITURGY

1. From Dom Gueranger's *Liturgical Year*:

The Greek Church, in her Menæa, has an Office in honour of St. Leo: we take from it the following stanzas. As they were composed before the Schism, they show us that the ancient Church of Constantinople believed the Supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, and that it is not the Latins that have changed the Faith. The Greeks keep the Feast of St. Leo on the 18th of February.

HYMN (*Die XVIII Februarii*.)

O happy Pontiff! glorious Leo! thou hast been made companion of the faithful Priests and martyrs; for thou wast most invincible in battle, and immovable as a tower and fortress of

religion. Thou proclaimest, with most perfect orthodoxy and wisdom, the unspeakable generation of Christ. O ruler of Orthodoxy, teacher of religion and holiness, light of the whole earth, divinely inspired glory of true believers, wise Leo! thou enlightenedst all men by thy teachings, O harp of the Holy Ghost!

Heir of the See of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, thou presidedst over the Church: thou hadst his spirit, and wast inflamed with zeal for the faith. Beaming with most bright light, thou, holy Leo, didst admirably preach the ineffable and divine Incarnation, teaching the two Natures, and the two wills of the Incarnate God. Resplendent with the knowledge of divine truths, thou scatteredst on all sides the brightness of orthodoxy, and dispelledst the darkness of heresy. Departing this life, thou, O blessed one! now dwellest in the Light that knows no setting...

Thou, as a dazzling sun, didst rise in the west: thou wisely dispelledst the error of Eutyches, who mingled and confused the two Natures, and that of Nestorius, who divided them. Thou taughtest us to adore one Christ in two Natures, inseparably, unchangeably, unconfusedly united. Inspired of God, thou appearedst to the people of God as another Moses, showing them the commandments of religion written, as it were, on tables. Thou exclaimedst in the assembly of the venerable Masters: "Praise, O ye Priests! and bless, and extol Christ forever!"

2. From Adrian Fortescue's *The Orthodox Eastern Church*:

St. Martin occupied the chair of St. Peter from 649-655. In a synod at the Lateran (649) he rejected two decrees (the *Ekthesis* of Heraclius and the *Typos* of Constans II), in which the Emperors had drawn up a compromise between the Catholic faith and the Monothelite heresy. In 653 the Emperor Constans II (641-668) sent to seize him, had him dragged first to the Island Naxos, then to Constantinople, where he was condemned for high treason and banished to the Chersonese. Here he died from the effects of the most barbarous ill-treatment, torture, and the want even of bread, on September 16, 655; and he is honoured as a martyr for the faith by East and West. We keep his feast on November 12th, they on April 13th and September 20th, and they sing in his honour this hymn :

By what name shall I call thee, oh Martin ! Shall I call thee the glorious ruler of the Orthodox Faith for all ? Or the sacred chief of divine dogmas, unstained by error ? . . . Or the most true reprover of heresy ? . . . We know that thou wast the foundation of bishops, pillar of the Orthodox Faith, teacher of religion. . . . Thou didst adorn the divine See of Peter, and since thou from this divine Rock didst guard the Church unmoved, so now with him (St. Peter) art thou glorified.

On St. Gregory the Great's [590-604] feast they have even more to say about the Roman See:

Most sacred Pastor, thou art the successor of the see and also of the zeal of the first one (τοῦ κορυφαίου, St. Peter), cleansing the people and bringing them to God. Successor of the throne of the prince of the choir of disciples, whence thou dost by thy teaching as with a torch enlighten the faithful, oh Gregory ! When the first of Churches embraced thee, she watered all the earth that is beneath the sun with divine teaching. Hail, torch of religion, who dost light up all the world with the glory of thy words ! Lighthouse, who dost call back to the shore those who are tossed among the waves of error ! Instrument sounded by the breath of the Holy Ghost !

They have a great devotion to St. Gregory Dialogos, as they call him ; and both hymns are an example of a very honourable conservatism, that will not alter their venerable office, in spite of later quarrels against the « divine See of Peter, » the « first of Churches. »

APPENDIX 2: THE ORTHODOX SCHISM – SOME OBSERVATIONS

[The Orthodox Schism – Raymond Taouk](#) :

Many of the East's most revered Church Fathers and Patriarchs sought refuge in Rome (theologically and/or geographically), for example: St. Athanasius (339 to 342), St. Basil the Great (371), St. John Chrysostom (404), St. Cyril of Jerusalem (430), and St. Flavian of Constantinople (449)...

All three of the great Eastern sees were under the jurisdiction of heretical patriarchs simultaneously during five different periods: 357-60 (Arian), 475-77, 482-96, and 512-17 (all Monophysite), and 640-42 (Monothelite): a total of 26 years, or 9% of the time from 357 to 642. At least two out of three of the sees suffered under the yoke of a heterodox "shepherd" simultaneously for 112 years, or 33% of the period from 341 to 681 (or, two-thirds heretical for one-third of the time), and at least 248 of these same years saw one or more of the sees burdened with sub-orthodox ecclesiastical leaders: an astonishing 73% rate (277 years, or 53% from 190 to 715). Thus the East, as represented by its three greatest bishops, was at least one-third heretical for nearly three-quarters of the time over a 340-year span.

To understand the events that lead up to the Schism of the East it must be understood that before Constantine had chosen Byzantium as his new capital, the Episcopal see of that city depended upon the Metropolitan of Heraclea. But no sooner had that city

received from the great emperor the title of « The second Rome, eldest and beloved daughter of the old Rome, » (Constantine was referring to the Old Pagan Rome, which was the Center of the Roman Empire) than ambition arose in the hearts of its Bishops, proud of the favor which they enjoyed at Court and twisting to their advantage the third Canon of the first Council of Constantinople (381), which conferred upon the Bishop of Byzantium « the primacy of honor second to that of the Bishop of Rome, » they did not wait long until they claimed to possess over the Eastern Church also the primacy of jurisdiction which had always belonged to the Roman Pontiffs. Claiming that Constantinople should be as exalted in ecclesiastical as it was in political matters.

Already in the fifth century, the Pope, St. Leo, who had occasion to protest against the usurpation of the rights of the Church of Rome, had said with much truth: « the presence of the Emperor may make a royal residence, but he cannot create an Apostolic See, divine things not being patterned after human concerns. »

Nevertheless despite the ever-increasing ambition of the Bishops of Constantinople, the confirmation of every new Patriarch by the Pope continued, before and after Photius, to be considered, if not indispensable, at least of great importance for the newly-elected Bishop, to increase his prestige and as a proof of his orthodoxy. Thus Photius himself, though he had usurped the See of Constantinople, did not fail to send to Rome an embassy to request confirmation from Pope Nicholas I.

[Catholic Answers, « Eastern Orthodoxy »](#) :

During the years of conflict between East and West, the Roman pontiff remained firm, defending the Catholic faith against heresies and unruly or immoral secular powers, especially the Byzantine emperor. The first conflict came when Emperor Constantius appointed an Arian heretic as patriarch. Pope Julian excommunicated the patriarch in 343, and Constantinople remained in schism until John Chrysostom assumed the patriarchate in 398.

Ironically, in the Church's eighth-century struggle against the Iconoclastic heresy (which sought to eliminate all sacred images), it was the pope and the Western bishops mainly who fought for the Catholic practice of venerating icons, which is still very much a part of Orthodox liturgy and spirituality. The patriarch of Constantinople sided with the heretical, iconoclastic emperors.