

HISTORY DEBUNKS PAPAL SUPREMACY

The Roman Catholic Church claims that the popes have ruled the Church since Jesus made Peter the first pope. History shows that the Church is lying.

The Church likes to quote the early proverb that when Rome has spoken the matter is at an end. But it speaks of Rome not the pope! And Rome being the best authority or source of information about the faith does not imply that it is the head of the Church or infallible.

Suppose the bishops of Rome claimed to succeed Peter and to be heads of the Church from the start. For these claims to be doctrinal and a part of the faith, they would need to be more than just traditions but in a creed or something or authorised by the full authority of the Church. Nothing in the first thousand years indicates that the bishop of Rome was essential to the Church.

Scholars often assert that Rome may have had primacy from the third century for there is no evidence of primacy of any kind before that.

It is certain that the papacy did not have supremacy in the first six centuries after the birth of Jesus. There is no evidence for papal supremacy and infallibility in that period (page 5, *The Primitive Faith and Roman Catholic Developments*). There is no trace of the view that Jesus made the pope the head of the Church through Peter among the Greek Fathers of the first six hundred years of the Church (page 91, *Roman Catholic Claims*). Peter being head of the Church and establishing the papacy at Rome are two new doctrines. The Church has no right to add them to the gospel.

The popes were called Vicars of Peter until the time of Innocent III when they called themselves Vicars of Christ (page 22 *The Primitive Faith and Roman Catholic Developments*). To claim to be the Vicar of Peter is to deny that you are the rock while to say you are the Vicar of Christ is to say you are the rock. The Vicar of Peter title proves that the papacy was denying that Matthew 16 recounted the origin of the papacy. The papacy was then just a human institution of the good of the Church.

The heretics Marcion and Praxeas were supposed to have tried to get their ideas supported by the episcopate of Rome (page 147, *Reasons for Hope*). This tells us that they were confident that Rome would come to their side. Marcion rejected Peter as a heretic which tells us far more. It tells us that nobody believed that the pope claimed to be the successor of Peter and the head of the Church. It tells us that nobody believed that the Church of Rome would keep its doctrine unchanged and claim to be infallible. The examples of bishops, Basilides, Fortunatus and Felix, who appealed to Rome to get their sees back in the third century proves nothing about Rome being the head of the Church but only that Rome was into administration and had a big influence. In theory, the present pope can leave somebody else to run the Church while he concentrates on guiding it through his teaching. It could be that Jesus made Peter the administrative but not theological head of the Church and the pope is the same but has lost any right to obedience by his resistance to Christ. It would be the same as what happened to Judas who was chosen as an apostle and failed. Even if Jesus created a head of administration that does not mean the head necessarily supervises the true Church or the true doctrine. He made a head of Judas and Judas went astray.

St Firmilian saw Pope Stephen as a schismatic and an apostate (page 109, *A Handbook on the Papacy*). This proves that he did not believe that Stephen was infallible or that God chooses the pope. He accused Stephen of not staying on the one foundation of the Church which was the rock. So he denied that the rock was the pope and the rock must have been something else for there can only be one pope at a time so he could hardly have meant that Stephen should stay on the rock of the pope when he was pope!

The popular slogan that was going around about 449 AD that said that Peter has spoken through Leo (page 147, *Reasons for Hope*), Pope Leo the Great, proves not that the pope is head of the Church or is infallible but that the pope has been considered to be true to Petrine doctrine. Perhaps some thought that Peter's spirit guided the pope but not in a way that made the pope the infallible superior of the Church.

St Cyprian of Carthage who passed away in 258 AD declared at a council that every bishop is free and cannot take orders from any other bishop (page 4, *The Primitive Faith and Roman Catholic Developments*). What he said during the opening address on 1 September 256 was "no one of us sets himself up to be a bishop of bishops...since every bishop according to his recognised liberty and power possesses a free choice, and can no more be judged by another then he himself can judge another." He once said that there was one Lord and one Church and one see founded on Peter (Epistles 43). But his own

see of Carthage was in turmoil at the time and he said this to protect it. He meant that the whole episcopate was founded on Peter so all the bishops were Peter's successors and so that all the sees were really one see in a sense. In a similar way, the episcopate is founded on each apostle. Peter is being named for Cyprian thinks he was the first ever bishop and is the origin of the episcopate even of the apostles in that sense. To break away from Carthage was to leave the see of Peter (page 117, Roman Catholic Claims).

Jerome stated bluntly, "The episcopate at Rome has no more authority than any other episcopate" (Epistles cxlvi).

In 590 AD, St Gregory the Great said that any bishop who thought himself supreme in the Church or who used the title of Universal Bishop was a disciple of Antichrist in response to the Patriarch of Constantinople who was claiming the title. He did not do this on the grounds that he was the supreme leader at all for he never gave this as the reason. The Catholics are forced to pretend that in making this protest he implied that he alone had the authority over the Church (Question 364, Radio Replies Vol 3) but obviously the Patriarch did not think that Gregory was supreme and significantly Gregory never condemned him for that. What about the other bishops and Patriarchs who condemned people who tried to be boss? Does that mean they were boss? No it only means they believed they knew better and wanted everybody to forget about power and ruling the whole Church and just work together for the good of the people of God.

Pope Fiction pages 152-153 says that Gregory might not have excluded the idea of a bishop ruling the Church but not taking away from the authority of bishops under him. Pope Fiction says this is the Roman Catholic system. In Catholicism, the pope runs the Church with the bishops but the final decisions about Church law and doctrine and morals belong to him but the bishops have a say too.

Pope Fiction guesses that what Gregory rejected was the idea that there was to be only one real bishop over the whole world and the other bishops had no authority but to be his slaves so that really there was just one real bishop in the Church.

Remember all the book is doing is guessing. If it is wrong then the whole Catholic faith collapses for you have a pope saying that anybody claiming to be the head of the Church was an antichrist. The quote from Gregory given in the book where he says that if there can be a universal bishop then other bishops are not bishops does not support the guess. Why? Because Gregory could have thought that if anybody is the head of the Church then the bishops, the word bishops means overseers, are not heads or overseers, not really.

Pope Fiction wants us to think Gregory opposed the idea of a superbishop who gives bishops no authority of their own but it is only guessing. It is a trick because this book following its Church doesn't want to admit that the early so-called popes didn't believe and even denied that they ruled the Church or had the right to.

What disproves it is that the word bishop means overseer and it is ridiculous to think that the Patriarch of Constantinople would have thought he could oversee the whole world to the exclusion of other bishops entirely.

Seeking the title Universal Father makes no sense unless the Patriarch was claiming powers that the popes claim today.

Gregory the Great was not the kind of pope that we have today. He didn't claim to be the rock the Church was built on or the head of the Church but he denied it. The Patriarch didn't want to be the only real bishop, that work is too hard and too difficult, he just wanted to be declared head of the Church. He certainly knew that no man could be the only real bishop in the world and do the impossible running a huge Church. That cannot be denied. Gregory condemned anybody who wanted to be the head of the Church and that included himself should he express such a desire.

Gregory was mistaken when he said that the Council of Chalcedon offered the title Universal Father to the bishops of Rome but what is important is how none of them accepted the title. When the bishop of Alexandria called Gregory universal father (the word pope means father) Gregory objected and said the title was inflating vanity and destroying charity (page 80, The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought).

The arguments that the popes were not supreme when the likes of Pope Victor got reprimanded by other bishops are incorrect because papal supremacy does not confer on the pope any right to abuse his position.

In the past, the Church said that an ecumenical council was above the pope. But at that time, the pope did not use his infallibility so the Church had to be infallible for him. No pope ever said that anything he declared was infallible because of some papal charism saving him from error. So, even statements worded as strongly and authoritatively as the infallible ones cannot be taken as infallible for that clause specifying that the charism is being employed was not inserted or even implied to have been utilised.

"Pope" Hippolytus in 230 AD called Pope Victor the thirteenth bishop of Rome after Peter's time which was following Irenaeus who did not see Peter as being part of the list (page 451, Catholicism and Christianity).

St Vincent of Lerins while trying to silence heretics said that if anybody wanted to check out if what they were told was true doctrine they should look and see what the ancients taught (page 168, A Handbook on the Papacy). If there had been a papacy then he would have told them to find out what the pope taught. That would be a lot easier than ploughing through the fathers.

Augustine never condemned the Donatists for ridiculing the Roman Episcopate on the basis that it was the see of Peter and the rock of the Church. He condemned it for other reasons which shows that he did not believe in the papacy (page 142, A Handbook on the Papacy). The Donatists denied that the Catholic Church could give any valid sacraments which is the same thing as saying it was not a Church at all but a farce (page 220, The Early Church). Donatists believed that members of their sect, confined to North Africa, comprised the only true Catholic Church (page 87, Heresies and How to Avoid Them). That they didn't try to elect a pope or court Rome's favour shows that Donatists did not consider Rome to be the centre of the Church established by Christ. That nobody expected them to elect a pope in Rome shows that the Catholics themselves agreed with them that there was no head of the Church on earth. The Donatists argued that as only a few were invited to enter the ark by God that God now calls a few to be the true Catholics (page 87, Heresies and How to Avoid Them). This was their answer to those who wondered how they could think they were the true Church when they were a minority who had cut off from the massive Catholic Church.

It is not surprising that the Church says that the papacy is necessary and that is proof enough that God created it even if no evidence for its functioning exists in the early days and many conservative Catholics admit there is no evidence (page 7, Church and Infallibility). If God went to the trouble of making a papacy then why didn't he give it more power? Most Catholics are not true Catholics and when one adds Orthodox and Protestants to their number it is clear that only a small minority properly and sincerely acknowledge the pope as head of the Church. The papacy has been a better source of division than unity.

The book published by a trusted Catholic publishing company, Image Books, and written by a Seminary lecturer, Thomas Bokenkotter, A Concise History of the Catholic Church, makes some astonishingly frank admissions about the real history of the papacy. When a respected Catholic history book says things without meaning to that undermine the papacy we have to rejoice.

It tells us that in the fourth and fifth centuries the papacy began to work on gaining primacy over the Church and getting acceptance for it being boss (page 96). The Eastern section of the Church was opposed to this as was the Latin Church in Africa. They did not want Rome telling them what to believe or laying down the law on how they should be run (page 97).

Pope Nicholas I who died in 867 AD used force against any Archbishop who opposed his claim to be head of the Church (page 132).

For the first millennium, and well into the second, the popes never claimed that they had the authority to choose bishops (page 134). Had they been heads of the Church, their main job would have been to conserve the faith by having a say in who would be consecrated bishop and choosing the right one. There was a danger of heretics being chosen and the Church being corrupted. The modern popes see their choosing of bishops as the most important part of being pope and it follows that if the pope is the head of the Church any bishop he has not chosen is illegitimate for the pope cannot run the Church unless he uses the bishops as his eyes, hands and feet. When candidates for ordination to the priesthood were just tested if they knew the basics of the faith for a few days and then ordained (page 153) there had to have been loads of priests and therefore bishops who did not understand their religion and so who would have preached heresy. Their allegiance to the Church might have been based on what they thought the Church was and on what it taught and they might have broken away or lost their faith if they found their perception was wrong.

The Church and the papacy forbade usury (page 162). This tradition has been forgotten though the Church says tradition is infallible truth.

Gregory VII following Pope Gelasius held that even people who are not Christians are obliged to obey the princes of the Church for spiritual authority comes before the state (page 124). Gregory VII was the first pope to say that the pope cannot be judged by any earthly power - not even the Roman Emperor. Depending on your view, you can say that is what being pope means. It is very clear in a way that Vicar of Christ or anything that can be taken as a mere claim to primacy but not absolute religious power is not.

Boniface VIII decreed in Unam Sanctum that no earthly power had the right to judge the pope (page 187).

If the papacy is not to rule over the whole world then these men were heretics and not real popes. Watch out then!

The Church teaches that the head of the Church in a diocese is the bishop who is subject to the pope making the pope the

ultimate head. If the pope is really the head of the Church, why was the authority and right to choose bishops not granted to him until the fourteenth century? (page 308, *Can We Save the Catholic Church?* Hans Kung, William Collins, London, 2013). Only the head of the Church can appoint subordinate heads. Remember, the priests are not heads of their parishes - they administer the authority of the bishop.

CONCLUSION

The papacy is a late development in the Church and is not supernatural in origin. It is not supported by the Bible and is a blight on the world with many of its evil policies. To argue that the Catholic Church is the true Church because it is led by Peter's successor is simplistic. Yet it is the kind of thinking that the Catholic Church deceptively fosters in the naïve.

APPENDIX - COMMENT POSTED IN 2018

Catholic doctrine about the pope being the vicar of Christ and head on earth of the Church contradicts history for only later in history did the bishop of Rome imagine he was boss and spiritual father of all Christians. The doctrine of the papacy is immoral for it argues the pope has the keys of the sacraments and can block the whole Church from forgiving sins or performing marriages - any attempt will be invalid. Relativism starts with lying about history and that is what the papacy is doing. History does not support Catholic doctrine and the orthodox never recognised the pope. Most Christians do not. Indirect and subtle catalysts for relativism are the worst. Relativism solidifies which is why appropriate action is never taken over papal lies.

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THE WEB

Pope John Paul II condemned as an immoral and traitorous and heretical pope
www.trosch.org

Of Bones and Boners: St Peter at the Vatican, Frank R. Zindler ,
www.atheists.org/church/bones.html

Has Rome Become the Seat of the Antichrist? Br Michael Diamond OSB
<http://catalog.com/endtimes/diamond.html>

This page claims that prophecies about the Vatican apostatising have come true and that the pope, John Paul II is a fake and a heretic. It reports on evidence from Masons and Communists that they had a plan to subvert the Church from within and had placed spies and impostors in the Church. Pope John Paul II was the first pope not to take the standard oath to defend the traditions of the Church and the canon laws and to excommunicate anyone who threatened the faith of the Church. This shows that there is more to this heretic than meets the eye and he is famous for allowing fake Catholics to function within the Church. Padre Pio who was famous for seeing the future snubbed Karol Wojtyla, he who would become John Paul II. It is said too that John Paul II having stated that religious freedom is lawful is contradicting Leo XIII who said that once you give men the right to believe whatever they will you give them the right to refuse to believe in loving God and remove all restraint on crime. It has been noticed too that the pope claims that Muslims worship the same God as Christians though the Muslim God said that anybody who believes in a three in one God is as impure as dung. In 1986 the pope let ash that was a sign of devotion to the Hindu god Shiva be placed on his forehead. In Assisi 1986 the pope invited devil-worshipping animists to pray with him there for peace. The psalm says that the gods of the pagans are all evil or demons (95:5). And there have been similar meetings since, ones in Warsaw and Bari for instance. Another fault is that Cardinal Ratzinger, the pope's right hand man, has stated that the resurrection of Jesus is not a historical event the way the crucifixion of Jesus is. The 1917 Code of Canon Law states that if the pope becomes a heretic he is no longer pope. Even the autocratic Innocent III stated that a pope who becomes a heretic is to be cast out and ignored.