

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Faculty Publications

4-25-1968

The Story of Catholicism Part 4: Crowning the Pope

C. Mervyn Maxwell
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "The Story of Catholicism Part 4: Crowning the Pope" (1968). *Faculty Publications*. 3827.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/3827>

This Popular Press is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

Crowning the Pope

By C. MERVYN MAXWELL

ROMAN CATHOLICS who visit Pope Paul VI expect to kiss his ring. Some, on certain occasions, kiss his foot. And when he travels in official parades he is often carried along on men's shoulders.

To Protestants the most conspicuous characteristic of the Catholic Church is probably the great honor that its members accord to their pope. This article will say something about how the pope came to enjoy his unique prestige.

Our story is moving on into the time of the Emperor Constantine (306-337) and the centuries that followed him. But before discussing the development of the papal primacy, we must take up some other subjects in order to prevent a wrong impression. Although it is true, as the previous articles have pointed out, that the church "tobogganed into apostasy" so rapidly that virtually all the major errors of Catholicism were apparent before the reign of Constantine began in 306, it must not be assumed that the Spirit of Christ ceased to reveal itself in the early Christian church.

For example, the decades after Constantine produced one of the most devoted Christians of any age. At his conversion as a teen-ager John Chrysostom (or John of the Golden Mouth, so named because of his remarkable eloquence) gladly renounced a promising career as a public orator and threw himself into the life of the church. Indeed, his early enthusiasm led to sacrifices that for a while nearly ruined his health. After several years of intense Bible study he was called to the position of preacher in the large church at Antioch, and for 12 years held his congregation so spellbound with his wonderfully practical messages based on Scripture that his hearers frequently broke into spontaneous applause! He is still regarded as the ablest preacher of his generation and, by many, as the greatest expository preacher of any generation.

In due course and against his will John Chrysostom was called from Antioch to become the bishop of Constantinople. In his new position he denounced with unsparing vigor the hypocrisy and wickedness that he found abounding in the capital city;

and he practiced what he preached. Whereas the previous bishop had reveled in luxury, Chrysostom put a stop to banquets and lavish manners, and by living simply as a monk, managed to save enough in one year to build a hospital for the poor. Increasing hostility in high places did not frighten him from his fearless and faithful calls to repentance. But his enemies had their day. He was exiled at last and forced, in spite of poor health, to keep pace over long distances with a marching Roman army, and died, broken in body but not in spirit, with his life's motto on his lips, "Glory be to God for all things. Amen."

John Chrysostom was by no means the only devout Christian of antiquity. Although the letter from Clement of Rome (A.D. 95) to the church in Corinth mentions belief in the immortality of the soul, as stated in the first article in this series, its appeal for peace among brethren is truly Christlike. Polycarp's courage at his trial

—"Eighty and six years have I served my King and never has He done me wrong"—and Blandina's fortitude through endless days of torture—"I am a Christian"—are examples worthy of the church in any era and are only two of many that could be cited. Perpetua and Felicitas, young married women, placed their newborn babes into the arms of deaconesses and walked into the arena with courageous resolution, even if with tears as well, rather than renounce their faith. When Marinus was to be promoted to the rank of centurion in the Roman army (A.D. 260), he openly declared his religion, and lost both his job and his life.

Another aspect of the fourth- and fifth-century church that is commendable, in spite of the deepening apostasy of the times, is the series of ecumenical councils by means of which the church came to a full and largely correct understanding of the natures and person of Jesus Christ.

In the early centuries many strange ideas about Jesus circulated among the believers. Some people said that Christ was a temporary form of the Father Himself. Others thought He was merely an ordinary man in whom God's power or word resided. Some were so sure that He was a true God that they spoke of "two numerically distinct" Gods, the Father God and the Son God, even though this hardly agreed with Biblical monotheism. And others said, much as Jehovah's Witnesses do today, that Christ was only an inferior, created god.

But in the early fourth century the church began really to come to grips with this important question. At the Council of Nicaea (325), which the Emperor Constantine convened, the point was emphasized that Christ was, indeed, truly God; and at the Council of Constantinople (381) the view was expressed that He was also fully and truly man. A bishop called Nestorius argued that Christ was evidently two persons, but the Council of Ephesus (431) came to the conclusion that Christ was only one Person. When this decision, in its turn, encouraged the monk Eutyches to say that Jesus must have had only one nature, the great Council of Chalcedon was convened (451). After careful consideration this epochal council concluded

Fireflies

By NORMA BIGGINS

Did you ever watch a firefly
Flitting through the gathering gloom?
He is not disturbed by darkness
Nor afraid of coming doom.

He enjoys what God has given—
Flowers and trees and grass and air;
You will never find him moping
Any time or anywhere.

His is not an envious nature,
He won't sulk because he's small;
He just lifts his wings and twinkles
All along the garden wall.

He knows he's not a lighthouse
Sending beams far out to sea.
But he does what God would have him,
And he shares his light with me.

Have your friends received more talents?
Do your efforts seem but weak?
Maybe you should go to Jesus,
More contentment there to seek.

God has for His human children
Many tasks both great and small,
If you cannot do the big things—
Twinkle by the garden wall.

that Christ in His divine nature is as truly God as is His Father, and in His human nature is as truly human as His mother, and that these two natures are still distinct and yet at the same time are joined into one single Person. This decision, known often as the "definition of Chalcedon," has to most Christians ever since seemed satisfying and inspired.

"Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God?" asked Ellen G. White. "No," she replied; "the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person—the man Christ Jesus."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Mark 16:6, p. 1113. "In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined," she said in another place. "Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity by being united to divinity, withstood the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness."—*In Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890, p. 97.

But it was during these same fourth and fifth centuries, while the church was coming to its apparently correct conclusions about Christ, that it was advancing rapidly in its very regret-

table exaltation of the Roman papacy, and to this we must turn our attention now. The process was gradual and was assisted by many circumstances.

It was natural that the Christians in at least the Western reaches of the Roman Empire should have felt from early times a special regard for the bishop in Rome. Rome was the capital of the empire and its population of a million or more was vastly greater than that of any other city in the known world. Alexandria, Egypt, came a poor second with perhaps 300,000, and most other "large" cities were considerably smaller. As the largest city, Rome undoubtedly contained the most numerous Christian congregation. Everyone knows that leading a large flock lends prestige to a pastor.

Equally important to the ultimate rise of the power of the pope was the fact mentioned last week that Rome was the only Western church of any size known to have been founded by an apostle—and the church in Rome was founded (or so it was believed) by two apostles, Peter and Paul. Rome was thoroughly and undeniably "apostolic." In the antiheresy controversies it was held vital to belong to an

apostolic church, or at least to agree with one. Many Western Christians were anxious from time to time to prove their fellowship with apostolic Rome.

Then, too, the emperor in course of time virtually moved out of Rome and ceased to rule the empire from that city. This naturally increased the importance of the leader of the large local Christian community there by default.

But without two other factors, none of these would have given the pope his ultimate primacy. The first of these was the vigor, ambition, and sheer capability of many of the early bishops of Rome. As early as A.D. 95 Clement of Rome did not hesitate to inform the church in Corinth how to settle a local quarrel. A century later Pope Victor dared single-handedly to excommunicate thousands of Christians (the Quartodecimans) in Asia Minor. In 220 Pope Calixtus took it upon himself to begin the forgiveness of adulterers. Even though the Council of Nicaea (325) said that no bishops who had been punished could appeal for a retrial to anyone outside their own provinces, Pope Julius (337-352) said that they could: They

The art of living

BY MIRIAM WOOD

when you're Young

PRINCIPLES Many young people ask: How can I be better liked? How can I manage to have more genuine friends, the kind who will last for years and years?

AND PITFALLS These questions, or variations on them, are asked so frequently that I sometimes wonder if *anyone* feels truly liked and accepted when he's young! Those who do, seem to be in the minority. And it's a shame, really, because a feeling of friendlessness, of isolation, is one of the heaviest burdens one can carry.

There are, however, no simple solutions to complex problems. I've said this many times and doubtless will repeat it upon numerous occasions in the future; it is so undeniably true! However, the fact that a situation is so difficult makes it even more imperative to explore every possible solution. With this philosophy in mind, I've been giving a great deal of thought to ways and means whereby a young person can feel warmly and securely part of "the group." In trying to boil it down, to get at the kernel of the matter, I've decided on one particular line of reasoning—not a new one, but an effective one.

The basic key to good human relations is to make another person feel that "he" counts. On the face of it, this statement is so simple as to seem almost ludicrous. But explored in depth, there are innumerable inferences, innumerable implications. Because, you see, the entire picture of yourself that you present to the world is involved here. Essentially, it means that you "live" an attitude, for insincerity in this area is always detected, sooner or later. There's a whole world, an entire *ocean*, of difference between making others feel that they really "count" and merely manipulating them (or attempting to do this) for your own purposes.

Logically we could divide the problem into (1) internal attitudes and (2) external manifestations. Strangely enough, a completely correct, completely sincere attitude toward others may not always "come through" undistorted. The art of living in this area requires a bit of rather careful self-examination regarding behavior. For instance, the following mannerisms are pretty well guaranteed to make others feel minimized. (I'm cringing as I write, for I am guilty of some of these, I fear!)

1. The practice of interrupting others or making it clear that you just can't wait until they've finished speaking so that you can make your own (much more important) remarks.

2. Telling your friends their faults, unless they ask you specifically to do this, and even then, extreme delicacy is called for. Few people can bear to face the truth about themselves. I read recently that this is like shining a blinding light mercilessly into the eyes of a victim. It just doesn't increase his vision! (After all, God is the judge—isn't He?)

3. Expecting people to drop everything to accommodate you, but never being willing to inconvenience yourself even slightly.

4. Acting too "possessive" with others. Friendship just can't be an "all or nothing" kind of thing; there really is "safety in numbers" since too-intense friendships almost always are eventually shipwrecked on the shoals of jealousy.

5. Demanding that others "baby" you along.

6. Inflicting your moods on others. If you aren't always deliriously happy (and who is?) at least you shouldn't be leaping wildly from the valley to the mountaintop over and over again. It's so unnerving to your friends; they become psychologically dizzy!

7. Being unreliable. Broken promises lead inevitably to broken friendships.

Other points might be discussed, but the ones I've listed have a direct bearing on whether others feel that they "count." If you can engender this feeling, by a sincere application of specific principles, and a firm avoidance of the pitfalls, you'll have friends—and *you'll* be a friend worth having.

could appeal to Rome. Pope Damasus (366-384) told the bishops in Illyria to get the pope's opinion first in any argument. And Innocent I (402-417) specifically claimed authority as the heir of Peter throughout Italy, France, Spain, Britain, and Africa; while Pope Zosimus (417-418) insisted that the *tradition of the fathers* assigned such great authority to the Roman see "that no one would dare to dispute it."

The "tradition of the fathers." There it is. Each strong-minded utterance of a strong-minded man sets a precedent for the next strong-minded man. In time people come to believe what they say, if only because it has become a tradition.

Leo I (440-461) was the greatest of the early popes. He saw to it that his legates presided over the crucial Council of Chalcedon and pushed hard to have his personal opinions prevail there. When Attila led his Huns into Italy, Leo in person went out to meet him and persuaded him to spare Rome. What though the Huns had already been decimated by defeat and disease and were probably already too weak to attack the city? The incident helped Leo's public image enormously. Later he negotiated successfully with the Vandals as well.

And he picked a fight with old Hilary of Arles! Hilary was a godly man and the chief bishop in France; but a man of spirit who would not bow to Rome in every case. Leo watched his chance, then pounced like a cat. He made a test case out of a local disagreement, called on the empire for help, and forced Hilary to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome, through the Alps, in winter, to be disgraced. Even many Catholics today cannot quite forgive Leo for this. But think what it achieved for the power of the papacy!

Notice that Leo called on the empire for help. Here, in addition to the vigor of the popes, is that second vital factor. "The dragon gave him his power, . . . and great authority" (Rev. 13:2). Perhaps for devotional reasons, but probably also for administrative purposes, one emperor after another either conceded or offered power to the papacy. Strongly centralized governments even to this day often prefer to work with strongly centralized churches, since it increases their own authority and simplifies administration.

In 380, when heretics were denying the Trinity, the Emperor Theodosius I (379-395) decreed that everyone had to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity precisely as it was defined by the Pontiff Damasus of Rome and by Bishop Peter of Alexandria. In

381 the same emperor forbade heretics to hold meetings under pain of exile. In 445 the emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III helped Pope Leo, as mentioned above, by stipulating that anyone in Gaul (they had Bishop Hilary in mind) who disobeyed the pope's summons "shall be compelled [to obey] by the governor of the province" under threat of a stiff fine of ten pounds' weight of gold.

When Pope Gelasius (492-496) daringly wrote that "there are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sa-

cred authority of the priests, and the royal power," and that of these two, "that of the priests is the more weighty," Emperor Anastasius let him get away with it.

Finally as is well known, Emperor Justinian in 533 said that the bishop of Rome was "superior in honor" to all other bishops, and that he was "the head of all the holy churches."

It was not a sudden thing, this virtual crowning of the pope by Justinian. Many factors contributed to such a climax over several centuries of time.

(Continued next week)



Kind Only for Pay?

By LOIS C. RANDOLPH

MRS. WILLIS told her family at the dinner table that she wanted to get a message to her dressmaker, but neither of her sons, Bert or Frank, offered to go. However, when mother suggested that they both go directly after school, they gladly agreed to deliver the message.

After giving the message to the dressmaker, the boys decided to walk home another way, one that led them by Mr. Gray's property. He had a large market garden, and as the boys walked by they admired the long rows of celery, beets, and onions. Just beyond these rows they spied a handsome cow enjoying a good supper of fine cabbages.

Bert was always very observing. "Why, that's Mr. Carter's cow. How did she get into the cabbages? She must have waded up the brook from the pasture. The other day I saw three of Mr. Carter's cows standing in the water."

Frank thought a moment. "Look, she has not yet harmed the bed of cabbages much. She has eaten only two or three heads. Let's drive her out and take her on home."

"I will help you drive her out of the cabbages, but I am *not* going to retrace my steps and go over that road again. It's nearly a mile back to Mr. Carter's. We would be late for supper. I'm tired and hungry." Bert slumped.

With some difficulty they got the cow out of her feasting place. "We ought to take her home," persisted Frank.

Bert shook his head. "If Mr. Carter would give us some of his pears, I would go, but he would not spare even one. He would only give us thanks, and you're welcome to all the thanks Mr. Carter gives you." Then Bert headed for home.

When Frank got home, the family was nearly through with supper. Frank told what had delayed him. Then mother turned on Bert, "Why didn't you go with

your brother and help him? Two would have been better than one." Bert hung his head and gave no answer. Somehow it did seem selfish to have let Frank go by himself.

"I'm glad I went, for Mr. Carter seemed so pleased. He said he wouldn't have had Bessie damage Mr. Gray's garden for a thousand dollars. This evening he will go over to talk to Mr. Gray about the cabbages," Frank explained.

Next Frank's father spoke up. "I am most grateful to Frank for doing this favor for Mr. Carter, and I'll tell you boys why. Today Mr. Carter did me an unusual kindness. How I appreciate that neighbor! For many days I have been very short of money, and I had a note due this very day. As I was coming out of the bank feeling very low in spirits, Mr. Carter, with a smiling face, was ready to walk into the bank.

"He looked searchingly at me. 'You look worried. Could I possibly be of any help to you?' he asked.

"I told him about my predicament with the money and how I had thus far been unable to raise the needed amount to meet the note.

"Mr. Carter smiled broadly. 'You must have been praying for help to have me come by with the necessary money just at the right moment. Here I am with eight hundred dollars to deposit in the bank, but I can just as well let you have that amount instead of the bank. If you want it, you will be quite welcome to it.'"

Father looked straight at his selfish son. "Do you suppose for one moment that a boy who will not do a kindness for a neighbor except for pay will grow up to be a generous and helpful man like Mr. Carter?"

Bert was seeing his selfish action in a new light. "Daddy, I see what you are driving at."

A week later a basket of pears was left at the Willis' door marked for Frank Willis. They had come from Mr. Carter's orchard.

"Bert, try one," urged Frank. "They are sweet and juicy."

"No doubt they are good, but I don't deserve even one of them. To teach myself a lesson I won't taste a single one. I think Mr. Carter is a fine man the way he loaned dad money and all. Next time I can do him a favor I'll walk five miles, if necessary, to help him."