

Orthodoxy and the Great Schism

Rome, Constantinople, and the First Thousand Years

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I. The Hardest Question on This Site

The other essays accompanying this site argue against positions that, in the end, require the historic Church to have failed. The Watchtower needs a universal apostasy. The Reformers needed a Church so corrupted that its authority could be set aside. This essay

argues against no such thing, because the Eastern Orthodox make no such claim. They hold, as Catholics hold, that the Church Christ founded has never ceased to exist, that its bishops stand in a succession that can be traced, and that its sacraments have been valid throughout. The disagreement is about where that Church's center lies.

That makes this the hardest question the site asks, and the one it is least able to settle in a paragraph. If the argument of the essay on the Great Apostasy holds, the apostolic Church never disappeared and is somewhere still. If the argument on authority holds, that Church is governed by men who received their commission by succession rather than by rediscovery. Both conclusions land a reader inside ancient, sacramental, episcopal Christianity—and two communions answering that description have stood side by side for a thousand years.

A reader who has followed the earlier arguments has therefore not finished. He has narrowed the question from a choice between a modern organization and the historic Church to a choice within the historic Church itself. That is an enormous narrowing, and this essay is written on the assumption that it has already happened.

II. What Is Not in Dispute

A great deal is not in dispute, and the Catholic case is stronger for saying so first.

The Orthodox Churches are not a sect. They possess bishops in genuine apostolic succession, a valid Eucharist, a valid priesthood, and a liturgy older than most of the arguments used against it. This is not a Catholic courtesy; it is Catholic teaching. The Second Vatican Council said of the Eastern Churches that through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these churches, the Church of God is built up and grows, and that they possess true sacraments, above all the priesthood and the Eucharist. The *Catechism* says the communion between us is so profound that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord's Eucharist.¹

Nor is the separation treated in Rome as a closed question. In 1965 Paul VI and the Patriarch Athenagoras together removed the excommunications of 1054 from the memory of the Church, in simultaneous ceremonies at Rome and at the Phanar. The sack of Constantinople in 1204 was a crime, committed by men who called themselves crusaders, and successive popes have said so in those words rather than softer ones.²

None of what follows argues that the East left the Church. It argues that Rome is where the record of the first thousand years indicates the Church's center to be.

III. An Estrangement Older Than the Quarrel

The schism is usually dated to 1054, and the date is nearly useless. What happened in that year was a quarrel between a legate and a patriarch; what produced the separation was several centuries of drift, and it is worth stating plainly because a reader who thinks the churches divided over one clause of the Creed will not understand either side.

They stopped sharing a language. By the sixth century few clergy in Rome read Greek and few in Constantinople read Latin, and the theological vocabulary diverged with the tongues. The Greek *hypostasis* and the Latin *substantia* are cognate and do not mean the same thing, so that each side could hear the other confessing heresy while both meant what Nicaea meant. Almost every subsequent dispute is harder than it needed to be for this reason.

They stopped sharing an empire. On Christmas Day in the year 800 the Pope crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans, at a moment when there was already a Roman Emperor, reigning in Constantinople. Whatever was intended, what the East saw was the Bishop of Rome transferring the empire to a Frankish king. The political frame within which both churches had lived was broken, and it was Rome that broke it.

And they had rehearsed the breach. In the 860s a disputed patriarchal election in Constantinople, between Photius and Ignatius, drew Rome into a judgment that Constantinople rejected, and ended in mutual condemnations. The Photian schism was healed. It established the pattern of the one that was not.³

IV. Rome Acts Before Anyone Explains Why

The Catholic case does not begin with a theory of the papacy. It begins with a pattern of behavior that is visible before anyone had a theory to defend, and that is the strongest form the evidence takes, because nobody was yet arguing about it.

Around A.D. 96 the church of Rome wrote to the church of Corinth. The Corinthians had deposed their presbyters, and Rome wrote to tell them to reinstate them. Consider the geography: Corinth is far nearer to Ephesus than to Rome, and the apostle John was in all likelihood still alive at Ephesus. If a nearby apostle was available, an intervention from Italy requires explanation. Consider also the register. The letter does not suggest or advise; it says that if any disobey the things spoken by God through us, they are involved in transgression and no small danger. And consider what Corinth did with it: the letter was kept, and Dionysius of Corinth records it being read aloud in the Corinthian assembly generations later.⁴

About a decade after that, Ignatius of Antioch wrote seven letters on his way to be killed in the arena. He corrects every church he addresses—except one. To the Romans alone he

offers no instruction, and of the Roman church alone he uses a phrase he applies to no other: it presides in love. Whatever weight one places on the phrase, the asymmetry is there in the text.⁵

By about 180 the principle is stated outright. Irenaeus, writing against the Gnostics, argues that heresy can be refuted by pointing to the churches founded by apostles, and singles out Rome: with this church, on account of its preeminent authority, every church must agree. He then lists the Roman bishops in order from Peter to his own day, which is precisely the kind of argument that presupposes the list matters.⁶

And about a decade after Irenaeus wrote that, Pope Victor threatened to cut off the churches of Asia from communion over the date of Easter. Irenaeus rebuked him for it, and the rebuke is often quoted against Roman claims. It repays reading. Irenaeus objects to the severity of the act, and appeals to the forbearance of Victor's predecessors. He does not say that Victor lacks the standing to do it. Nobody in the controversy says that.⁷

V. Rome Hears Appeals

By the fourth century the practice has hardened into procedure. The Council of Sardica in 343 provided that a bishop who believes himself unjustly deposed may appeal to the Bishop of Rome, and that Rome may order the case retried.

Two qualifications are owed here, and an essay that omitted them would deserve the suspicion it got. Sardica was not an ecumenical council; it was a Western synod with Eastern participation that broke apart. And when its canons later reached North Africa in a Roman collection that labeled them Nicene, the African bishops objected—rightly, because the label was wrong. That is the Apiarius affair, and the Africans were correct about the provenance of the text.⁸

What the Africans did not dispute, and what the record does not permit anyone to dispute, is that appeals to Rome from outside Rome's own province are a fact of the fourth and fifth centuries. Athanasius appealed to Rome. John Chrysostom appealed to Rome. Theodoret appealed to Rome, and wrote that the Roman see holds the primacy over the whole world for many reasons. These are Eastern bishops in trouble, and Rome is where they went.

At the Council of Ephesus in 431, the papal legate Philip told the assembled fathers that Peter lives and exercises judgment in his successors, and that the bishop of Rome is his successor. The council did not correct him. It is possible to read that silence as courtesy; it is not possible to read it as contradiction.⁹

VI. The Council That Rome Refused

Here is the fact that tells hardest against the theory that Rome held an honorary precedence and nothing more.

In 449 a council assembled at Ephesus. It had the emperor's summons, a full body of bishops, and a presiding patriarch of Alexandria. It deposed Flavian of Constantinople and vindicated Eutyches. By every external measure it was a council of the same kind as the ones that had preceded it. It is not an ecumenical council; no one on either side of this argument treats it as one; and the reason is that Leo of Rome refused it, and named it a *latrocinium*, a gathering of robbers rather than a synod. An assembly possessing everything except Roman consent turned out to possess nothing.¹⁰

These two episodes also answer the procedural form of the objection—that no part of the Church may define for the whole. When a council with imperial backing met at Ephesus in 449, Roman refusal is what voided it; when Chalcedon's canon 28 elevated Constantinople, Roman rejection is what kept it from the books the East itself later cited. If Rome's consent could unmake conciliar acts, then Roman consent was already, in the undivided Church's own practice, part of what made a definition the Church's—and a communion that accepts those two vetoes has already granted the principle it now protests.

Two years later, at Chalcedon, the same Leo's doctrinal letter was read to the council, and the fathers acclaimed it: Peter has spoken through Leo. The opposing case rightly notes that they examined the Tome first, comparing it with Cyril, and received it because they found it orthodox. That is true and it should be conceded. What follows from it is less than the objection needs, because what they said when they had finished examining is what they said.¹¹

Then in 519, to end the Acacian schism, some two hundred and fifty Eastern bishops, the Patriarch of Constantinople among them, signed the formula of Pope Hormisdas, which states that in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been preserved unblemished. Eastern bishops signed that, in the East, in the first millennium, as the price of restored communion.¹²

VII. Why the Canons Give Civil Reasons

The strongest Orthodox argument from the councils is that when they rank the sees, they explain the ranking in civil rather than Petrine terms. Constantinople I in 381 gave the new capital the primacy of honor after Rome, because Constantinople is New Rome. Chalcedon in 451 went further, granting it privileges equal to Rome's, on the ground that

the fathers had granted privileges to old Rome because it was the imperial city. If Roman primacy rested on Peter, the argument runs, the councils appear not to have known it.

The observation is accurate and the inference is not. Both canons are arguing for *Constantinople*, a see with no apostolic founder, and the dignity of the city is the only argument available for such a see. That the councils gave the reason that worked for Constantinople does not establish that Rome had no other reason, and Rome consistently gave a different reason for itself.

Notice, too, what happened to the canon. Leo rejected it, writing to Marcian, to Pulcheria and to Anatolius that it was void. And it did not take effect. A canon of an ecumenical council failed for want of Roman consent—a strange fate for a decree supposed to have reduced Rome to the first among equals.¹³

VIII. Gregory Refused a Title That Meant Something Else

No Catholic essay on this subject is honest that does not quote Gregory the Great against itself. When the Patriarch of Constantinople took the style of ecumenical patriarch, Gregory wrote that whoever calls himself universal bishop, or desires to be so called, is in his self-exaltation the forerunner of Antichrist. He wrote it more than once, he meant it, and he refused the title for himself when it was offered.

What must be added is what Gregory says the title means. He takes *universal bishop* to be a claim to be the *only* bishop—so that if one man is universal bishop, the rest are not bishops at all but his agents, and the episcopal order collapses into a single office with deputies. That is the pride he condemns, and the Catholic Church condemns it too. Vatican I taught that the papal primacy does not undermine the ordinary and immediate jurisdiction of each bishop in his own diocese, and Vatican II taught that bishops are true successors of the apostles by divine institution, not vicars of the Roman Pontiff. What Gregory refused is not what Rome claims.¹⁴

And the same Gregory, in the same years, received appeals from Eastern bishops, intervened in sees far outside his own patriarchate, and conducted himself throughout as a man who believed the Apostolic See to be answerable to no other. A title he thought proud he refused. A jurisdiction he thought his, he used.

IX. Honorius Defined Nothing

The Third Council of Constantinople, in 680 and 681, anathematized Pope Honorius by name among the Monothelites, and his successor Leo II confirmed the acts of the council rather than annulling them. Catholics should state this plainly, because the strongest version of the objection is the true one, and evasion here costs more than the concession.

What Honorius did was write two private letters to Sergius of Constantinople, answering a question about how to speak of the wills of Christ, and counseling that the disputed expressions be dropped. He defined nothing. He addressed no definition to the whole Church, and he did not purport to settle the question by his authority. The council's own charge is heavier than that summary suggests, and it should be quoted rather than paraphrased: session 13 decreed that Honorius be "expelled from the holy Church of God and anathematized ... because of what we found written by him to Sergius, that in all respects he followed his view and confirmed his impious doctrines." Leo II, confirming the acts, described the fault differently—as having let the immaculate faith be subverted by profane treachery, which Catholic apologists have read for centuries as negligence rather than positive teaching. The Latin and Greek of that letter differ, the sense is contested, and a reader who examines the acts will know it.

This is not a technicality invented after 1870 to protect the definition. It is what the definition says. Infallibility attaches to a pope defining a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the whole Church; a private letter advising a bishop about vocabulary is the paradigm case of what the definition does not cover. The strongest counter-example anyone has produced in nineteen centuries is a pope who defined nothing at all.

And Leo II's confirmation repays a moment's thought. The council's condemnation of a pope was held to require ratification by a pope. Whatever that shows, it does not show a Roman see subordinate to the assembly.¹⁵

X. The Creed, and the Clause

The *Filioque* has its own treatment in the companion essay to this one, and the theology of the Spirit's procession will not be rehearsed here. What belongs in this essay is the shape of the objection, because it is not primarily a theological objection at all.

The creed of 381 was the common possession of the whole Church, and the Council of Ephesus in 431 forbade the composition of any other. The clause entered the Western creed without an ecumenical council and without the East being consulted. The Orthodox complaint, stated in its proper order, is that a text sealed by the whole Church was altered by part of it—and the question that raises is not about the Holy Spirit. It is the question of this essay, wearing other clothes: who may speak for the whole Church, and on what warrant.

XI. 1054: Bread, Celibacy, and a Bull on an Altar

The disputes that brought matters to a head in 1054 were, for the most part, not doctrinal at all, and a Catholic account that treats them as trivial has not understood the East.

The Latins used unleavened bread at the altar. To Constantinople this looked like Judaizing, and beneath that lay a real theological instinct: leaven means life, and the Eucharist is the *risen* Christ, so that unleavened bread seemed to say something false about the Lord it confected. Patriarch Cerularius closed the Latin churches in the city over the question. There were also the Western moves toward a celibate clergy, against an Eastern practice of ordaining married men that goes back as far as the record does; and disputes about fasting, including whether one fasts on Saturdays.

The Catholic answer to all of this is that none of it is a matter of faith. Bread, the discipline of the clergy, the calendar of fasts—these are questions of rite, and Rome has never required the East to become Latin in any of them. That is not an accommodation offered now for the sake of argument, and the proof of it is the subject of the next section.

As for the legation itself, no part of the Catholic case depends on defending it. Cardinal Humbert laid a bull of excommunication on the altar of Hagia Sophia during the divine liturgy. The pope who had sent him, Leo IX, had died three months earlier, so that the commission under which he acted had in all probability lapsed. The bull excommunicated Cerularius; Cerularius excommunicated the legates. Neither excommunicated the other's church, and for a long time afterward few people supposed that a schism had occurred.¹⁶

XII. The Churches That Are Both

There is a standing answer to the question whether communion with Rome requires becoming Latin, and it is not a theoretical one. Some twenty-three Churches *sui iuris* are in full communion with the Bishop of Rome while keeping their own liturgies, their own canon law, their own hierarchies and their own traditions. The largest are Byzantine in rite—the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Melkites, the Romanians, the Ruthenians—and what they celebrate is the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, as the Orthodox celebrate it. Others are Maronite, Chaldean, Syro-Malabar, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, each with a rite older than the quarrel this essay is about.

What they demonstrate bears directly on the disputes of 1054. They use leavened bread. They ordain married men. They keep the Eastern fasts and the Eastern calendar. They confirm infants at baptism and give them Communion, as the East has always done and the West does not. None of this is tolerated as an eccentricity. The Second Vatican Council declared that the Churches of the East have the same dignity as those of the West, that none is superior to the others by reason of rite, and that they enjoy the same rights and stand under the same obligations. The Council went further, and told the Eastern Catholics to *return* to their ancestral traditions wherever these had been eroded by Latin influence—which is to say that Rome instructed them to become less Latin, not more.¹⁷

If the Roman claim entailed the Latinizing of the East, these churches could not exist. They do exist, they have existed for centuries, and several of them have paid for that existence: the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was liquidated by Stalin in 1946 and lived underground for more than forty years rather than be absorbed.

Honesty requires the other half of the account. The Orthodox do not regard these churches as a model but as a wound—communities detached from Orthodox communion, in several cases under political pressure, and now standing as a permanent argument against Orthodoxy inside its own territory. That objection has weight, and the Catholic Church has conceded a substantial part of it. At Balamand in 1993 the joint international commission stated that uniatism, as a method of seeking unity by detaching portions of the Eastern churches, is not the way; and in the same document affirmed that the Eastern Catholic Churches now in existence have the right to exist and to serve their faithful. Both halves of that are Catholic teaching, and neither cancels the other.¹⁸

What these churches settle is therefore narrower than a polemicist would like, and more useful than he would expect. They do not prove the Roman primacy. They prove that the Roman primacy, as Rome understands it, is compatible with everything the East feared losing—the liturgy, the married priesthood, the bread, the calendar, the whole shape of Eastern Christian life. Whatever divides Rome from Constantinople, it is not that.

XIII. 1204, and the Reunions That Failed

What made the separation permanent was not an argument. In 1204 an army of Western crusaders, diverted from the Holy Land, took Constantinople by assault, plundered it for three days, desecrated Hagia Sophia, and installed a Latin patriarch in the chair of the Greek one. Whatever the theologians had been disputing, this is what the East remembers, and it is not wrong to remember it.

Twice afterward the churches formally reunited. At the Second Council of Lyons in 1274 and at the Council of Florence in 1439, Greek delegations signed unions on substantially Roman terms. Both were repudiated on their return—by the monks, by the lower clergy, by the people, and by most of the bishops who had signed. The Eastern verdict on both is the same, and it is a serious one: a union negotiated by emperors who needed Western armies against the Turks is a transaction, not the mind of the Church.

The Catholic reply should concede the history and dispute only the inference. That a union was rejected establishes that the terms were not received. It does not establish that the terms were wrong; assemblies have received true doctrine reluctantly before, and rejected it too. And not every Greek who signed at Florence was a cynic under pressure. Bessarion of Nicaea argued for the union on its merits for the remainder of his life, in Greek, to Greeks, with nothing left to gain.¹⁹

XIV. Development Is Not Invention

The last Orthodox objection is the deepest, and it cannot be answered by finding earlier quotations. It is that the definition of 1870 says more than the first millennium ever said: that the Bishop of Rome possesses ordinary and immediate jurisdiction over every church, and that his definitions are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church.

The honest answer is that this is true, and that the Catholic claim has never been otherwise. No one maintains that *Pastor Aeternus* can be quoted from Irenaeus. What is maintained is that it articulates what was already being done—as Nicaea articulated in one word a divinity confessed for three centuries without it, and as the canon of Scripture was fixed long after the books composing it were being read as Scripture. Newman’s question is the right one: does the later formulation preserve the type of the earlier thing, and add without contradicting? A Church whose bishop annulled a council in 449, heard appeals from Eastern patriarchs, and required Eastern bishops to sign a formula about his see in 519 has not been given a new power in 1870. It has been given a definition.

It is worth adding what the definition does not say, because it is regularly enlarged in the telling. It is not impeccability; the tenth century is exactly the embarrassment it appears to be. It is not inspiration; no pope receives revelation, and the definition explicitly denies it. It is not a general power to innovate. It is a negative protection, in narrow and stated conditions, and in the solemn form it has been used twice.

And the principle of development is not a Roman invention brought in to license Roman claims. It is apostolic. Christ promised that the Spirit of truth would guide the apostles “into all the truth” (John 16:13), and the apostles proceeded to develop the Church’s order within their own lifetimes: filling the office Judas vacated, and creating an order of ministers that had not existed before, ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 1:20; 6:1–6). If the Spirit was still leading the Church into truth after the Ascension, episcopal developments were to be expected rather than feared. A Church whose order was forbidden to develop would be a Church the Spirit had finished with—and that is a proposition neither Rome nor Constantinople holds.

XV. Where the Center Is

This essay does not claim to settle a question that has outlasted a thousand years of better men arguing it. It claims something smaller and, for the reader this site is written for, more useful.

The dispute between Rome and Constantinople is a dispute *within* apostolic Christianity. Both communions have bishops; both have the Eucharist; both trace their orders through

an unbroken succession; each recognizes the other's sacraments as real. Whatever is true about the papacy, nothing in this quarrel supports the proposition that the Church Christ founded disappeared and had to be restored in the modern age. Both parties to it are witnesses against that proposition, and they have been standing there, in plain sight, for the whole period the restoration theories say was dark.

So a reader who has come this far is no longer deciding between a nineteenth-century organization and the ancient Church. He is standing inside the ancient Church, deciding where its center lies. The evidence set out here is why one man concluded that the center is where Clement wrote from, where Ignatius sent no correction, where Irenaeus said every church must agree, where Athanasius and Chrysostom and Theodoret appealed, and where a council that had everything else was refused. Another man may weigh the same evidence and stop at Constantinople. He will still have left the restoration hypothesis a long way behind him, and that is not a small distance to have travelled.

Endnotes

1. Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio* 14–18, esp. 15 on the true sacraments of the Eastern Churches; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §838.
2. Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of Paul VI and Athenagoras I, 7 December 1965, removing the excommunications of 1054 from the memory of the Church. On 1204, the expressions of regret of Paul VI and of John Paul II.
3. On the linguistic, political and ecclesiastical estrangement generally, Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955); Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. ed. (Penguin, 1993), part I. The coronation of Charlemagne is recorded in the *Royal Frankish Annals* for 800.
4. 1 Clement 59:1 for the warning to those who disobey; on the letter's continued reading in the Corinthian assembly, Eusebius, *Church History* 4.23, quoting Dionysius of Corinth.
5. Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Romans*, salutation: the church that presides in love (*prokathemene tes agapes*).
6. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.2–3: with the church of Rome, on account of its preeminent authority, every church must agree; followed by the list of Roman bishops from Peter to Eleutherius.
7. On the Quartodeciman controversy and Irenaeus' remonstrance with Victor, Eusebius, *Church History* 5.23–24.
8. Council of Sardica (343), canons 3–5: canon 3 directs that those who tried the case “write to Julius, the bishop of Rome, and if he shall judge that the case should be retried,

let that be done, and let him appoint judges”; canon 4 forbids ordaining a successor to a deposed bishop who has appealed “unless the case shall have been determined in the judgment of the Roman bishop”; canon 5 provides for the rehearing. On the Apiarius affair and the African objection to canons transmitted as Nicene, the Councils of Carthage of 419–424.

9. Council of Ephesus (431), session 3: the intervention of the legate Philip. On the Eastern appeals, Theodoret, *Ep.* 113 to Pope Leo.

10. Leo I, *Ep.* 95, describing the assembly of 449 as a *latrocinium*.

11. Council of Chalcedon (451), session 2, the acclamation on the reading of the Tome of Leo.

12. The Formula of Hormisdas (519): at the Apostolic Chair the Catholic religion was always preserved unspotted. Cited in Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, on the doctrinal primacy of the popes.

13. Council of Constantinople I (381), canon 3; Council of Chalcedon (451), canon 28; Leo I, *Ep.* 104–106, rejecting the latter.

14. Gregory the Great, *Register*: Bk. V, ep. 18 (to John of Constantinople); Bk. V, ep. 20 (to the Emperor Maurice), that “the Universal Church falls from its standing ... when he who is called Universal falls”; Bk. V, ep. 43 (to Eulogius of Alexandria and Anastasius of Antioch), that if one patriarch is called universal “the name of Patriarch in the case of the rest is derogated”; and Bk. VII, ep. 33 (to Maurice), “whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist.” On bishops as true successors of the apostles and not papal vicars, Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* 27; First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, ch. 3.

15. Third Council of Constantinople (680–681), session 13, the sentence against the Monothelites; Honorius is named again in the Definition of Faith. On Leo II’s confirmation and the contested wording of his letter, the Latin and Greek texts differ. On the limits of the definition, First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, ch. 4.

16. On the disputes of 1054 and the legation of Cardinal Humbert, Runciman, *The Eastern Schism*, and Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, part I. Leo IX died on 19 April 1054; the bull was laid on the altar on 16 July.

17. Second Vatican Council, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 2–6, on the equal dignity of the Eastern rites and the duty of Eastern Catholics to preserve and, where necessary, restore their own traditions; *Lumen Gentium* 23.

18. Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, *Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion* (Balamand, 1993), esp. §12 and §16.

19. On Lyons II (1274) and Florence (1438–1445), the decree *Laetentur Caeli*; on Bessarion, his *Oratio dogmatica de unione*.

For Further Reading

The Letter of Clement to the Corinthians, c. A.D. 96—Rome intervening in another church. Free online at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1010.htm>.

Ignatius to the Romans, c. A.D. 107—the church that presides in love. Free online at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0107.htm>.

Against Heresies, Book III, by St. Irenaeus, c. A.D. 180—the succession of Rome. Free online at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103303.htm>.

Church History, by Eusebius—Clement at Corinth, and Victor and the Quartodecimans. Free online at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2501.htm>.

Pastor Aeternus, First Vatican Council (1870)—the definition itself. Free online at <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum20.htm>.

Unitatis Redintegratio, Second Vatican Council (1964), §§13–18 on the Eastern Churches. Free online at vatican.va.

The Orthodox Church, by Timothy Ware (Kallistos)—the standard Orthodox account of the schism.

The Eastern Schism, by Steven Runciman—the historian’s narrative of the separation.

The Early Papacy—To the Synod of Chalcedon in 451, by Adrian Fortescue.

Saints and Sinners—A History of the Popes, by Eamon Duffy.

An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, by St. John Henry Newman. Free online at <https://www.newmanreader.org/works/development/>.

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“He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ ... He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, ‘So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas’ (which means Peter).” — John 1:41–42

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

*as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.*

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A Note on Authority

This essay represents the author's articulation of *the Catholic case for the Roman primacy, and the Catholic assessment of the separation between East and West*, drawing on Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Church Fathers, and the major theological tradition. It is offered as a personal defense, not as an official statement of the Church's teaching. Where this defense is fortunate enough to align with the magisterial teaching of the Church, the credit belongs to the tradition that formed it. Where it falls short, the responsibility is the author's alone.