

His Grace Bishop of Nazianzus



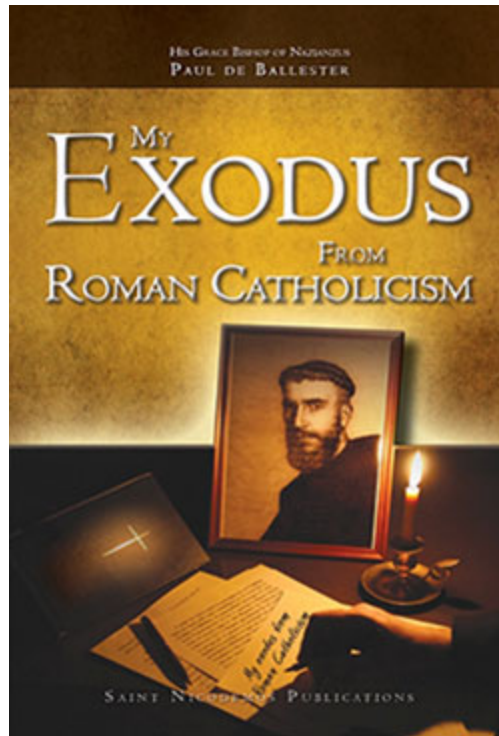
Paul de Ballester (1927-1984)

My Exodus

From Roman Catholicism

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*"And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."
(1 Peter 3:15)*

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FOREWORD TO THE GREEK EDITION

By the grace of the God of our Fathers, we have been deemed worthy to bring to fruition the publication of the present and apropos spiritual tome.

The author of this book is Bishop Paul de Ballester, a former Roman Catholic monk of Spanish descent. This is the narrative of his personal experiences, his own road to Damascus that ultimately led him to discover Orthodox Christianity. His acquaintance with Orthodoxy led him to the Truth, which is none other than Christ Himself. By coming to know Christ—or rather, through being known by Christ—he recognized the shortcomings of Roman Catholicism and its departure from God. This is precisely what made him turn to the Orthodoxy of the East—the Orthodoxy of Byzantium and Tradition. Initially published in 1954, the book describes the spiritual struggle that led to his conversion.

In a time of feverish ecumenical dialogues, the book's contemporary value prompted us to re-publish it, hoping that it will provide much-needed wisdom in our new age of globalization and inter-ecclesiastical pursuit of union. The testimony of a former Roman Catholic monk who converted to Orthodoxy can only offer—to both sides of the spectrum—tremendously valuable information and life principles. On one hand, it demonstrates the deviation and severance of the Roman Catholic Church from the body of the Church of Christ, and on the other, it attests to the preservation and continuation of the inherited Truth by the Orthodox Church. Moreover, because of his life principles and stance on this matter, the author spells out the methodology needed to guide the union of the Roman Catholic with the Orthodox Church. Consequently, it is our prayer that this book may serve as a most informative guidepost in the inter-ecclesiastical dialogue.

On the occasion of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the original edition of the book and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the martyrical death of the author, we re-publish it this year to honor the memory of His Grace Bishop of Nazianzus, Paul de Ballester.

We express our gratitude to the Abbot of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Mexico, Most Reverend Archimandrite Nectarios, who provided us with the pictures of Bishop Paul. We pray that the readers benefit greatly from this book, to the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ and to the honor of our most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary of Macheras.

The Abbot of the Holy Royal and Stavropegial Monastery of Macheras
Bishop of Lidra, Epiphanius,
along with my brotherhood in Christ

Holy Monastery of Macheras

March 25, 2009

A Word to the Reader

These pages were not written to justify the author's conversion to Orthodoxy; rather, they constitute the spontaneous overflow of a man's heartfelt gratitude and appreciation and a man's wish to offer an apologetic testimony to the purity of his newly discovered Orthodox faith and the boldness of her teaching. What makes the present work unique is not necessarily the topic, especially given the great number of existing epistemological studies examining it from every possible ecclesiological point of view. What makes this work original is the freshness of its approach and the unique manner of its analysis.

His Grace Bishop Paul de Ballester did not simply discuss the academic aspects of his theological crisis. On the contrary, his theology, intertwined with his very life, was the driving force propelling him toward the most painful spiritual journey and inevitable sacrifice: abandoning his church and subsequently facing his separation from his country of birth. Expressing such a profound theological experience without sacrificing self-honesty could only come to fruition through extraordinary inspiration and an adamant power of will.

In each chapter, the reader will have the opportunity to follow step by step the awesome and agonizing journey of this former Franciscan monk from his initial crisis of conscience until his final and decisive confession that Orthodoxy is the true Church of Christ.

Such conversions, whose number is progressively increasing, serve as a serious warning to the Roman Catholic Church that it has lost the privilege it had in the Middle Ages to reign as a dictatorial center of a political-ecclesiastical empire. Equally, they represent some of the most expressive guideposts for all those Christian groups still wandering along murky trails in search of the Shepherd's true sheepfold. Above all, however, they give us Orthodox one of the most valuable lessons: an objective avowal on the purity of our religious inheritance, emanating from the author's personal experience. This most pious testimony further illustrates the honor due to our predecessors for their resolve to keep the faith flawless through the harshest of historical trials and most difficult of times.

People such as Bishop de Ballester, who know what they believe and why they believe it, offer an unshakable testimony and a powerful confession of the Orthodox faith through their experience of what it means to come to the fullness of the Truth. With their steadfast and absolute conviction and with the characteristic enthusiasm of one who searched and found the Truth, they are called to shine the light of Orthodoxy onto the darkness of foreign Christian philosophies, and they do so with great zeal and success. Through such people, the ecumenical desire that the one flock be under one Shepherd—for which the Lord beseeched His Heavenly Father with much insistence—will one day become possible.

Stanislas Jedrezewsky

Massalia, March 1954

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Chapter 1

The First Doubts

The long and painstaking journey of my conversion to Orthodoxy began one day while I was in the process of re-organizing the library catalogs of the Roman Catholic monastery to which I belonged. This monastery, one of the most beautiful in the northern region of Spain, belonged to the monastic order of Saint Francis of Assisi. It was built on the Mediterranean coastline, a few miles outside of my birthplace, Barcelona.

At the time, the abbots of the monastery had assigned me the task of updating the catalogs of the books, transcripts, and authors of our voluminous library. This task would be instrumental in the assessment of the incalculable losses the library had sustained during the last Spanish civil war, when the monastery had been set ablaze and partially destroyed by the communists.

On one of those evenings, buried in the endless work, hidden behind mountains of old books and charred manuscripts, I made a discovery that puzzled me greatly. In an envelope that contained documents referring to the Holy Inquisition from around 1647, I found a copy of a decree written in Latin, proclaimed by Pope Innocent X. By this decree, any Christian who would dare to believe, follow, or profess the doctrine regarding Saint Paul's authentic apostolic authority^[1] was anathematized [eternally condemned] as a heretic. Furthermore, this paradoxical document compelled all faithful, under the threat of post mortem punishment, to accept that the Apostle Paul had never exercised his apostolic work freely or independently. In other words, from the moment he had become a Christian until the time of his death, Paul was under the constant monarchical authority of the Apostle Peter, the first among the popes and leaders of the church. Additionally, the decree asserted that Peter's absolute authority was exclusively and solely inherited by the subsequent popes and bishops of Rome through direct succession.

I confess that had I found in our monastery library a book forbidden by the Index,^[2] it would have been less of a surprise. Naturally, I was not ignorant of the exaggerated practices and machinations concerning dogmatic matters to which the courts of the Holy Inquisition had resorted during the Middle Ages and even during later years. That was a period when the Roman Catholic hierarchy would go to extreme lengths to substantiate *a theological justification for the imperialist ambitions of papism*. To succeed in this endeavor, Rome had given explicit orders to its theologians and preachers to prove—with all possible means—that the popes had received from God the authority to reign as caesars over the entire ecumenical church, given their position as heirs of the Apostle Peter's primacy.

Thus, a true crusade was organized in the West to disparage the Orthodox teaching regarding the Apostle Peter's primacy of honor. The purpose for this was two-fold. On one hand, it would develop a theological basis for *papal caesarism*, and on the other, it would *diminish the importance of the Eastern patriarchs' position* in terms of the monarchical claims of their Roman colleague. One of the main

ploy to fulfill this agenda was the circulation of a plethora of adulterated publications or misinterpretations of the Holy Fathers.

These misleading publications, supported by the misinterpretation of various Scriptural verses,^[3] attempted to have the notorious *Primatus Petri* shine forth as a special privilege bequeathed solely to the Apostle Peter and subsequently to his alleged successors, the Roman pontiffs. According to this privilege, the popes of Rome had the right to exercise monarchial and practically absolute authority over the ecumenical church, a notion against which the Orthodox Church rebelled. So an excess of anthologies and catenae^[4] of patristic verses relating to papal primacy—mostly absolutely false or heavily distorted, with a minimal basis of authentic content—were pressed in the print shops of the main monastic orders of the West and circulated in vast quantities throughout Mediterranean Europe.^[5]

Yet if the faithful comprehended that neither the Apostle Paul nor the other apostles were under the absolute authority of the so-called first pope, Simon Peter, then the entire edifice of the heavily distorted teaching of Papism would collapse on its own. To prevent this, the bishops of Rome never ceased to terrorize, condemn, and anathematize with postmortem punishments all those who dared to express the slightest doubt on this subject. Their cause was assisted by the courts of the Holy Inquisition, which, under the adage “the end justifies the means,”^[6] were authorized to use brute force such as torturing by fire, submerging in boiling oil, and skinning alive in order to beat into submission the most persistent and *unrepentant* Christians, *in the name of the Holy Trinity and for the general good of the Church*.

Nevertheless, I had never expected my church to reach such a level of fanaticism as to dare to prohibit and condemn the teaching of the Holy Scriptures that had been recorded with absolute clarity and taught by the apostles themselves, with a document such as the one I was holding in my hands. That document had exceeded all limits, especially since the condemnation of the faithful following the teaching of the Apostle Paul amounts to the absurd condemnation of the orthodox teaching of this apostle, who declares, in no uncertain terms, that he is not at all inferior to the most eminent of the apostles.^[7] In this context, the decree of Pope Innocent X seemed to be so implausible that I decided to examine the possibility of some typographical error or some accidental distortion of the authentic text, something not so unusual during its publication era.^[8]

In any case, whether authentic, forged, or simply distorted, I reckoned that this text was a rather curious bibliographical possession of our library, in need of serious attention and further research. Shortly thereafter, however, my initial interest changed into much confusion. After doing some additional research at the Central Library of Barcelona, I discovered that not only was this document unequivocally authentic, but its views were rather common at the time. In fact, in the two decisions of the Holy Inquisition, those of 1327^[9] and 1351^[10] and prior to the one of 1647, Popes John XXII and Clement VI had anathematized and condemned every man and every teaching daring to refute the argument that the Apostle Paul obeyed the mandates of the Apostle Peter, the first of the popes. These mandates, which no one dared question, were presumed to be under the Apostle Peter’s absolute authority. Point in case was the anathema Pope Martin V placed on John Huss at the Synod of

Constance.^[11] Later, Popes Pius IX at the Synod of Vatican,^[12] Pius X in 1907, and Benedict XIV in 1920 repeated the same condemnation in the most official and unequivocal terms.^[13]

Since the possibility of forgery proved to be unlikely, I found myself tormented by a deep crisis of conscience. I found it impossible to accept that the Apostle Paul was subordinate to human authority. For me, Paul's independent and unhindered ministry among the nations, akin to the ministry of the Apostle Peter among the Hebrews, is an irrefutable fact of the greatest significance.^[14]

The Apostle Paul, "*not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,*"^[15] thought Simon Peter second to James among those considered to be pillars in the Church of Christ.^[16] Subsequently, he adds that the positions they assume in these matters find him indifferent since they are simply their personal preferences which God does not take seriously.^[17] At any rate, the Apostle Paul clearly declared that whoever those apostles were, he was not at all inferior to any of them.^[18]

To me this was loud and clear, especially given the exegetical works of the Holy Fathers that leave no room for the slightest doubt on this issue. Saint John Chrysostom says the following about the Apostle Paul:

[Paul] declares his equality to the rest of the apostles and wishes to be compared not only with all the others but with the first one of them, to prove that all of them had the same authority.^[19]

In addition, the *Consensus Patrum* (the consensus of the Fathers) was that: "All of the apostles were exactly like Peter; namely, endowed with the same honor and authority."^[20]

It would have been impossible for the Apostle Paul to be under the tutelage of some higher authority of another apostle since the power of the apostle is "the ultimate power and the apex of all authorities."^[21]

Saint Cyprian shares this position as well:

They were all shepherds equally even though the flock was one. And it [the flock] was shepherded by the apostles, as they conformed to the same thought.^[22]

Saint Ambrose of Milan further adds:

If the Apostle Peter had some precedence in relation to the other apostles, this was a precedence of confession and not of honor; of faith and not of degree.^[23]

Justifiably then, this same Saint later wrote referring to the popes: “They cannot have the inheritance of Peter, those who do not keep the same faith with him.”^[24] Although this matter was crystal clear, Roman Catholic dogma, being diametrically opposed to it, posed a terrible dilemma to me:

Should I knowingly choose and abide by the Gospel and the Tradition of the Fathers or side with the arbitrary teaching of the Catholic Church?

To make matters worse, according to Roman Catholic soteriology^[25] [doctrine of salvation], a Christian must believe that the Church is a monarchy^[26] and its monarch is the Pope.^[27] Accordingly, the Synod of Vatican, combining all the previous convictions on this matter, officially declared:

If anyone says...that Peter, the first bishop and pope of Rome, was not crowned as prince of the apostles by Christ and [established] as the visible head of the church militant.... let him be anathema.^[28]

In the face of these two diametrically opposed doctrinal positions, how could I possibly compromise my conscience?

Chapter 2

Spiritual Counsel

Adrift in the midst of this unrelenting spiritual tempest, I approached my father confessor and naively expressed to him my dilemma and concerns. My confessor, one of the most educated and seasoned hieromonks of the monastery, immediately realized that this involved a most serious and complex matter. He surrendered to some moments of silence while searching in vain for some satisfactory resolution to my predicament. He finally spoke, but he gave such a twist to this issue, that I was truly caught off guard.

The Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, he told me in the most nonchalant manner, have troubled you. Set both of them aside and confine yourself in strict adherence to the infallible teaching of our church, without delving into much questioning and examining. Do not permit some creatures of God, whosoever they may be, to scandalize your faith in His church.

This totally unexpected answer succeeded in increasing my spiritual confusion. I had always believed that the word of God was precisely one of the very things that one could not "set aside." According to my perception, the Holy Scripture was the determining factor of our orthodoxy [as Roman Catholics] ^[29] and not vice versa. In more precise terms, Holy Scripture commands: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."^[30]

I don't need to hear 'your opinions' or 'my opinion' says the Blessed Augustine, but let us rather hear 'what the Lord says.' Undoubtedly, there are the Scriptures of the Lord to whose authority we must both obey and submit. Let us then seek to find the true Church in these [Scriptures] and let us base our conversation on these only.^[31]

Without giving me the slightest chance to respond, my father confessor added:

Instead, I shall give you a list of our own authors in whose works you will regain your spiritual calmness. Through these books, you will perceive the clarity of the teaching of our church without any difficulty at all.

Then, asking me whether I had anything "more important" to discuss, he terminated the conversation.

A few days later, my father confessor departed from the monastery on a preaching tour to the other churches and monastic communities of our order. Having supplied me with the list of books he had mentioned, he asked me to promise that I would correspond with him on a regular basis to keep him informed on the voyage through my "spiritual unrest."

Even though his arguments and input had left me completely unconvinced, I went ahead and collected all the books he had recommended with the decision to study them with the greatest objectivity and conscientiousness possible. The majority of these books were theological texts and manuals of papal decisions and papal ecumenical councils. I threw myself into studying them with genuine interest and without using any precautionary measures, with the exception of the Holy Scripture, which I kept open in front of me as a “lantern unto my feet and a light unto my path.”^[32]

I was not at all willing to permit either my father confessor or my church to turn me into somebody like the Jews whom the Lord had reproached as deluded because of their ignorance of the Scriptures.^[33] On the contrary, I was determined to stay faithful, following the example of those believers (in Veroia) who, after they had “received the word with all readiness of mind”^[34] were praised by the Apostle Paul because they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”^[35] In doing this, they were safeguarded from the deception caused by “philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”^[36]

As I continued reading and progressing in the study of the recommended texts, I began to suspect—only to become gradually convinced—that I was almost completely ignorant about the true nature and organic constitution of my church.

Having been introduced to Christianity and baptized, after the completion of my secondary education I took some courses in philosophy. At the time, I was still at the initial stage of comprehending Roman Catholic theology, a field of study quite new and unfamiliar to me. Until then, Christianity and the Roman Church had represented to me two ideas expressing one and the same reality. Cradled in the quietude and calmness of my monastic life, I had been only concerned with the mystical aspect of Christianity. Immersed in my philosophical studies, I had not had the opportunity to research in depth the reasons behind the organic structure of my church.

Reading the official texts that my father confessor had shrewdly selected for my benefit, I gradually understood the true nature of the paradoxical religio-political monarchy that constitutes the contemporary Roman Church. At this point, I believe that a brief overview of its characteristics would be informative.

Chapter 3

The Monarchy of the Pope

According to Roman Catholic thought, the Church “is nothing more than an absolute monarchy”^[37] whose absolute despot is the pope who functions as such in all her expressions.^[38]

On this monarchy of the bishop of Rome “all the power and stability of the Church is anchored,”^[39] “whose existence would otherwise not be possible.”^[40] Christianity itself is “anchored and totally based on the doctrine of Papism,”^[41] and, furthermore, “the doctrine of Papism is the most significant element of Christianity,”^[42] “its epitome and its essence.”^[43]

The monarchic authority of the pope—as supreme leader and head of the church, cornerstone of the Church, infallible teacher of the faith, representative of God on earth, shepherd of shepherds, and supreme hierarch—is absolutely binding, can be executed at any moment, and has ecumenical force. This authority extends by *divine right*^[44] upon all baptized Christians of the whole world,^[45] simultaneously and individually. This dictatorial authority can be applied directly and at any moment upon any Christian, whether lay or clergy, bishop, archbishop, cardinal, or patriarch, and even upon any church, regardless of denomination or language^[46] because the pope is the supreme bishop of every bishopric throughout the world.^[47]

Those who refuse to acknowledge his authority or do not submit to it *blindly*^[48] are “schismatic, heretical, impious, and sacrilegious; consequently, their souls are already predestined to be thrown in the outer darkness because it is an indispensable condition for the salvation of their soul to believe in the God-given doctrine of Papism and to submit to its representatives.”^[49] In this way, the pope seems to incarnate that imaginary pre-Christian leader whose imminent coming was believed by Cicero and whom all people need to accept in order to be saved.^[50]

On the basis of this Roman Catholic doctrine, Pope Gregory VII affirmed: “Given that the pope has the right to intervene and to judge all spiritual matters of all Christians and each one of them separately, he is enabled that much more to intervene in their mundane and earthly affairs.”^[51] For this reason, even though he can limit his authority to the imposition of spiritual penalties and to the denial of salvation of all those who refuse to submit to him, “*he has the right to compel the faithful to believe in him.*”^[52] It is for this reason that “the Church holds two swords: one symbolic of the spiritual and the other of the worldly authority. The first sword is in the hands of priests and the other in the hands of kings and soldiers. Yet, even the second sword is under the discernment and will of the priests.”^[53]

The pope, contending he is the representative and earthly vicar of Him Whose “kingdom is not of this world,”^[54] of Him Who forbade His apostles to exercise even the slightest predominance and hegemony over the faithful,^[55] enthrones himself as worldly king, thus continuing in his person the caesaro-imperialist tradition of Rome, the Eternal City and queen of the world.^[56] Throughout the course of history, the pope became the master of great nations and declared the bloodiest wars against other

Christian kings in his quest to conquer new lands or simply to satisfy his unquenchable thirst for dominance and power.

He also owned thousands of slaves and often played a central and decisive role in international politics. It is the duty of the Christian rulers and governors to submit to the king ordained by God, who enfranchises his kingdom and his political-ecclesiastical throne and “who was established as the splendor and anchor of all the kingdoms of the world.”^[57] Today, the worldly kingdom of the pope is confined to Vatican City, which is an autonomous state with political representation in every nation on earth and with its own military, police force, weapons, prisons, currency, and commerce.

As the consummation of his complete authority, the pope has one more outrageous privilege, totally unique in the entire world: he is presumed to be “infallible” by divine right according to the doctrinal definition of the Vatican Synod of the year 1870.^[58] Such a monstrous and unimaginable privilege has never even occurred in the wildest dreams and imagination of the most barbarian and derailed idolatrous religions. Nevertheless, as a result of this doctrine, “all humanity must address him with the same words which were once addressed to the Savior: ‘Thou hast the words of eternal life.’”^[59]

Thus, the presence of the Holy Spirit to lead the Church “into all truth”^[60] is unnecessary, as are the Holy Scripture and the holy Tradition, because now there is a “god” on earth with the authority to invalidate, or even declare as deluded,^[61] the teachings of the God of Heaven. Based on this claim of infallibility, the pope is the absolute Rule of Faith.^[62] He can promulgate, even without the consent of the Church, as many new dogmas as he wishes, to which the faithful must strictly adhere and blindly obey if they want to avoid the tortures of hell after death.^[63]

“It depends solely on the will and pleasure of his Holiness,” wrote Cardinal Baronius, “for what he wishes must be deemed ‘holy and sacred by the entire Church,’^[64] and his pastoral epistles must be considered, and believed, and obeyed as ‘Canonical Scriptures.’”^[65]

A natural consequence of the doctrine of infallibility is that the papal teachings must be kept with blind obedience. This is precisely what Cardinal Bellarmine, a saint of the Roman Church, presented in no uncertain terms in his notorious *Theologia*:

If one day the pope fell into the error of imposing sins while prohibiting virtues, the Church would be obliged to believe that sins are indeed beneficial and virtues are bad. Alternatively, she would be committing a sin against her conscience.^[66]

Cardinal Zabarella is even more preposterous on this matter:

If God and the pope convene at a certain Synod, [...] the pope can do [there] almost anything God can do, [...] and the pope does whatever he wishes, even violations; therefore, he is something more and higher than God.^[67]

When I completed the study of these books, I saw myself as a foreigner within the bosom of my church. It became apparent to me that her organic synthesis had no relationship whatsoever with the Church established by Christ, which the apostles and their successors had organized and which the Holy Fathers had described and clarified. This papal organization could hardly be identified with the Church of Christ since it is obviously built not on *the Rock* which is Christ Himself, but on the quicksand of some alleged privileges of the pope, privileges which were purportedly bequeathed to him by Simon Peter, who most certainly never had them or even imagined them.

We, says Saint Augustine, one of the greater Fathers of the Church, who are Christians in our words and in our deeds, do not believe in Peter but in Him in Whom Peter himself also believed [...] He, Christ, the Teacher of Peter, Who catechized him in the way that leads to eternal life, He is our unique and only Teacher.^[68]

Really, how could I possibly accept the infallibility of the popes, who usurp a title promoting themselves as *the exclusive heirs* of the Apostle Peter, who, more than the rest of the apostles, was told by the Lord on several occasions that he (Peter) did not know what he was saying?^[69] Where was the infallibility of Peter when he was reprimanded by the Apostle Paul for being clearly in the wrong^[70] because he “walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel”?^[71] Are those who call themselves his “official successors” to the papal throne and to the bishopric of Rome infallible? In fact, they knew very well that they harbored quite a few scandalous names in their lineage such as that of Pope Marcellus, the notorious apostate and idolater, who, as everyone knows, sacrificed in the temple of Aphrodite and in front of her altar.^[72] Was Pope Julius infallible, he who was excommunicated as a heretic by the Synod of Sardice?^[73] Was Liberius infallible, he who was a follower of the delusions of Arius and who condemned Athanasios, the great champion of Orthodoxy?^[74] Was Felix II infallible, he who, according to Saint Athanasios, was elected Pope by three eunuchs and ordained by three spies of the emperor? Such a man was a worthy candidate of his body of electors, given his well-known heretical beliefs, and his overall conduct, befitting an antichrist.^[75] Was Honorius infallible, he who subscribed to the heresy of monothelism?^[76] What about Gelasios who held heretical positions about the doctrine of the Divine Eucharist? Was Sixtus V infallible, he who circulated an edition of the Holy Scripture which he “corrected” by himself based on the authority and the fullness of his apostolic power? That edition was so distorted by all kinds of delusions, that it was soon withdrawn because it was such a great scandal.^[77] Was Urbanus infallible, he who condemned the theory of Galileo that the Earth revolves around the Sun?^[78] Was Pope Zachariah infallible, he who prohibited anyone from believing that the Earth is round by threat of anathema?^[79] And what can be said of Pius II, who had the amazing sincerity to send a friendly reminder to King Charles VII of France warning him not to believe the words of the popes because most of the time they speak out of passion or self-interest?^[80] Was Pius IV infallible, he who dared to repeal the Seventh Canon of the Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus^[81] and who violated the oath he swore at the ritual of his enthronement?^[82]

Saint Cyprian says that it is the Church, and not the bishop of Rome, which constitutes the “pure and life-giving water that cannot be blurred or adulterated, because the spring from which it flows is in itself pure and crystal clear.”^[83]

Our Lord Jesus Christ promised His permanent support until the end of age to the entire Church and not exclusively to the popes.^[84] For the benefit of the entire Church and not only for that of Peter and his successors, He promised to ask from His Father the “*Spirit of Truth*,”^[85] the very Spirit that teaches “*all the truth*”^[86] and all that the Lord taught.^[87] It is precisely for this reason that the Apostle Paul calls the Church, and not Peter, “*the pillar and ground of the truth*.”^[88] Likewise, Saint Irenaeus teaches that we must seek the truth of Christ in the Church and nowhere else because “within her bosom, we find it pure, complete, and unadulterated, with the utmost certainty.”^[89]

The Lord addressed not only Simon Peter but all His apostles and disciples saying, “*He who hears you, hears me*.”^[90] Besides, throughout the entire history of the ancient Church, from its inception until the great schism, there is not a single precedent either of any great disagreement or a momentous matter of faith that has been resolved by the bishops of Rome. In my view, this is quite inexplicable if we were to suppose that the popes were indeed recognized as the true, absolute, and, above all, infallible leaders of the ecumenical Church.

It is common knowledge that not a single one of the great heresies was defeated by a pope but rather by a synod, or through a Church Father or saintly theologian. Arianism, for example, was condemned by the Synod of Nicea and not by the pope, who himself was infected by this heresy. The Synod of Ephesus condemned Nestorianism; Saint Epiphanius confounded the Gnostics; the Blessed Augustine refuted the cacodoxies of Pelagianism, and so on.

Furthermore, the bishops of Rome never served as arbiters in any of these great ecclesiastical matters; on the contrary, they were often the ones indicted and prosecuted on matters of faith by other bishops, patriarchs, or synods. In this manner the Synod of Arelat resolved the contention between the bishop of Rome and the bishops of Africa regarding the matter of rebaptism.^[91] Similarly, it was the African Church that wrote a strong admonition to the bishops of Rome and Alexandria warning them to put an end to enmity and seek peace.^[92] The patriarch of Alexandria in unison with the Eastern bishops excommunicated Pope Julius at the Synod of Sardice.^[93] Pope Honorius was condemned and anathematized by the Sixth Ecumenical Synod,^[94] and so on.

Having gained an unwavering conviction about the accuracy of all this evidence—a conviction that has never left me since—I wrote the following letter to my father confessor at the first instance of communication after our separation.

I have studied the books so kindly suggested by your reverence. Nevertheless, my conscience does not permit me to violate the commandments of God and place my trust in human teachings^[95] that lack even the slightest biblical foundation. Such are the assorted Papist absurdities that have spawned from the irrational doctrine of infallibility. We acknowledge the true Church based on biblical criteria, as stated by the Blessed Augustine, and not on apophthegmatic verbalism, nor episcopal synods, nor the letter of dissensions—whichever they happen to be—nor on deceptive signs and wonders. We base our acknowledgement only on those things that are found written in the prophets, in the psalms, in the words of the Shepherd Himself, in the works and the teachings of the Evangelists and, in short, on the

canonical authority of the Holy Scriptures.^[96] Furthermore, the same Holy Father [the Blessed Augustine] writes against the Donatists:

I no longer wish to hear your opinion or my opinion, but let all of us abide by 'thus says the Lord.' Undoubtedly, there are Scriptures of the Lord onto whose authority we all agree, obey, and submit. Let us then seek to find the Church in these and let us discuss our differences based on these Scriptures.^[97]

And so, I concluded my letter to my father confessor with these words:

I shall never distance myself from the principle that provides the true Christian rule for the test of faith and every doctrine, which is the authority of the word of God and the Tradition of His Church.^[98] Your doctrines are irreconcilable with this rule.

He did not take long to respond:

You did not adhere to the advice and to the orientation I offered, my father confessor complained, and you let the Bible continue its dangerous influence on your soul. The holy books are like fire, which when it does not illumine, burns and darkens... and for this reason the popes correctly posited that "it is a scandalous delusion to believe that all Christians can read the Holy Scriptures",^[99] since our theologians confirm that "these consist of a dark cloud, a parapet that often becomes a refuge even to atheists."^[100] According to our infallible leaders, "the belief in the clarity of the Scriptures is a heterodox dogma".^[101] As far as Tradition goes, I should not find it necessary to remind you that "in matters of faith, we are first and foremost obliged to follow the pope, more so than one thousand Augustines, Jeromes, Gregories, Chrysostoms, etc".^[102] And when we possess the interpretation given to us by Rome on any text of the Bible whatsoever, we must believe that we possess the truth of the word of God, irrespective of whether this interpretation may seem to us absurd and contradictory to the very meaning of the text."^[103]

His position, however, bolstered my personal conviction even more. Despite all his theories, despite all the dogmas of our (Roman Catholic) Church, despite even the pope himself, I would never set aside the word of God, which is absolutely and indisputably perfect and lucid to those who have found the true knowledge.^[104] This is the word of Light,^[105] which can seem nebulous only to those who are on the way to their perdition and whose spirit is blinded by the god of this age.^[106] The Holy Scripture is the word of life,^[107] grace,^[108] truth,^[109] and salvation,^[110] and I did not wish to neglect it and find myself liable at the hour of judgment.^[111]

I was well aware that faith in Holy Scripture was the most accurate^[112] and absolutely catholic faith,^[113] since, according to Saint Athanasius,^[114] this alone is sufficient for the profession of the truth.

For this reason Saint John the Chrysostom stresses the fact that “when we have the Holy Scriptures, it is senseless to seek other teachers outside of these.”^[115] “In these [Holy Scriptures],” writes Saint Isidore of Pelusium, “[there] exists everything we need to know”^[116] and “everything we are interested in knowing.”^[117] Basil the Great adds further that “it is an evident imperfection of our faith and proof of pride to reject something found in the Holy Scripture or, alternatively, to accept something not recorded there.”^[118]

Based on this, the Holy Fathers come to the obvious conclusion that “we must believe only what is written in the sacred books and neither seek^[119] nor ever use^[120] what is not written there.” By contradicting and opposing the Scriptures, my church lost all validity in my eyes, since she became one and the same with those heretics who, according to Saint Irenaeus, “once they were reproved by the word of God, they turned against it to reproach it.”^[121]

The great Chrysostom further writes on this:

He who adjusts himself to the framework of the Holy Scriptures is the true Christian. He, who fights them, finds himself outside the rule of faith. And if this one comes to tell you that the Scripture teaches what he believes, then, tell me, have you no mind of your own or reasoning ability?^[122]

This was the final contact I had with my spiritual father. I considered it a lost cause to continue our correspondence so I did not write to him again. Neither did he seek to learn any news about me after that, choosing instead to distance himself from any further involvement in my unpleasant ordeal. He was concerned that it could ultimately hurt his excellent chances of promotion to the episcopacy ‘by the grace of the apostolic see’ (*Apostolicae Sedis Gratia*), which he had served so faithfully.

Still, I did not stop there. I had begun to diverge from the divergence of my church, setting course on a new path, feeling unable to stop until I reached some positive stance that was at least theoretically sound. The drama I experienced in the course of those days was that, even though I felt myself increasingly distant from Papism, I did not yet feel any inclination toward approaching any other ecclesiastical reality.

Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Anglicanism were, in my view, very vague ideas and it was neither the right time for me nor did I have the opportunity to think that they had the slightest connection with my personal circumstances. Despite everything, I loved my Church, the Church that had made me a Christian and whose cassock I wore. Therefore, it became necessary for me to study this matter on a much deeper and even broader scale, before I could gradually reach the painful realization that my Church did not actually exist and that I had no place in the Papist community. And indeed, given the dictatorial authority of the pope, the authority of the Church and of the episcopal body is for all practical purposes nonexistent. According to Roman Catholic theology:

The authority of the Church is authentic and effective only when it coincides with the will of the pope. Otherwise, it is of no value whatsoever.^[123]

Consequently, the net worth of the pope is the same with or without the Church. In other words, the pope is everything and the Church is nothing. With good reason then and much sadness Bishop Maret wrote:

In changing the constitution of the Church, we also change its dogma. From now on, it will be more accurate [for Roman Catholics] to confess in the Divine Liturgy, 'I believe in the pope,' instead of saying, 'I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.'^[124]

The significance and the role of the bishops are limited to the position of simple associates, subservient representatives of the Papist authority, scattered to the four corners of the earth. They submit to this authority just as the simple faithful do. The Papists attempt to justify this condition based on an absurd interpretation of a verse in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John^[125] according to which (they say):

The Lord bequeathed to the Apostle Peter and first pope the pastoral commission over His lambs and sheep; namely, the commission of the supreme and absolute shepherd of all the faithful, who are symbolized as lambs, and over all the rest, apostles and bishops, who are symbolized as sheep.^[126]

Furthermore, the bishops in Roman Catholicism are not considered at all successors of the apostles,^[127] on account of the following belief:

The authorities of the apostles were lost with them and consequently were not passed down to their succeeding bishops. Only the authority of Peter, under which all other authorities fall, was transferred to his successors within Papism.^[128] Accordingly, "there is a tremendous difference between the succession of Peter and the succession of any other apostles. The Roman pontiff succeeds Peter as the official shepherd of the entire Church and, consequently, has all the authorities emanating from Him Who bequeathed them to Peter, whereas the rest of the bishops do not actually succeed the apostles, because they were mere shepherds empowered [by Peter], and as such cannot have successors."^[129]

According to Papism, therefore, those who hold the office of the bishop do not inherit any apostolic authority and do not possess any other authority except the one they receive, not directly from God, but from the supreme pontiff of Rome: "The authority of the bishops emanates directly and

straight from the pope.”^[130] This I considered an unjustifiable offense against the episcopal office, which was sacrificed and rendered worthless for the sake of bolstering and elevating papal authority.

One does not need to have an extensive knowledge of the history of the ancient Church to understand that ever since the apostolic age the order of the bishops has founded its authority on the premise that “it succeeded the apostles and governed the Church with the same power ^[131] and the same office that they had.”^[132] According to Saint Athanasius, it was the Lord Himself who instituted the office of the episcopate through the apostles.^[133] And so, Saint Gregory the Great clearly teaches:

“Today in the church, the bishops hold the position of the apostles.”^[134]

Saint Ignatius of Antioch posits that the apostolic authority received by the bishops proceeds from God the Father ^[135] and further adds that the bishop does not submit to anyone other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself ^[136] Consequently, “the gold chain that unites the faithful to God connects link to link and passes from the bishops to the apostles, from the apostles to Jesus Christ and from Him to God the Father.”^[137]

This teaching was so well embedded in the Tradition of the Church and was expressed so overtly by the Holy Fathers that for me there was absolutely no doubt whatsoever about its validity. One only needs to read the ancient episcopal catalogs left by Saint Irenaeus, Tertullian, Eusebius, Saint Jerome, Saint Optatus of Milev, and so many other Fathers and ecclesiastical historiographers, who recorded and attempted to describe with the utmost care the succession of the bishops who presided over the various Churches instituted by the apostles. After the names of the founding apostles, the names of the bishops of every see were recorded successively up to the time of the authors of these catalogs. So then, what is the purpose of so much care, so much interest, and so much effort to prove this apostolic succession, if, as Roman Catholicism contends, “the authority of the apostles was lost along with the apostles themselves and was not transferred to their successors, the holders of the office of the episcopate”?^[138]

Very consistent with the Papist teachings about the authority and power of the bishops is the Roman Church’s position on the Ecumenical Synods themselves. It is believed that the Ecumenical Synods have no added value other than the one the pope confers upon them, and so the papists assert:

The Ecumenical Synods neither are, nor can they be, anything other than Christian conferences called by the power of the Sovereign and conducted with him as the Chairman.^[139]

Since this sovereign is not the Lord but the pope, first and foremost an Ecumenical Synod cannot exist unless called personally by the pope as the Chairman ^[140] or his immediate representatives.^[141] At any given moment during the proceedings of an Ecumenical Synod, the pope, and only he, can postpone, move, or dissolve it.^[142] It is enough for the pope to exit the hall saying, “I am no longer here,” to have the Ecumenical Synod be reduced to a mere meeting, and, in the event its members continue to

persist, to a lawless and schismatic group.^[143] Even the decrees of a Synod are virtually worthless, if they are not approved by the pope and published with the seal of his authority.^[144]

In reading all these texts, I came to a realization totally inconceivable to me up to that point, that, in essence, all the Roman Catholic bishops who had gathered together from around the globe at the first Vatican Synod in 1869 consented to demote themselves and become voiceless servants of the bishop of Rome, by accepting the dogma of Papal infallibility. The pope served essentially as the dictator of that Synod from the day it commenced until it concluded, so that anything he wished was passed, while nothing he opposed was accomplished. Indeed, this is well documented by the announcements of one of the members of the Synod, the German Archbishop Strossmayer, whose sober conscience was scandalized in witnessing the order of the episcopate deprived of any power and freedom of will in the face of an almighty pope:

At the Synod of Vatican we did not have any essential freedom. For this reason, it cannot be considered a true Synod with the right to draft decrees with binding power over the conscience of the entire Catholic world [...] Anything that could ensure the freedom of speech and expression was most carefully censored and suppressed [...] and, as if all this were not enough, this synod constituted the most scandalous public violation of the ancient ecclesiastical axiom *'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.'*^[145]

In other words, it was necessary for the alleged papal infallibility to be applied and enforced in the most obvious and appalling way before that same infallibility was declared a dogma. Furthermore, there were additional allegations about the overall legality of the synod, such as the fact that the bishops of Italian descent, mostly high officials, were the colossal majority in it, having practically the power of monopoly in voting; or that the vicarii were subjected to the most scandalous propaganda, while the entire mechanism of papal authority, enforced at the time by the pope in Rome, succeeded in intimidating everyone and suppressing all freedom of expression. Therefore, one may easily deduce what sort of freedom of discussion (an inviolable principle in every synod) we were afforded at the Synod of Vatican.^[146]

During my severe spiritual crisis, I nearly gave up all my studies. I spent all the free time allotted by my monastic order meditating in the solace of my cell. For months on end, I researched the biblical, apostolic, and patristic sources pertaining to the structure and organization of the early Church, increasing my knowledge in this broad subject.

Naturally, this painstaking work could not be done in total secrecy. It became apparent that my overall conduct was heavily influenced by the dilemma that had absorbed my whole being. I did not hesitate to seek guidance outside the monastery from persons and works that could possibly answer my questions.

As time went on, I started, with much discretion and caution, to reveal aspects of my ordeal to various church intellectuals whom I had befriended over the years. By discreetly disclosing and alluding

to some aspects of my concerns, I received their valuable input, advice, and opinions on this intricate and significant topic that greatly preoccupied my existence.

However, I soon discovered that most of the people I had trusted were much more fanatical than I had presumed. Even though they recognized the absurdity of the entire Papist teaching, they remained hopelessly bound to the idea that “the submission due to the pope demands the blind consent of the mind” [\[147\]](#) and to the adage of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits:

In order to have the truth in all things and never be led astray, we must always abide by the constant principle that if we perceive something with our eyes as being white, it may actually be black, if this is what the Church hierarchy declares. [\[148\]](#)

Influenced by this fanatical mindset, which sterilizes any rational argument, a priest of this order and long-standing friend of mine, confided in me the following:

Everything you say is unquestionably logical and quite obvious from every point of view, and I have no reason not to accept it. However, we, the Jesuits, outside the three usual promises, must especially abide by a fourth one, much more crucial than those of obedience, purity, and poverty: we also promise unfailing submission to the pope. [\[149\]](#) *For this I am obliged to choose to be thrown to eternal condemnation with the pope, rather than be saved with all these unshakable truths of yours.*

Chapter 4

“You are Peter...”

I was advised by the most objective people of my faith to study the biblical basis of Papacy. They meant that I was to review the Scriptural verses invoked by Papism as proof and justification of the so-called “Primacy of Peter.”^[150] I found this advice fair and very much to my liking since it would provide the opportunity to research the subject in the light and on the basis of the Holy Scriptures. Naturally, I selected as the object of my research a most prominent verse, one that appears in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel and has served as the foundation of the teaching regarding the primacy: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.”^[151]

For Roman Catholicism, these phrases of the Lord addressed to Simon Peter consist of the divine institution of his papal authority.^[152] The Jesuit Bernardino Llorca writes:

As reward for his outstanding confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ, He announced to Peter that he would be the corner stone, in essence, the head and the highest authority of the edifice of His Church.^[153]... [F]or the apostle, this metaphor [Peter = Rock], which shows that he is the foundation of the Church, clearly proves that he is established as her supreme ruler. The meaning of this metaphor is that he must be for the Church that which a foundation is for an edifice. And as in every edifice the foundation stabilizes and unifies the entire structure, likewise in the Church, he [Peter] is the one bestowing stability and true unity.^[154]

According to the aforementioned interpretation of this Scriptural verse, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that Saint Peter, the first pope, “is the foundation and cornerstone of the Church, the supreme ruler and her head, and the infallible teacher of the world.”^[155] Indeed, this is the official and required teaching [of the Roman Catholic Church], namely that “according to the will and mandate of God, the church rests upon the blessed Apostle Peter, just as an edifice rests upon its foundation.”^[156] Consequently, according to the Synod of Vatican, this blatantly erroneous teaching is presented to be in total agreement “with the apparent and absolutely overt meaning of the Holy Scriptures, as it has been always understood by the Catholic Church.”^[157]

Despite these assertions, in my opinion, this papal claim, which was supposed to have been “always understood by the Catholic Church,” was diametrically opposite to “the apparent and absolutely overt meaning of the Holy Scriptures.” Actually, few things in the Holy Scriptures are as apparent and as overt as this truth: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.^[158]

“Jesus Christ is the only true foundation of the Church” according to Saint Athanasius.^[159] The Apostle Paul boasts about the Lord’s being and having laid the sole foundation. The Apostle Paul together with the Apostle Peter “built the Church of Rome”^[160] because “the Lord Jesus Christ alone is

the foundation of all sectors of His Church.”^[161] “Whenever the Holy Scripture refers to a foundation,” says Saint Gregory the Great, “it is not meant for anyone else but for the Lord.”^[162]

It seems preposterous that anyone who has read the canonical books of the Old ^[163] and New Testament ^[164] even once could deny that Jesus Christ is the Rock and foundation of the Church.

The words of the Lord, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, are not repeated by any of the other evangelists. Although John was an eyewitness of the confession of Peter, he does not give even the slightest hint about this in his Gospel, and neither does Luke or Mark, who was a disciple, companion, and interpreter of Peter himself and recorded his Gospel according to the spirit and teaching of the Apostle Peter.

Apparently the evangelists were neither adherents nor proponents of the papal primacy, insofar that there is no record in their sacred work of this teaching, which, according to Roman Catholicism, constitutes “the most important element of Christianity,” ^[165] “its epitome and its essence.”^[166] Perhaps it would be more correct to hold the Holy Spirit Itself responsible for this inexcusable omission, given that they acted under Its guidance and “spake as they were moved by [It].”^[167]

Similarly, the immediate disciples of the apostles, during the second generation of Christianity, give no indication of the passage in question. In fact, in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, out of the 412 Scriptural verses quoted, not a single one refers to the confession of Peter, which happens to be solely and exclusively recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. The same holds true for the other Scriptural verses employed by the Roman Catholics to support the papal primacy.

The notorious Roman Catholic version of the “You are Peter...” is also absent from The Didache (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), from Clement, from Ignatius, from Polycarp, from Barnabas, from the Epistle to Diognetus, from the fragments of Papias, and even from *The Shepherd of Hermas*, whose main objective is the organization and the constitution of the Church. Consequently, it seems most apparent that the Church of the first two centuries was oblivious to that element, which supposedly serves as “the absolute basis of Christianity.”^[168]

This significant omission becomes even more conspicuous in *The Shepherd of Hermas*, since Hermas was the brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome, and, as we are informed from the Muratorian Canon, wrote this work during the episcopacy of his brother. In this work, Hermas describes the position of the apostles, the bishops, the teachers and the deacons,^[169] the officials,^[170] and the presiding presbyters^[171] in the Church. In fact, in *The Shepherd of Hermas*, which is a most detailed account of the Church’s organization, replete with images and symbols for its hierarchy, there is not a single testimony suggesting the unique position of a bishop as the general leader of the entire Christian community. It is significant, therefore, that even the brother of the bishop of Rome should be completely oblivious to the matter of papal primacy.

The first reference to the Scriptural verse about the confession of Peter appears in the second half of the second century, around 160, when Justin Martyr wrote his *Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon*. The nonchalant manner in which Justin describes the Apostle’s confession is quite revealing:

One of his disciples, who confessed Him Son of God by revelation from the Father, while he was named Simon at first, He then named him Peter.^[172]

Toward the end of the same century and for the first time in the ecclesiastical philology, there appeared a reference mark on this verse, although not very trustworthy. It is found in the Diatessaron Gospel of the Syriac priest, Tatian. This work was of such great importance, that it almost fully superseded the four canonical Gospels in the Syriac Church, at least until the first half of the fourth century. This reference mark is as follows: “Blessed are you, Simon. And the gates of Hades will not conquer you.”^[173] Based on the meaning given in the East to the word “the gates,” we can only conclude that this refers to the victory of Peter upon death.^[174]

From Justin Martyr, we skip over to the Golden Age of the Church in search of other references to that verse. Initially, the first observation of the Fathers was that the Lord called His apostle *Petros*, a Greek noun in masculine gender, while stating that He would build the Church upon the *petra*, a noun in feminine gender. The Greek text makes the distinction between the two nouns clear and precludes the possibility of identifying *Petros* with *petra*. The explanation offered by the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers is that the *petra* [rock] upon which the Church was built was not the person of the Apostle Peter, because in that case, the Lord would have used the expression “and upon this *Petros*.”^[175] Consequently, most of the Holy Fathers lean toward the interpretation of the word *rock* as a confession of faith in the Son of God, an interpretation carved out long ago by Saint Jude admonishing us to be “building up yourselves on your most holy faith....”^[176]

Another interpretation suggests that *the rock* is Christ Himself, Whom the prophets characterized as the awaited Rock of Israel,^[177] something that He also renders unto Himself.^[178]

Finally, a few other writers such as Tertullian—although they, too, identify the rock with the Apostle sometimes—ascribe only a spiritual meaning to this metaphorical interpretation. They do not consider this to be a special privilege of the Apostle in comparison with the others, and certainly not a successive one.^[179] The Blessed Augustine wrote in his *Retractiones* that at first he thought that this biblical verse identified the rock with the Apostle. Later, however, after careful examination, he understood that the correct interpretation is that *the Rock* upon which the Church is built is He Whom the Apostle Peter confessed as the Son of God.^[180] The Blessed Augustine always held to this teaching, something which becomes evident from countless points in his works. He posits his reasoning on this interpretation:

Since the Rock is the proper noun, Peter receives this name from the Rock and not the Rock from Peter; just as we Christians receive this appellation from Christ, and not Christ from the Christians. ‘You,’ Christ said, ‘are Peter, and upon this Rock that you confessed by saying “You are Christ the Son of God,” I will build my Church’; [I will build it] upon Myself, Who am the Son of the living God.^[181]

The Blessed Augustine repeats this, almost verbatim, in his first homily on the Feast of the Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul.^[182] He is even clearer in his fifth homily on Pentecost:

I will build my Church upon this Petra [Rock]; not upon Peter (Petrum), not upon your person, but on the Rock (Petram) that you confessed.^[183]

He further adds in the 124th *Tractatus* for John the Evangelist:

Upon this Rock that you confessed I will build my Church, because Christ Himself was the Rock.^[184]

This same Holy Father gave a sarcastic reply to some, who, precisely like the Papists today, identified the Apostle Peter with the Rock. While interpreting the verses of Peter's apostasy, Blessed Augustine asked them tauntingly in his characteristically fiery demeanor:

And where is your Rock now? Where is the solidity? Christ Himself was the Rock, while Simon was nothing more than a ...rocky Peter. The true Rock arose to strengthen Peter, who had cowered and abandoned the Rock.^[185]

Upon this divine Rock—which is His own true Son—God placed the “relative foundation,” that is, the first human elements of the Church. This foundation consists of all the apostles collectively, without Simon Peter's holding any special position of authority. The Apostle Paul teaches this,^[186] and John the Evangelist concurs as was revealed to him in one of his amazing apocalyptic visions that the edifice of the Church was built on the Rock which “had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”^[187]

Thus, Saint Ignatius of Antioch writes to Trallians that “without them [the apostles], even the name of the Church is nonexistent.”^[188] Saint Cyprian expresses the same thing in different words, teaching that the Church stands on *the super episcopos*, meaning the apostles and their successors,^[189] who were entrenched on the immovable rock of our Lord Jesus Christ.^[190]

To accept that the Church was established solely upon Peter with the exclusion of all the other apostles, as the Papist system claims,^[191] is tantamount to comparing the Savior with that “foolish man” of the parable, “who built his house upon the sand... and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”^[192] Saint Jerome writes to Iovinianus the heretic:

You claim that the Church was established on the Apostle Peter, but the truth is that it was established on all the apostles, and the power of the Church became manifest in all of them.^[193]

The study of the teachings of the Fathers relating to this subject was especially profitable to me. Indeed, according to Saint Vincent:

It is necessary, in order to avoid the trouble and labyrinth of delusion that the method of biblical interpretation must be in conformity with and within the auspices of the traditional ecclesiastical mindset. [\[194\]](#)

After this Patrological research, I had no doubt whatsoever that the Roman Catholic teaching referring to the papal primacy of Peter was diametrically opposed to the “evident and most overt meaning” of the Holy Scriptures, the teachings of the apostles, the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, and generally to the sound and Traditional teaching of the Church of Christ. [\[195\]](#)

Chapter 5

The Beginning of the Dispute

Once my conclusions were made public, the rumor that I was a dangerous monk, suspected of heresy, began to circulate. A reverend bishop, now cardinal, wrote to me these harsh words:

If we lived a few centuries ago, the theories expressed by your reverence would have given more than ample cause to hand you over to the fire of the Holy Inquisition.

Additionally, it was soon given out that my ill-disposed ecclesiastical supervision was soon to intervene in order to foil my upcoming ordination to the diaconate.^[196] As a final resort, they attempted to invoke the monastic vow of obedience and discipline, in order to force me to abandon my convictions though I was aware of their accuracy. They contended that I was obliged to obey blindly and refrain from any further prying, since the right of examining matters of faith belonged to the supreme hierarchy of the Church. They also argued that, if I believed in the Apostolic Church, I was obliged to follow indiscriminately the canonical successors of the apostles. Nevertheless, the grace of the Lord permitted me to remain unshakeable in my convictions, holding fast to the maxim of Saint Irenaeus regarding the heterodox:

They cannot demand of us to be their followers simply because they have apostolic succession. We must follow the good and break away from the evil successors of the apostles.^[197]

Truly, the Roman Catholic Church may have the typical apostolic succession due to the successive laying on of the hands of the bishops, but it does not have the true succession of faith and the apostolic teaching. Saint Papias praised this succession of faith of Rome's Christians during the second century with these words: "At every succession and at every place, all that is demanded by the Law, the prophets, and the Lord is kept."^[198]

Once I made up my mind, nothing could convince me otherwise. Even when a priest, who has never ceased to speak about me with malice, addressed me publicly as an "ungrateful son of the Catholic Church," I did not hesitate to voice my skepticism on the compatibility of the title *Catholic* with Papism. For me, Papism is nothing but an "impious innovation"^[199] since "the true catholic faith belongs to the ancient and ecumenical Christianity."^[200]

In retrospect, I considered myself more catholic than my own church:

Truly catholic is he who loves the truth of God, the Church, the body of Christ [...], he who does not favor anything else but the divine faith only and does not superimpose over her the authority

of a single man, revering above all the ancient and unique faith. Furthermore, he shows contempt for this authority and maintains a steadfast and unshakeable bond with the true faith, fully determined to believe in nothing else except that which he knows to be decreed by the Church from the beginning of her journey.^[201]

The world questioned how I, the least of the monks of the Saint Francis order, dared to judge my entire Church and condemn her as deluded together with all her popes, synods, and theologians. My response was simply to repeat Tertullian's words:

Any teaching that opposes the truth taught by the Church, the apostles, Christ, and God the Father, must be judged as erroneous.^[202]

Chapter 6

“Come Out of Her, My People...”

Regardless of this grotesque dogmatic deviation, I did not wish to abandon my Church. First, however, I had to be assured that I could find refuge in the solace of the spiritual life afforded to me by my order and my monastery. Certainly, I could leave it to the hierarchy to take on the responsibility and obligation to recognize and correct this heresy.

Nevertheless questions remained. Would I be compromising the interests of my soul if I remained in a religion in which every pope is considered infallible and as such can introduce new doctrines, decrees, and false teachings relating to the faith, the sacraments, and the worship? Wouldn't these impact the integrity of my spiritual life? As Saint Vincent of Lerins warned even since the fifth century:

It is a great temptation if he whom you consider a prophet, interpreter of the prophets, teacher and pillar of truth, whom you follow with the utmost respect and with much love, suddenly begins to introduce in subtle and imperceptible ways dangerous falsehoods that you may not discern easily, dazzled by your preconception of his previous teachings and your blind obedience.^[203]

Moreover, it was easy for me to discern that the very spiritual life of Roman Catholicism bears evident marks indicating the influence of its theological deviations. Doctrinal deviations such as purgatory, practices such as partaking of only one element in Holy Communion, and excesses such as Mary worship, are clear indicators and symptoms of theological degeneration, apparent only to those who wish to look at things objectively. Indeed, having already adulterated the original purity of the evangelical and Apostolic faith with the innovation of Papism and the heresy of infallibility—hence abandoning parts of the true teaching about man—they have deviated in many other areas.

Congruent to all other cases of heterodoxy that appear in ecclesiastical history, they “subsequently extend the distortion to other teachings, initially as a matter of habit and later as if having been given a license for distortion. Eventually, by distorting incrementally all aspects of doctrine, they distort everything.”^[204]

It is not at all surprising that various persons highly esteemed for their spirituality in the Roman Church began to sound their trumpet calls, although somewhat late, with public statements as striking as the following:

How can we know if the minor means of salvation that bombard us did not lead us to forget our only Savior, Jesus?^[205]

Our piety today appears like a tree with such entangled branches and such thick foliage, that the souls are in danger of losing sight of the trunk, which holds it all, and of the roots, which embrace the earth.^[206]

Another, even more urgent, entreaty:

We have so bejeweled and over-adorned the picture in such a way, as to cause the image of the One Who is our only need to vanish beneath the embellished ornaments.^[207]

The solution is not only simple but also possible, as the most sincere and daring faithful of this Church have come to recognize. Unfortunately, it remains elusive and distant in its application:

Let us not taste a Christianity other than the one of the apostolic era, the wise and highly respected Roman Catholic, Mgr. Le Camus thunders. Let us not allow those who improvise and suggest to us different ideas to agitate our spiritual life, to whittle away our good disposition, and to diminish our efforts.^[208]

These words simply echo the admonitions of Saint Polycarp to the Philippians:

Therefore let us abandon the vanities of men and false teachings and return to the teaching handed down to us from the beginning.^[209]

And the observations of Saint Cyprian to Cecilius:

When truth is missing from practice and tradition, this is rather indicative of the longevity of falsehood. There is a very safe method for spiritual souls to discern between truth and falsehood: it suffices to return to the beginning of the divine teaching, there where the human falsehood ends. Let us return there, to the evangelical beginning, the original teaching given by our Lord; and to the apostolic tradition, there where the word of our thoughts and actions emanates.^[210]

The words of the great Prophet Jeremiah are also very pertinent:

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.^[211]

I was convinced, therefore, that the very spiritual life within the Roman Church was not without danger since:

[I]t is a great temptation for the faithful of the Church of God when their leaders fall into delusion. Moreover, the temptation is far more serious and greater when the deceivers occupy very high positions. ^[212]

Whoever entrusts his soul to a church that is governed and directed by the heterodox runs the risk of facing the same fate as the faithful who found themselves under the pastoral authority of Origen. The Holy Fathers wrote the following about his actions:

In reality, the bad influence of this teacher on the faithful entrusted to him by the Church presented not a simple but a very great temptation [...] since they did not suspect nor did they feel any danger from him and thus were led progressively and unconsciously from the old faith to an impious innovation. ^[213]

Thus, I arrived at a new decision. I no longer wished to stay under the patronage of a false Christianity that exploited the Gospel to serve the imperialist agenda of *caesaro-papism*. I did not want to be counted among those who, as Saint Cyprian said, “cannot have the true God as their Father since they have rejected the true Church as their Mother,” ^[214] adding further that those who deviate from the true teaching and the original ecclesiastical unity “do not have the law of God, do not have the faith of the Father and the Son, and do not have either life or salvation.” ^[215]

I was absolutely certain that I had no other recourse but to proceed with my final decision. I made my exit, putting an end to my terrible lot—a lot already defective in every respect—in the bosom of Papism. The grace of the Lord undoubtedly sustained me during those days of such a grave and life-altering decision. It was with great effort and much inward questioning that I withstood the pleading and many tears of my beloved brothers at the monastery. Unfortunately, these were interwoven with numerous reproaches and threats from those in the higher echelon. They called me ungrateful and labeled me an apostate of my forefathers’ church and of my country’s religious tradition. To the few who still wished to hear me out, I was content to respond with the words of Saint Jerome, which filled me with much strength and consolation:

We are not obliged to follow the delusions of our predecessors and our relatives but the authority of the Scriptures and the commandments of God. ^[216]

As for the alleged “betrayal” of my country’s tradition, I was consoled by these words:

Anything that opposes the truth, even if it consists of a tradition or an old custom, is heresy.^[217]

Months later, when I wrote the first chapter of my work *The History of Spanish Orthodoxy*, an epistemological account regarding the first Iberian Churches created by Saint Paul,^[218] it suddenly occurred to me that I was the only one who had not betrayed the true old Spanish tradition. And this is because the Church of my country, during the first four centuries of its foundation, was truly Orthodox and not Papist or subservient to the Vatican, as she is today.^[219]

In the end, I left the monastery and shortly thereafter publicized my decision to abandon the Roman Church. Some other monks and priests had felt inclined to follow me, but only up to that point. At the final moment, not one of them appeared willing to sacrifice his Church position, his prestige, and his good reputation in the community.^[220] Before I walked away from the monastery, though, I had the presence of mind to ask my superiors to certify that my departure was the result of my own choice, while my overall conduct during my monastic life had been exemplary. This letter became subsequently the “deplorable detail” that prevented the Papist Uniates [Greek Catholics] from fabricating slanderous attacks regarding the causes of my “apostasy.”

This is the story of how and why I abandoned the Church of Rome, whose leader forgot that the kingdom of the Son of God is “not of this world.”^[221] The leader of the Church of Rome, by forgetting that “he who was called to the office of the episcopate was not called to be vested by human authority but to serve the entire Church,”^[222] emulated him (Satan) who “in his pride, desiring to be like God, lost true happiness in order to earn a false glory”,^[223] him who “sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,”^[224] and who says in his heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”^[225]

Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the great mystics of the West, was then justified when he wrote to Pope Eugene:

For you, there is no greater poison, or a more dangerous sword, than the passion of supremacy.^[226]

Driven by this unbridled passion, the popes forced their church to “fornicate with the powers of the world,^[227] making her the desolation of the merchants.”^[228] In doing so, they violated the commandments of God, expounding the sophistries and teachings of men,^[229] and “they undermined the truth to build upon it their falsehoods.”^[230] They were found to be liars^[231] and followers of the father of lies.^[232] This was inevitable, because as it happens with the heresies of all epochs, “they introduced human superstitions into the divine dogma and violated the commandments of the ancients by showing contempt for the teachings of the Fathers, invalidating the wisdom of the predecessors, being captivated by the unbridled passion of an impious and vain lust for innovation, and unwilling to restrain themselves within the boundaries of the sacred and incorrupt antiquity.”^[233]

Behold the plight of the pope, who not unlike the pitiable Origen, showed contempt for the simplicity of the Christian faith and claimed to be superior in knowledge to anyone else, disregarding the traditions of the Church and the teachings of the ancients.^[234]

Under these circumstances, I could not have acted any differently than I did. I chose to be obedient to the voice of my conscience, the voice that echoed the commandment of God Himself to His chosen people:

Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues.^[235]

Chapter 7

Toward the Light

The news of my renunciation of Papism spread quickly in the wider ecclesiastical circles. Nevertheless, only when it was enthusiastically embraced by the Spanish and French Protestants, did my position become difficult. I dealt with numerous insulting and threatening anonymous letters in my daily correspondence. My accusers claimed that I was conspiring to create an anti-Papist public opinion among the faithful. They claimed that I was striving to lead to “*apostasy*” a number of Roman Catholic priests, who were considered “*dogmatically weak*” because they showed publicly their compassion and interest in my ordeal. All this led to my decision to abandon Barcelona and move to Madrid, where I received hospitality from the Anglicans. Through them, I began to develop relations with the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

Despite my precautionary moves, my presence did not remain unnoticed. After each one of my sermons in different Anglican Churches, a great number of the listeners expressed the desire to meet me personally and discuss in private various matters of conscience. Most of those who sought to converse with me questioned the scandalous coexistence of so many different Christian churches that anathematized one another, each one claiming that only she was the authentic representative and heir of the Early Church. Thus, quite unintentionally, I began to attract a circle of followers, mostly non-Papists, which expanded by the day. This made me all too visible to the local authorities, especially since among those who visited me privately were some Roman Catholic priests, notorious for being “*rebellious against the Church and followers of a libertarian idea concerning the primacy and the infallibility of the pontiff of Rome.*”

The fanatical hatred of some Roman Catholics, who acted more Papist than Christian, would fully surface on the day I gave a public response to an extensive and notable ecclesiological treatise sent to me by *Action Catholique*. The treatise was a “*final attempt*” to make me come to my senses and denounce my “*heretical obstinacy.*” It was apologetic in character and sported the expressive title “*The Pope, Representative of our Lord upon the Earth.*” It could be summarized as follows:

“On account of the infallibility of His Holiness, the Roman Catholics today are the only Christians who can be certain in what they believe.”

With no qualms whatsoever, I answered them via the columns of a Portuguese book review newspaper:

In reality, on account of this infallibility, you are the only Christians today who cannot be certain what His Holiness will compel you to believe the day after tomorrow.

I concluded my response with these words:

With a little more effort on your part, you will succeed in having our Lord become the representative of the pope in heaven.

A short while later, I put an end to this contention with a threefold study published in Buenos Aires, which exhausted the subject of papal primacy in the most objective manner.^[236] This volume was a collection of all the works of the Church Fathers from the first four centuries, which directly or indirectly refer to the so-called “verses of the primacy.”^[237] In this manner, I proved that the Papist teaching on these Scriptural verses is diametrically opposite to the exegesis of the Church Fathers, whose scriptural interpretation constitutes the ONLY authentic rule for the correct understanding of the word of God.

Chapter 8

My Encounter with the Truth

Meanwhile, I came into direct contact with Orthodoxy for the first time and quite independently from the previously mentioned circumstances. It must be said here that my gravitation to this Church started forming since the very beginning of my spiritual odyssey.

Earlier, while I was still at my monastery, I had had lengthy discussions on ecclesiastical topics with a group of Polish Orthodox university students who had passed through my country. Later, the information I received from the Ecumenical Council regarding the existence and activities of the Orthodox of the West truly sparked my interest. Furthermore, I received some fortuitous publications from the Russian and the Greek Orthodox Churches of Berlin and London. The powerful articles therein by Archimandrite Nicholas Katsanevakis in Naples began to win over my heart.

Taken together, these three circumstances were conducive to expunging my previous misconceptions and bias against Orthodoxy, entrenched in me by formal Roman Catholic education. Catholic students are taught in middle school that “the schism of the East, so-called Orthodoxy, is nothing more than an assembly without life, mummified and desiccated; small local churches without any of the genuine and distinctive characteristics of the true Church of Christ.”^[238] In other words, “a deplorable schism fathered by the devil and mothered by the pride of Patriarch Photios.”^[239]

During that time of personal crisis, compounded with my general (and recent) knowledge, I initiated a correspondence with a highly respected member of the Orthodox hierarchy of the West. At last I was quite ready to comprehend everything this bishop would communicate to me about Orthodox teaching. In other words, I was in a position to examine objectively the relevant facts about the constitution and theological status of the apostolic churches.

Over the course of this communication, it became obvious that my position against Papism matched the ecclesiological teaching of Orthodoxy. Thus, while I combated that which *ought not* to be part of the Christian dogma, Orthodoxy provided that which *ought* to be. When I discussed my observations with that reverent hierarch, he agreed with me, though cautiously, given my connection with the Protestants at that time.

As a point of interest, it must be said that the representatives of Eastern Orthodoxy in the West are not at all interested in proselytizing. This is due to their perception of the ecclesiastical status quo in Europe. Proselytizing goes against their conviction that spiritual fathers must adhere to the demanding pastoral toil due primarily to the Greek and Russian communities, with whose spiritual care they have been entrusted.

My correspondence with this hierarch soon reached an advanced state, at which point I was put in touch with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Only then was I advised to study the celebrated work of Sergius Boulgakov, Orthodoxy,^[240] and the equally challenging work of the Metropolitan of Berlin,

Seraphim, bearing the same title.^[241] As soon as I began reading these two works, I found myself in total agreement with the spirit of the authors. I did not come across a single paragraph that I could not accept and adopt wholeheartedly and in good conscience. In the pages of these works and in many others that I began receiving from Greece along with letters of encouragement, I found the teaching of Orthodoxy expounded with surprising clarity. It gradually became clear to me that the Orthodox faithful are the only Christians in the world today who share the same faith with the Christians of the catacombs. Unique and truly faithful, they alone are fully justified to boast in the Lord while repeating the patristic phrase:

We believe in everything we received from the apostles, in everything the apostles received from Christ, and in everything Christ received from God the Father.

To them also apply the words of Tertullian:

Only we are in communion with the apostolic Churches because our teaching is uniquely equivalent to their teaching. This is the testimony of our truth.^[242]

During this period, I completed my books *The Meaning of the Church According to the Fathers of the West* and *Our God, Your God, and God*.^[243] Later on, I was compelled to discontinue the circulation of the second book in South America, only to prevent its use by Protestant propaganda.

At that point, I was advised by my Orthodox colleagues to disengage myself from my polemic efforts against Papism that had become an obsession for me. I was counseled, instead, to initiate a self-examination, in order to clearly define my personal creed. This would provide the basis for evaluating my precise theological position and reveal the gaps caused by my association with Anglicanism.

This endeavor was neither painless nor short in duration as it forced me to undertake a most extensive research in a faith in which I lacked theological proficiency. It would not suffice simply to expunge the dogmas of the Papist primacy and its privileges while upholding the remainder of the Roman teachings. So I proceeded with a deep and thorough analysis of the basic truths of Christianity. These basic truths helped me distinguish the Papist dogmatic boundaries upon which the Vatican had founded its political-ecclesiastical interests. Through the centuries, those boundaries had been determined by papal decrees of every class and kind and served to promulgate an imperialist agenda within the church.

My research was imperative because I did not want to repeat the mistake of the [Old] Catholics, who, scandalized by the infallibility decree of the Synod of Vatican, abandoned the pope but still adhered to Roman theology. This theology has been interwoven with so many other false doctrines, biases, and superstitions, that it is no longer orthodox.

Acknowledging the extreme difficulty of this task, I chose to express my position in general but positive terms and issue the following statement of faith:

I believe all the content of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments and all teaching that directly emanates from their content, in accordance with the interpretation of the traditional ecclesiastical teaching, namely, the Ecumenical Synods and the full consensus of the Holy Fathers.

Almost immediately, I sensed that the amicable alliance with the Protestants came abruptly to an end. With the exception of a small group of Anglicans, whose understanding and moral support followed me during this awkward period, only the Orthodox, though still extremely cautious, were interested in my struggle. Only when the latter let go of their prejudice and mistrust toward me, did they begin to consider me a “possible and interesting catechumen.”

At the time, the fortuitous friendship of a Polish Orthodox scientist strengthened my conviction that Orthodoxy adhered to the essential truths of early Christianity. This Polish Christian had resisted the desperate efforts of the Uniates^[244] to lure him to Papism due to his influence and wealth. His response was simple but most inspiring:

You claim that I must deny my Orthodox faith in order to become a perfect Christian. Great! My Orthodox faith consists of the following elements: Jesus Christ, the Gospel, the Synods and the Holy Fathers. Which one of these elements must I deny to become, as you suggest, ‘a perfect Christian’?

Unperturbed, the Uniates shifted their strategy and suggested that there is no need to deny any of these basic elements. He only had to recognize the pope as the infallible leader of the Church. My friend countered with this profound response: “I must recognize the pope? This would be the equivalent of denying all of the above!”

I realized at that point that in order to purify his faith, any thinking Christian of every other denomination faces the need to reject some element of the teaching of his faith-group that conflicts with the overarching teachings of Christianity. The only exception to this is the Orthodox Christian—only his beliefs constitute the pure essence of Christianity, the complete, eternal, and immutable Truth, as revealed by God Himself in the Gospels.

A Roman Catholic, for example, can reject the pope as I did, recant the teaching on purgatorial fire, or argue the terms of the Synod of Trent without losing his Christian identity. Similarly, a Protestant may reject the teachings of the reformers regarding divine grace and predestination and still be a Christian.

Only Orthodoxy has not incorporated any external elements, so that every single item of its faith is an essential and unaltered truth, impossible to reject or excise. The Orthodox Church is the only Church that has never attempted to suggest anything other to the faithful than that which always, everywhere, and by all has been considered to be the God-revealed Truth.^[245] Thus, when one adopts Orthodoxy, one simply embraces the Gospel in its primal purity. Conversely, if one denies and apostatizes from her, it is akin to denying and apostatizing from Christianity itself.

Orthodoxy is the only Church that has faithfully guarded the truth of the Gospel. She “never altered anything in it; neither added nor subtracted”;^[246] she “did not cut the essential, nor did she embody the nonessential, nor did she lose something belonging to her, nor did she grasp something foreign, always wise and faithful to everything she inherited.”^[247] She knows that it is not permitted to make the slightest change to the faith that was entrusted to her once and for all,^[248] not even if suggested by an angel from heaven^[249] and certainly not by an earthly man full of flaws and weaknesses.

Orthodoxy is the true bride of Christ “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but [...] holy and without blemish.”^[250] She is the Holy Church of God, His only one,^[251] “the truly Catholic Church that fights against all heresies. She can fight without ever being defeated. Even though all heresies and schisms sprouted as wild branches and were cut from the vine, she remains steadfast to her root, in her union with God.”^[252] Anyone who follows her follows God; anyone who listens to her voice, listens to the voice of God;^[253] and anyone who disobeys her, becomes a gentile.^[254]

Convinced thoroughly by all I had read and learned, I no longer felt deserted. I was no longer alone and dejected by the powerful Roman Catholics or the increasingly indifferent Protestants. In fact, I was united in faith and teaching with millions of my brother Christians in the East and throughout the world. It was a comfort to be finally united with all those who constitute the true Orthodox Church.

The Papist slander of the theological fossilization of Orthodoxy had totally lost its validity as I finally comprehended the consistent perseverance of Orthodoxy in its inherited truth. Orthodoxy is not a motionless, rigid, and fossilized stance but an unceasing flow of confession of the ancient faith. It can be likened to the current of a waterfall, which appears to be always the same, yet its waters move unceasingly and change constantly, forever creating new sounds and harmonies.

When I reached this point of revelation in my faith, the Orthodox finally began to view me as one of their own, and so an archimandrite wrote in a letter the following:

“Discussing the truth of Orthodoxy with this Spaniard does not imply proselytism but a discussion about a doctrine and a religious spirit that are as much ours as they are his; the only difference is that we inherited it from our predecessors while he succeeded in excavating it from beneath the debris of fifteen centuries of Western ecclesiastical history.”

It was most obvious then that the journey of my “spiritual unrest,” as my father confessor had labeled it, had quite naturally and without my awareness led me to the bosom of the Mother Church,

Orthodoxy. In reality, during that final period of my journey, unbeknownst to me, I was already Orthodox. I was strolling next to the divine Truth, just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, without recognizing it until the final stretch of my spiritual pilgrimage.

When I became unequivocally convinced about everything, I felt that I needed to take one final step. I wrote a lengthy account of my entire ordeal and its developments and mailed it both to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to His Beatitude, Archbishop of Athens, care of the Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece. I also sent immediate notice of my intent to become Orthodox to the hierarchs and various members of the Churches with which I had developed a special relationship. Delighted by the sense that I was in possession of that precious pearl worthy of all sacrifice,^[255] I left my country and went to France where I fully connected with my Orthodox brothers I had recently met there. Nevertheless, the critical step of becoming a canonical member of the Orthodox Church would require a little more time.

Upon reaching a fully mature decision, I officially requested entrance to the true Church of Christ. In full accord it was resolved that this event take place in Greece, an Orthodox country par excellence, where I soon needed to move in order to pursue my studies in Theology. Upon my arrival in Athens, I visited His Beatitude the Archbishop, who received me with the most paternal embrace. His unceasing sincere love, care, and interest have accompanied every step of my new ecclesiastical life. The same holds true for his most reverend chancellor, who by God's grace is now the bishop of Rogon. He is indeed a true father, whose sincere interest in me has far exceeded all my expectations.

Needless to say, in the midst of this atmosphere of tender love, the Holy Synod did not take long in accepting me into the bosom of the Orthodox Church. During the deeply moving service of Holy Chrismation by which I finally became a member of the true vine, I was honored with the name of the apostle of the nations and was subsequently accepted into the Holy Monastery of the Virgin Mary in Penteli as a monk. A few months later, I was ordained into the diaconate by the laying on of the hands of the bishop of Rogon.

Now, at last, I feel replete with joy, despite the endless aggravation caused by members of the dark order of the Uniates of Greece, who never cease to fabricate slanders against my person. I am blessed, because I am enveloped by the love, warmth, and full acceptance of the Most Holy Orthodox Church of Greece, including the members of her sacred hierarchy, the various religious brotherhoods, and generally all those who have embraced me with their spiritual support.

I ask all these fathers and brothers in the faith and all those who kindly kept in touch with me, sympathetic as they were to my cause and overall odyssey, to keep me in their prayers, so that I may receive the grace from above and prove worthy of the amazing beneficence of the Most Good God.

Appendix I

Necrology

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 1, 1984

Greek Orthodox Bishop Paul Succumbs to Assailant's Bullets

New York, NY—Bishop Paul of Nazianzos, 56, Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Iakovos responsible for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, succumbed January 31 to bullet wounds suffered on January 22 in Mexico City.

Bishop Paul had been in critical condition since he was shot as he left Saint Sophia Cathedral after celebrating the Divine Liturgy by 70-year old Rafael Roman Mondrago who then shot himself in an apparent suicide attempt.

Archbishop Iakovos presided at a memorial prayer service for the repose of the soul of Bishop Paul in Saint Paul's Chapel at Archdiocesan headquarters here at noon, January 31, and in his eulogy said: "Our beloved Bishop Paul, whose body was ravaged and brought to an earthly end, is whole again as his soul lives in the eternal and heavenly Kingdom of the Father of us all." Archbishop Iakovos also announced that Metropolitan Silas of New Jersey would officiate at the funeral services to be held Thursday, February 2 at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Mexico City with the participation of Bishop Gennadios of Buenos Aires and Bishop Anthony of the Syrian Orthodox Church serving in Mexico.

Investigating officers have established that the assailant, who is reported out of danger, was a retired army officer who had undergone brain surgery 12 months ago and had attacked Bishop Paul for unknown reasons.

The Rt. Rev. Paul de Ballester, a former Roman Catholic monk, was the first convert to Greek Orthodoxy to become a bishop in the Western Hemisphere when he was elevated to the episcopacy on March 15, 1970. A native of Barcelona, Spain, he received his primary and secondary education there. In 1952, he entered the Theological School of the University of Athens and then later the Halki School of

Theology of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Constantinople, Turkey) where he received a Master's Degree in Orthodox Theology in 1958.

He was ordained a deacon in 1953 by Metropolitan Dionysios in Athens and on June 26, 1954 he was ordained a priest by Bishop Chrysostomos in Athens, Greece. He arrived in the United States in the fall of 1959 and was assigned by Archbishop Iakovos to serve the Annunciation parish in Scranton, PA, where he was afforded the opportunity to learn English. In addition, he spoke Greek, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian and Latin. In August 1966, he was named Archdiocesan Vicar for Central America. This was preceded by a period of missionary activity in which he visited most of the areas of Central and South America.

Active in ecumenical affairs, Bishop Paul attended the Uppsala general Assembly of the World Council of Churches and represented Archbishop Iakovos as an official observer at the Roman Catholic International Eucharistic Congress in Bogota, Columbia.

He was a professor of ancient Greek and Greek civilization at the national University in Mexico City and made frequent appearances on television and radio where he discussed moral and religious issues.

Bishop Paul translated the *Greek Orthodox Divine Liturgy* into Spanish and was the author of several books and publications including: *Our God, Your God, and God, The Journey and the Work of Saint Paul of Spain*, and *My Conversion to Greek Orthodoxy* ^[256] (which has been translated into several languages). During his service in Mexico City, he was instrumental in building a parish complex which includes a community center, a parochial school and a parish house. He also organized the *Greek Orthodox Youth* and the *Ladies Philoptochos Society* (Friends of the Poor).

Appendix II: References / Sources Index

[1] Decree of Sancti Officii of the 21 st of January 1647, which was approved and sent by Pope Innocent X.

See the complete text in, Du Plessis d'Argente, 3, 2, 218.

[2] Index Liborum Prohibitorum [index of censored books]. This official index released by the Vatican posts all books which include content contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

[3] Specifically: Matt 16:18-19, Luke 22:31-32, John 21:15-17.

[4] Catenae (singular, “catena,” from Latin meaning “chain” are the successive collocation of exegetical verses of the Holy Fathers juxtaposed to the verses of the Holy Scriptures they intended to interpret.

[5] All these activities did not escape the attention of the Roman Catholic historians themselves. See, for example, G. Greenen, Dictionaire de Theologie Catholique, Paris 1946, XVI, 1, pg.745-746; J. Madoz S. J., Une nouvelle rédaction des texts pseudopatristiques sur la Primaute, dans Pocuvre de Jacques de Viterbe? (Gregorianum, vol. XVII, [1936], pp 563-583); R. Ceiller, Histoire des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques, Paris vol.VIII, pg 272. Also: F. X. Reusch, Die Fälschungen in dem Tractat des Thomas Aquin gegen die Griechen (Abhandlungen der K. Bayer, III, cl. XVIII, Bd. III, Munich, 1889); C. Werner, Der heilige Thomas von Aquin, I, Ratisbone, 1889, pg. 763.

[6] “Licet facere mala ut veniaut bona”.

[7] 2 Cor. 11:5 and 12:11: I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super apostles.

[8] See: G. Greenen, Dictionaire de Théologie Catholique, Paris 1946, vol. XVI, 1, pg. 745; also in: R. Ceiller, Histoire des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques, Paris, vol. VIII, pg. 272.

[9] October 23rd of 1327, in the decision: “Licet Luxta Doctrinam”. “Ioannis XXII, Constitutio, qua damnantur errores Marsilli Patavini et Ioannis de landuno”. See text in Du Plessis d' Argente, 1, 365.

[10] September 29th of 1351, in the papal epistle “Super Quibusdam” to the Catholic Paregoretas of the Armenians. See text in Cardinal Baronio’s Chronicles, 1351, num. 3.

[11] Articuli 30 Ioannis Huss damnati a Concilio Constantiniensi et Martino V, Artic 7.

[12] The Vatican Synod, which convened at the Basilica of Saint Peter of Rome from December 8, 1869 until September of 1870, determined that papal primacy was the most significant dogma of Christianity and confirmed the theory of papal infallibility. See texts in Conc. Vatic., Const. Dogmat., Sess. 4, Const. 1, Bulla “Pastor Aeternus”, ch. 1. (Denzinger, Enchiridion, 139, 1667-1683).

[13] Pius X in the decree “Lamentabili,” whose text can be found in “Actae Sanctae Sedis, 40/1907/, 470-478. See also: Concilii Florentini Decreta, Decretum unionis Graecorum, in Bulla Eugenii IV “Laetentur Coeli” Professio fidei Graecii praescripta a Gregorio XIII per Constitutionem 51 “Sanctissimus Dominus

noster”; Professio fidei Orientalibus praescripta ab Urbano VIII et Benedicto XIV per Constitutionem 79 “Nuper ad Nos.”

[14] Cf. Gal. 2:7-8.

[15] Gal. 1:1.

[16] Ibid. 2:9.

[17] Ibid. 2:6

[18] Ibid. 2:6-9.

[19] St. John the Chrysostom’s comments on the epistle to the Galatians 2:3.

[20] “Hoc erant utique et cacteri Apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio praediti et honoris potestatis”; St. Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiae, IV; St. Basil, In Isaias 2; St. Isidore Hispaleusis (of Seville), De Officiis, Liber II, cap. 5, etc.

[21] St. John the Chrysostom, About the Importance of the Holy Scriptures, Acts 3.

[22] St. Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiae, V.

[23] St. Ambrose, Lib. De Incarnatione, 7.

[24] St. Ambrose, De Poenitentia, 7. In the West in the latter editions of the works of St. Ambrose, the Latin term “Fidem” has been replaced by the term “Sedem.” Thus, the text conveniently reads: “They cannot have the inheritance of Peter those who are not enthroned on the same episcopal see as him.” This very text however, having lost its logical meaning, smacks of forgery.

[25] Martin É, Bull “Inter Cunctas”, 8 Calend. Martii 1418. Gerson, De Statu Sum. Pontiff. Consid., I.

[26] Devoti, Instit. Canonicae, Prolegom., Cap. 2, Benedict XIV, De Synod. Diocesan, 2,1.

[27] Benedict XIV, Ibid.

[28] “Si quis dixerit [...] Petrum non esse a Christo contutum Apostolorum Principem et totius Ecclesiae Militantis Visibile Caput [...] anathema sit,” Concilii Vaticani, Constit., Dogmat., Sess. 4, Const. 1, Bulla “Pastor Aeternus,” Cap. I.

[29] St. Augustine, Epistola adversas Donatum, III, 5.

[30] 2 Cor. 13:5.

[31] St. Augustine, Epistola adversas Donatum, III, 5.

[32] Ps. 118 (119):105.

[33] Mark 12:24.

- [34] Acts 17:11.
- [35] Ibid.
- [36] Col. 2:8.
- [37] Devoti, Instit. Canon., Proleg., Cap. 2.
- [38] Gregory VI (Mauro Capellari), About the Primacy of the Roman Bishop, Introductory Homily, Ch. 25.
- [39] Bull Pastor Aeternus, of the Synod of Vatican, Introduction.
- [40] Maistre, Du Pape, Discours préliminaire, I; also Ibid., Book I, Ch. 3.
- [41] Ibid., Introductory Homily, 3.
- [42] Cardinal Belarmino, De Sum. Pontific., Book 2, Ch. 31, vol.1.
- [43] Ibid., Foreword, vol. 2. See also: Marin Ordonez, El Pontificado, vol. I, Madrid 1887, Ch.10, pg. 30; J. Donoso Cortés, Obras Completas, vol. 2, Madrid 1901, pg. 37.
- [44] Pius X, “Vacante Sede Apostolica,” 25th December 1904; Pius XI, “Cum Proxime”, 1st March 1922.
- [45] Agosto Trionfo, Summa de Potestate Ecclesiastica, Quaest. 19, 1, article 3.
- [46] Mons. Roëy, L’ Episcopat et la Papauté au Point de vue Theologique, appendix 10, in “The Conversations at Malines,” published by Lord Halifax, London 1930.
- [47] See for ex. The Bulletin of the Diocese of Strausburg, March 1945 vol. 3, pg. 45.
- [48] Mauro Cappellari (Gregory XVI), Ibid, Table, Ch. 6, 10.
- [49] Gerson, De Statu Sum. Pont., Consid. 1.
- [50] Cicero, De Divinatione, Book 2, Ch. 54.
- [51] Gregory VII, Epistle “Notum fieri,” to the Germans.
- [52] Mauro Capellari (Gregory XVI), Ibid. 11.
- [53] Boniface IIX, Bull “Unam Sanctam”; A more clear and detailed explanation can be found in: Bernardus Claravalensis, De Consideratione, IV, 3.; Hugui Sancti Victoris, De Sacramentis, II, 2, 4.; Alexandre d’Halés, Summa Theologica, IV, quaestio 10, num. 5, num.2.
- [54] John 18:36.
- [55] Luke 22:25-26.
- [56] Mathieu, Le Pouvoir Temporal des Papes.

[57] Maistre, Du Pape, Discours Prelim., 2.

[58] Constit. Dogmat. Conc. Vatic, Sess. 4, Bull “Pastor Aeternus”. (Full text in: Denzinger, Enchiridion, 139, 1667-1683).

[59] Veillot, Livre sur la Papauté, Ch. 1, 11 (John 6:68).

[60] John 16:13.

[61] Based on the alleged infallibility of the pope, the Roman Catholics approximate those old heretics who were condemned by the entire church because, according to Saint Vincent of Lerins, “They had the audacity to promise and to teach that an extraordinary and totally personal grace is sent to their church, i.e., to their heretical sect, so without any toil, without any effort, without the slightest care, even without asking, all the members of their sect receive such power from God, and since it feels like angels are holding them on their wings, they never injure their feet on stones, i.e., they never succumb to the scandal of misinterpreting the faith.” (Commonitorium de Orthod., Fide, 25, 8).

[62] Perujo, Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Sciences, 100.

[63] Devoti, Instit. Canon., Prol. Ch. 2. The words of Saint Vincent are very fitting here: “I never cease to be amazed,” says this ancient and most reverend father of the Church, “for the extreme impiety of their blinded nous (mind), for their insatiable passion for falsehood and evil; so they are not satisfied with the rule of faith given to us once and for all from the ancient times, but they daily seek innumerable innovations and they are constantly restless in their desire to add or to change or to subtract something from the religion, as though it is not divine dogma, which suffices once revealed to people, but a human organism, which cannot reach perfection unless it is perpetually corrected and revised.” (Commonitorium 21,1).

[64] Baronii, Annales, Ad Ann. 553, No. 224.

[65] Gratianus, Codex Juris Canonici, vol. 1, Paris 1612, dis. 19, part I, Ch. 6, pg. 90 and Col.55, edition Leipzig 1839.

[66] Si autem Papa erraret, praecipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, tenetur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, et virtutes mala (Theologia, Bellarmino, De Romano Pontifice, Book 4, Ch. 23).

[67] “Deus et Papa faciunt unum consistorium [...] Papa potest quasi omnia facere quae facit Deus [...] et Papa facit quicquid libet, etiam illicit, et est ergo plus quam Deus” (Cardinalius Zabarella, De Schism, Innocent. VII).

[68] St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, XVIII, 54.

[69] Luke 9:33.

[70] Gal. 2: 11. (NIV)

[71] Gal. 2: 14. I saw that they were not walking in line with the truth of the Gospel.

[72] Pope Marcellus (296-303) fell into the sin of idolatry and reached the point of sacrificing to the gods of the gentiles to save his life and his property during the persecution of Diocletian. It is a well known historical fact that Marcellus entered the temple of Aphrodite and offered sacrifices to the goddess on her very altar. This scandalous event, which became widely known at that time, caused the Christianity of Rome to keep, for many generations, the worst memory of this pope, at least until the end of the 5th century, according to historical accounts that have reached our days. The Roman Catholic historians, unable to deny the reality of these sad events, prefer to blame these on the imagination of the heretical Donatists, enemies of Marcellus, who supposedly organized a defamation campaign against him after his death. At the same time, however, they are equally unable to explain to us why, if that were the case, Pope Marcellus was expressly noted as an apostate in the Roman Liber Pontificalis itself. Moreover, this was precisely the opinion of the Roman hierarchy that refused to include the name of its apostate leader in the official calendar where the time periods of the papal hierarchies are recorded. Indeed, from Favius (250) until Markus (395) all the names of the Roman bishops are found, with the exception of that of Marcellus.

[73] It is generally known that at the Synod of Sardice (342-343) the Eastern bishops under the leadership of Patriarch Stephen of Antioch excommunicated Julius, Bishop of Rome. This took place after the Western delegation demanded the revision of certain aphorisms and ecclesiastical dispositions of the East. (See Mansi, Summa Conciliorum, Actae Synod. Sardic. Decreta).

[74] Concerning the heresy of Liberius (352-366), we have three indisputable witnesses: Saint Jerome, Saint Hilary, and Saint Peter the Damian. Initially, the Orthodox Liberius was barred from Rome and exiled by the Arians. A short while later, however, weary and distraught by the hardships of exile and nostalgic for the glorious, luxurious life of the papal see, he betrayed the faithful, apostatized, and signed the heretical Arian "Creed." After this he condemned and anathematized Saint Athanasius as a heretic. Overjoyed by these events, the heretical Arians welcomed him back to Rome and enthroned him once again. Saint Jerome expressly records: "Liberius, weary from the hardships of exile, signed the heretical delusion and returned to Rome as a conqueror" (Chronicles, A.D. 357 and: De Script. Eccles.) This is also confirmed by Saint Hilary, who laments seeing the papal signature under the heretical "Creed" and exclaims: Haec est perfidia ariana! (Fragment. Histor., VII). Saint Peter the Damian, during the 11th century, affirms once again that Pope Liberius was a "heretic and an apostate" (Liber Gratissimus, Ch. 16).

[75] St. Athanasius, Against Arians, 73. Saint Athanasius also comments that Pope Felix was so scandalously heretical, that the faithful of Rome refused to enter the churches he was visiting (Epistle to monastics, Paris 1627, opp. I, 861. See also: Duchesne, Histoire Ancienne de l' Eglise, Vol. II, Ch. XIII).

[76] Pope Honorius (625) accepted and publicly ratified the heretical teachings of the monothelites. Persisting in such a blatant delusion against the faith, he was unanimously condemned and anathematized by the 6th Ecumenical Synod together with all the other leaders of the monothelite heresy. "To Theodore Pharanites the heretic, anathema; to Sergius the heretic, anathema; to Honorius the heretic, anathema; to Cyrus the heretic, anathema; to Pyrrus the heretic, anathema." (see Mansi, Sum. Concil., Gener., Sess. XIII). These are indisputable truths especially since they are confirmed in the

pastoral epistles by the very popes who succeeded Honorius. Thus, Leo II, in his apostolic epistle sent to the bishops of Spain asking for their consent on the teachings of the 6th Ecumenical Synod, states that Honorius and his followers were “punished with eternal condemnation” (aeterna condemnatione mulctati sunt) because the Synod found them to be in betrayal of the purity of the apostolic tradition. He also wrote to King Ervigius that Honorius was condemned by the venerable Synod and was excluded from the communion of the Catholic Church. Likewise, Pope Adrian II, in the synodal epistle of the Roman Synod, refers to the heretical guilt and anathema of Honorius by the Synod: Honorio ab Orientalibus post mortem anathema sit dictum, sciendum tamen est, quia fuerit super haeresi accusatus... (Adrianii II, epist. Synod. Concilii Romani, quae in octavae Synodi Actione VII et lecta et approbata est). The Roman Catholic historians, unable to refute these undeniable facts, have been ordered to keep absolute silence about them or in the event that it is absolutely necessary simply to refer to them in passing. Thus, for example, in the *Somme des Conciles* of Abbe Guyot (Paris 1868) not the slightest reference to the condemnation of Honorius can be found in the minutes of the XIII session of the 6th Ecumenical Synod (see V. I, pg. 315). All these events were duly included in the festal service book *Breviarium Romanum* in celebration of Saint Leo who is honored in the West on June 28th, up until the day the Vatican authorities adjudicated the text to be so offensive that it ordered its extinction. This alteration took place when Pope Clement VIII revised the *Breviarium*.

[77] Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) circa 1590 published a version of the Vulgata and officially declared from the *perpetuum Decretum* that this would hence be the only authentic text, superior to Holy Scripture, since it was corrected by him, “buttressed by the authority overflowing his apostolic power.” The *Decretum* officially informed the faithful that all other editions of the Bible automatically lost all their value and anyone who would dare to make even the smallest alteration to this new text, whether in the area of teaching or other public interpretations, such as personal discussions, would be “*ipso facto*” excommunicated. This edition by Sixtus V was so heavily flawed in the area of translation, expression, and teaching, that only an amateur could have produced it. This fact caused the immediate withdrawal of this edition in the midst of a great scandal. Cardinal Bellarmine surmised that this episode presented a serious obstacle regarding the promulgation of his teachings on papal authority. He then asked Pope Gregory XIV (1590-1591), successor of Sixtus, to protect the reputation of the latter by permitting Bellarmine to republish the text with the necessary corrections (see Cardinal Bellarmine, *Autobiography*, 1591, pg. 211). Bellarmine was also contemplating the addition of a prologue in this new edition, for the purpose of explaining to the faithful that in the unfortunate first edition of 1590 there were “some falsehoods” caused by the printers and other persons! However Bellarmine himself confesses in his *Autobiography* that this was simply a pious lie, since everyone knew that Sixtus was the author of this “labyrinth of every kind of falsehood,” and that every paragraph touched by this Pope had been altered in the worst way, *Permulta perperam mutata* (Bellarm. *Aut.*, *ibid*, 291). Clement the VIII (1592-1606), the Pope who succeeded Gregory, wishing to have this matter erased from people’s memory as soon as possible, published a new text of the Vulgata in 1592, different from the previous one in a great number of points, though still flawed. The general ridicule fomenting from the unfortunate Vulgata of Sixtus V took such dimensions that for many centuries the memory of this Pope was the cause of much comedy and laughter.

[78] When the Holy Inquisition tortured Galileo following the orders of Pope Urbanus demanding the recantation of his theory that the Earth rotates around the Sun, this outstanding astronomer, having lost his faith in the Pope and his church, even at the signing of the recantation, whispered these words, immortalized by history: “But it does rotate...!” Immediately after this, Urbanus VIII publicized, as a victory of his papal authority, the action of the recantation of the great astronomer, who was treated so unjustly by the papal henchmen of the Holy Inquisition. As a result, from June 30, 1633, everyone was obliged to believe that the Earth does not rotate around the Sun, under the threat of being condemned as a heretic. “But God, who in those days was still more powerful than the bishop of Rome,” says Stanislas Jedrezewsky with a good dose of irony “would eventually justify Galileo.” Truly, shortly thereafter the progress of astronomy made the “heretical” theory of Galileo most obvious, compelling Pope Pius VII to ridicule the papal authority in 1822, rectifying the actions of the Holy Inquisition against Galileo in 1633 and permitting the astronomical endeavors of Copernicus. Finally, after the actions of these popes had caused a great scandal among the faithful and much ridicule and scorn from the scientific world, the Vatican, unable to find any other means to restore the status of its authority, reversed its position on everything it had condemned and anathematized up to that point in these matters. In 1835, forced by widespread taunting, the Pope ordered the removal of all the works of Copernicus, of Kepler, and of Galileo from the Index of Prohibited Texts (Index Librorum Prohibitorum).

[79] See *Innovaciones del Romanismo*, G.H.C., Madrid 1891, XIV, pg. 202.

[80] “Unum a te petimus fili charissime, Doctoribus Sedis Apostolicae non Semper credas, multa illorum passionibus tribuas” (Epist. Pii II ad Carolum VII Regem Galliae, Epist. CCCLXXIV).

[81] Pius the IV abrogated the 7th Canon of the Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus, which contains the aphorism of the relinquishment and the anathema against anyone who would dare to compile and to force upon the faithful a “Creed” other than the one proclaimed by the Synod of Nicea. Pius IV composed his own “Creed” which bears his name: “Creed of Pius IV” (Credo Pii Quarti). In reality this creed does not essentially contradict the Nicenean, but the fact remains that it is different. Consequently, during the 5th session of the Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon after the pronouncement of the Nicenean Creed, the Holy Fathers forbade not only the composition of a contradictory “Creed,” but even “any other form of a Creed regardless of what it says” (See Mansi, *Summa Concil*, Act. Concil. Ephes., Can. VII, act. Conc. Calced, sess. V).

[82] Every Pope, at the behest of the 8th Canon of the Synod of Constance, is obliged to make this confession of faith during his enthronement ceremony, as presented in the *Liber Diurnus*: “With my mouth and my heart I promise to uphold without the slightest change, all that was legislated and commanded in the Eight Ecumenical Synods; the first of Nicea, the second of Constantinople, the third of Ephesus, the fourth of Chalcedon, the fifth and the sixth of Constantinople, the seventh of Nicea, and the eighth of Constantinople. I promise to uphold all of them equal in authority and honor, carefully following all that has been instituted by them and condemning all that was condemned.”

[83] St. Cyprian, Epistle LXXIII.

[84] Matt. 28:20.

- [85] John 14:16-17.
- [86] John 16:13.
- [87] John 14:26.
- [88] 1 Tim. 3:15.
- [89] St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III, Ch. 4.
- [90] Luke 10:16.
- [91] See Mansi, *Summa Conciliorum*, Act. Concil. Arelat., Can. VIII.
- [92] “Placuit etiam, ut de dissentione Romanae atque Alexandrinae Ecclesiae, ad sanctum papam Innocentium scribatur: quo utraque Ecclesia intra se pacem, quam praecepit Dominus, teneat” (Codex Canon. Eccles. Afric., No. 101).
- [93] See, Mansi, *Sum. Concil.*, Concil. Sard., Decreta.
- [94] “Honorio haeretico, anathema” (Mansi, *Sum. Concil.*, Act. VI Concil. Gener, sess. XIII).
- [95] Matt. 15:3-9, Mark 7:7-9.
- [96] St. Augustine, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*, 1,16.
- [97] St. Augustine, *Epist. Adversus Donatum*, 3, 5.
- [98] St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 29, 2.
- [99] Clementii XI Bulla “Unigenitus”.
- [100] Cardinal Bellarmine, *De Verbo Dei...*, Liber IV, 4.
- [101] Gregory XVI (Mauro Cappellari), *El Triunfo de la Santa Sede*, Madrid 1834, Index, Ch. 8, 2.
- [102] Cornelius Mussus., *In Epist. ad Roman.*, I, Ch. VIV.
- [103] Cardinali Hosii, *De Expresso Verbo Dei*, 1584, pg. 623.
- [104] St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, vol. 6, Ch. 15, par. 8-9.
- [105] Ps. 118 (119), 105.
- [106] Cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4.
- [107] Phil. 2:16.
- [108] Acts 20:32.

- [109] Eph.1:13, James 1:18.
- [110] Acts 13:26, Eph. 1:13.
- [111] See John 12:48.
- [112] See 2 Tim. 3:15-17.
- [113] St. Augustine, Sermo IV De Verbo Apostol.
- [114] St. Athanasius, Against Greeks, Vol.1, Part 1.
- [115] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 9, Epistle to the Colossians.
- [116] St. Isidore of Pelusium, Epistle, 4, 67, 91.
- [117] St. Basil, Epistle to Gregory; St. Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, 1, Ch. 9.
- [118] St. Basil, On the Faith, Ch. 1; See also: St. John Chrysostom, Homily 13; on 2 Corinthians, Homily 21, in the 6th chapter on the Epistle to Ephesians, Homily 6, About Lazarus; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechism 12.
- [119] St. Basil, Homily 21, Against the slanderers of the Holy Trinity; St. John of Damascus, About the Orthodox Faith, Book 1, Ch. 1. Theodoret, Dialog. 1.
- [120] St. Ambrose, De Offic., Lib. I, 23; Origen, Homily 5, On Leviticus.
- [121] St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies I, 3, Ch. 2.
- [122] St. John the Chrysostom, Homily 33, Acts of the Apostles.
- [123] Devoti, Institutiones Canonicae, Proleg., ch. 2,.
- [124] Maret, Du Concile Général, 2, 375.
- [125] John 21:15-17.
- [126] Bernardino Llorca S, J., Historia de la Iglesia Católica, vol. I, Madrid 1950, pg. 262.
- [127] Pii X, Decretum Lamentabili, 50; Actae Sanctae Sedis, 40, 476.
- [128] Devoti, Institutiones Canonicae, Prolegom., Ch. 2.
- [129] Ibid.
- [130] Bellarminus, De Pontifice Romano, Liber IV, 24 and 25, also Liber 1, 9.
- [131] St. Clement of Rome, Epistle to the Corinthians 12:44.

[132] See Martigny, Dictionn. D'Archéologie Chrétienne, Evèques, p. 569: Minutes of the Synod of Chalcedon.

[133] St. Athanasius, Epistle to Dracontius, 3:1.

[134] St. Gregory the Great, Homilies on the Gospels II, 23:5.

[135] St. Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Magnesians, 3.

[136] St. Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 1. See also Martigny, Dictionn. D'Archeologie Chrétienne, Evèques, p. 566.

[137] Ruiz Baeno, Padres Apostólicos, Introduction to the Epistle of St. Clement, Madrid 1950, p. 149.

[138] Devoti, Institutiones Canonicae, Prolegom., Ch. II; Bellarminus, De Pontifice Romano, Lib. IV, Ch. 24, 25, and Ch. 9.

[139] De Maistre, Du Pape, Book I, Ch. 3.

[140] Benedict XV, Codex Iuris Canonici, canon 222 1; Hefele, Histoire des Conciles, Introduction, II, 3.

[141] Benedict XV, Codex Iuris Canonici, canon 222 1; Devoti, Institutiones Canonicae, Prolegom., III, 38; Hefele, Histoire des Conciles, Introduction, II, 3.

[142] Decree of Leo X in the Fifth Synod of Lateran.

[143] De Maistre, Du Pape, Book I, Ch. 3.

[144] Benedict XV, Codex Iuris Canonici, canon 227; Leo XIII, Circular "Satis Cognitum."

[145] Catholicum est, quod semper, quod ubique et quod ab omnibus creditum est, meaning: It is indeed catholic when it is believed always, everywhere, and by everyone. (St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, Ch. 2).

[146] Excerpt from the declarations published in the newspaper Kölnische Zeitung July 13, 18 81.

[147] Gregory XVI (Mauro Cappellari), El Triunfo de la Santa Sede, Madrid 1834, Table, Ch. VI, 10.

[148] Ignatius Loyola, Libro de Exercicios Espirituales.

[149] The devotion of the Jesuits to the papal see was never sincere, especially during the occasions when the special interests of this dark order were conflicted. The Jesuits, despite the promise of blind obedience to the pope for which they boast, saying that they possess an exceptional virtue due to this, suddenly suffered from amnesia when Clement the XIV commanded the dissolution of their order. Truthfully, Pope Clement in his decree, Decretum Brevis, in 1773, announced the dissolution of the Jesuit organization and its total annihilation. The Jesuits, however, instead of practicing their virtue of blind obedience, took refuge in the countries of Prussia and Russia, where the pope could not enforce his decree with military force. They regrouped and increased their numbers there until 1814. Afterwards

with their many machinations and intrigues, they succeeded in convincing Pope Pius VII to annul the previous decree and to replace it with another one that permitted the existence and function of the order once again.

[150] These verses are:

- Matt. 16: 18-19: You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
- John 21: 15-17: Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’
- Luke 22:31-32. Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you return [to Me] strengthen your brethren.

[151] In the Vulgata: Tu es Petrus, et super istam petram aedificabo Ecclesiam Meam.

[152] See for example, Knabenbauer, S.I., *Cursus Scripturae Sacrae*, Paris 1903, Comment. In. Ev. Matthaeum, pars altera, p. 60. Also the Jesuits P. Knabenbauer, Cornely and Hummelauer have the audacity to claim in their “*Cursus Scripturae Sacrae*” that those of the Holy Fathers who do not recognize papal primacy based on the aforementioned verse, simply erred for not paying close attention to the real meaning of the text: Si Sanctus Doctor recogitasset- writes Knabenbauer regarding St. Augustine- Christum locutum esse aramaice, vel si hanc et totum contextum perpenderit, profecto priore sua interpretatione stetisset” (Ibid., p. 61).

[153] Bernardino Llorca, S. I., *Historia de la Iglesia Católica*, Madrid 1850, vol. I, p.49.

[154] Ibid, ch. 1, pp. 261-1.

[155] Cardinal Hergenroether, *Histoire de l’ Eglise*, vol. 1, ch. 1, 7.

[156] Leo XIII, Circular “*Satis Cognitum*” (the text in José Madoz, S. I., *Enquiridion sobre el Primado Romano*, 361).

[157] Concil. Vatic. Constitut. Dogmat., I. De Ecclesia Christi, ch. 1 (Denyinger, *Enquiridion*, p. 396). See also: *The Conversations at Malines*, published by Lord Halifax, III. Conv. London, 1930.

[158] 1 Cor. 3:11.

- [159] St. Athanasius, *Against Arians*, 3.
- [160] St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 3, 3 (Apud Euseb., V, 6, 1-3).
- [161] *Homiliae Aelfric.*, *Passio S. S. Apostol. Petri et Pauli* (London, 1844, p. 369, 371).
- [162] St. Gregory the Great, *Moralis in Iob*, 28, 14.
- [163] Already in the Old Testament, God and Christ are symbolized as the Rock numerous times: Gen. 49:24; Deut. 32:4; 32:15; 2 Sam. 23:3; Ps. 18:2, 46; 19:14; 28:1; 31:3; 73:26; 89:26; 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Zach. 3:8, 9 (Cf. Rev. 5:6).
- [164] In the New Testament the symbol of the Rock always refers to Jesus Christ: Matt. 21:42,44; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:10,12; Col. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:4, 8.
- [165] Cardinal Bellarmine, *De Sum. Pontific.*, vol. I, Book 2, ch. 31.
- [166] *Ibid.*, Prologue, vol. 2; Marin Ordóñez, *El Pontificado*, vol. 1, Madrid 1887, ch. 10, p. 30.
- [167] 2 Pet. 1:21.
- [168] De Maistre, *Du Pape*, Discours préliminaire, I.
- [169] Vision III, 5:1.
- [170] Vision II, 2:6.
- [171] Vision III, 5:1.
- [172] See Migne, S. G., 571 ff.
- [173] *Diatessaron Gospel* (To St. Ephraim, Sir. S., Mg.).
- [174] The Eastern expression “the gates” means “the powers,” because during times of battle or in the event of some other external danger the military powers would concentrate at the gates of the fortified cities, where they would display their real might against the enemy. This term, in a more general sense, is used even in our days; [more commonly in European nations] where we find the expression “High Gate,” etc. This metaphor was very common among the Jews, especially Eastern peoples, and through them, found its way into the texts of the Holy Scriptures.
- [175] See St. Augustine, *In concione II super Psalmum XXX*; *In Psalm LXXXVI*; *Epistola CLXV ad Generosum*; *Tractati VII, CXXIII et CCXXIV in Ioannem*; *Sermo CCLXX in die Pentecostes, V*; *Sermo CCXIV*; *in Psalm LXIX*; *Sermo XXIX De Sanctis De Baptism.*, II, 1. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 55th on the Gospel of Matthew*; *Homily 51st on Matthew 16:18*; *Homily 65*; *Homily 4*; *Homily 83*; *Homilies 4th, 51st, 55th, 65th and 83rd of St. Cyril of Alexandria on Isaiah, Bk. 4th, Treatise 2nd*; *On the Holy Trinity, 4*; *On the Gospel of John 21:42 of St. Jerome, In Setum. Matthaeum, liber VI*; *Adversus Iovinianum, lib.*; *In Psalmum LXXXVI*; *Epistola XV ad Damasum, 2. of St. Cyprian Epist. XXVII De Lapsis*; *Epist. XXXIII, in initio*;

Epist. LXXIII ad Iubaianum; De Unitate Ecclesiae, IV. of St. Ambrose, De Incarnatione Domin. Sacrament, 5; Liber VI Comment. In Evang. Lucae, 9; Comment. In Ephes. 2; Epist. Ad Damasum. of St. John of Damascus, Homily on the Transfiguration; Tertullian, De Pudicitia, 21; De Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum, XVI et XXII. of St. Athanasius, Contra Arians, 3; St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Homily 32nd, 18; St. Gregory of Nyssa, Encomium on St. Stephen, 2; About the Coming of the Lord, St. Basil, 2nd ch. of Isaiah; Against Eunomius, 2,4; St. Epiphanius, Against Heresies, 59; St. Ilarion, De S.S. Trinitate, liber II et VI; St. Gregory the Great (of Rome), Moralia in Job, XXVIII, 14; Comment. in Psalm CI, 27; St. Isidore Ispalis, De Officiis, lib. II, 5; St. Bede, In quaest. super Exodum, cap. XLII, in recapitulation; Homil. De Feria III Palmarum in cap. XXI Iohannem; Basil of Seleucia, Homily 25th; St Peter Chrysologos, Homily 55th, About Stephen the Protomartyr Origen, Homily 74th, on Jeremiah; Homily 16th: Against Celsus, Bk. 3, 28; Comments on the Epistle to the Romans 5; Homily 7 on Isaiah; St. Eusebeus of Alexandria (bishop of Laodicea), Homily on the Resurrection; Theodoritus, Epistle 77th on 1 Cor. 3:10, to Eulalios, Bishop of Persia; St. Isidore of Pelusium, Epistle 235th, 1; Theophylact, on Matt. 16:18; St. Himerius of Reims, in Opusculi XXXIII adversus Himerium Laudunensis episcopum, Vet. XIV; St. Hippolytus, on Holy Theophany, 9; St. Paulinus, Epist. XXVII ad Severum, 10.

[176] Jude, 20.

[177] Gen. 49:24.

[178] Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17.

[179] See St. Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiae.

[180] St. Augustine, Retractiones, I, 21.

[181] St. Augustine, Homily LXXVI, 1.

[182] St. Augustine, Homily CCVC.

[183] St. Augustine, Homily CCLXX, 2.

[184] St. Augustine, Tractatus CXXIV In Iohannem.

[185] St. Augustine, Homily CCVIL, 1.

[186] Eph. 2:20

[187] Rev. 21:14.

[188] To Trallians, 3:1.

[189] St. Cyprian, Epistle XXXIII, in initio; Epistle XXVII, De Lapsis.

[190] See St. Jerome, Adversus Iovinianum, lib. I.

[191] “[The Lord] in favoring Peter among all the other apostles, established him as the principle of Church unity and as the visible foundation upon whose solidity He established the eternal edifice of the Church.” Bulla Paster Aeternus, Constit. I, Introduct. (Denzinger, Enquiridion, 1667).

[192] Matt. 7:26-27.

[193] St. Jerome, Adversus Iovinianum, I. See also, In Evangelio S. Matt., lib. VI.

[194] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, II.

[195] This was the main argument of Archbishop Strossmayer against papal primacy at the Synod of Vatican. During his presentation, he was interrupted many times by members of the Synod, the other cardinals, with such expressions as: “Crush the mouth of the heretic!”, “Silence the blasphemer!” etc. (See, Kölnische Zeitung, 13-7-1881). Moreover, the Roman Catholic Archbishop Kenrick (St. Louis, USA) published an article in 1870 in Naples which he had prepared to present at the Vatican Synod. In this article he argued that the Primacy of the Pope opposes the true interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods and the teaching of the Holy Fathers. For some unknown reason, which would not be so difficult for someone to guess, this homily was not presented at the Synod. The unofficial justification for this omission was that “His Eminence lost his briefcase when he entered the city of Vatican”! Here, the phraseology used by Saint Athanasius in relation to the followers of Apollinaris is most befitting: “Having been blinded by hate, they betray the messages of the prophets and the teachings of the apostles, and the admonitions of the Fathers, and even the unquestionable voice of the Master” (About the Incarnation, against Apollinaris, I, 1).

[196] Every candidate for ordination in the Roman Catholic Church is obliged to swear officially, among other things, the following oath: “I believe unequivocally that the Church was built upon Peter, supreme leader of the apostolic hierarchy, and their successors” (Motu Proprio Sacrorum Antistitum, Pii X. Actae Sanctae Sedis, II. 1910, 669-672).

[197] St Irenaeus, Against Heresies, IV, Ch. 26.

[198] St Papias (Eusebius, Eccles. Hist., IV, 22, 1-3).

[199] Etymologically the term “catholic” is not compatible with those who separated themselves from the catholicity of the Church.

[200] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XVIII, 5.

[201] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XX, 1,2.

[202] Tertullian, De Praescriptionibus Haereticorum, Ch. 21.

[203] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, X, 7 and 8.

[204] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XL,4.

[205] Ruiz Bueno, Padres Apostolicos, Introducción, Madrid 1950.

- [206] Ibid, Introducción.
- [207] Le Camus, L'Oeuvre des Apôtres, V. II, Barcellona 1909, p. 29.
- [208] Mgr. Le Camus, Ibid, V. I, p.10.
- [209] St. Polycarp, Philippians 7:2.
- [210] St. Cyprian, Epist. LXIII ad Cæcilium Fratrum.
- [211] Jeremiah, 6:16 (Septuagint).
- [212] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XVII, 1,.2.
- [213] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XVII, 15.
- [214] Habere iam non potest Deum Patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem. St. Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiæ, VI.
- [215] Hanc unitatem qui non tenet, Dei legem non tenet, non tenet Patris et Filii fidem, vitam non tenet et salutem,
- [216] Nec parentum nec maiorum nostorum error sequendus est, sed auctoritas Scripturarum et Dei docentis imperium. St. Jerome, In Ierem., I, 12.
- [217] Tertullian, De Virginibus Velandis, h. I.
- [218] Published in Athens under the title: The Journey and the Work of Apostle Paul In Spain (Republished by "Ecclesia"), Apostoliki Diakonia, March 1954.
- [219] See, Relations of the Iberian Churches and the Church of Africa, From St. Cyprian Until St. Augustine, Lux, Lisbon 1950. Also: Archbishop Juan B. Cabrera, La Iglesia en Espana (Desde la Edad Apostólica hasta la invasión de los Sarracenos), Madrid 1910.
- [220] Fortunately, the truth is that things are much different today and, by the Lord's help, we can foresee some conversions in the near future due to the interest and love for Orthodoxy, which we are constantly struggling to increase in the West.
- [221] John 18:36.
- [222] Origen, 6th Homily on Isaiah, I.
- [223] St. Gregory the Great, Epistle to Ioannis, Patriarch of Constantinople (Epist. S. Gregor. Magn. lib. V, ep. XVIII. Ed. Bened., 1705).
- [224] 2 Thess. 2:4.
- [225] Is. 14:13-14 [Septuagint].

- [226] Bernardus Claravalensis, Ad Eugenium Papam, De Consideratione, III, 1.
- [227] Cf. Rev. 18:3.
- [228] Rev. 18:3.
- [229] Cf. Matt. 15:3-9.
- [230] Tertullian, De Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum, 42.
- [231] Cf. Prov. 30:6.
- [232] John 8:44.
- [233] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, IV, 7.
- [234] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, XVII, 14.
- [235] Rev. 18:4.
- [236] The Scriptural Verses of the Primacy and their Patristic Interpretation, Buenos Aires, 1951.
- [237] As known: Matt. 16:18-19, John 21:15-17, Luke 22:31-32.
- [238] See for ex. Apologetics of F. Juan Ruano Ramos for the Use of Students of Middle Education, Barcelona 1948.
- [239] Behold how Roman Catholicism views Orthodoxy from an apologetic standpoint:
- a) Orthodoxy is not the One Church, because she distanced herself from the center of unity which is the Pope.
 - b) She is not the Holy Church, since she consists of a branch broken from the trunk of the vine which is the source of grace and holiness; and this [vine] is the Papist Church.
 - c) She ceased to be the Catholic Church from the time she was divided from Rome, the nucleus and symbol of catholicity.
 - d) Neither is she Apostolic, since she does not descend from the apostles, but from Photios and Cerularius. Ibid. Part B, "Specific Characteristics of the True Church of Christ."
- [240] Serge Boulgakov, L'Orthodoxie, édit. Félix Alcan, Paris 1933.
- [241] Metropolitte Seraphim, L'Eglise Orthodoxe, Payot, Paris 1952.
- [242] Tertullian, De Præscript., Hæretic., XXI.
- [243] Nuestro Dios, Vuestro Dios y Dios, Buenos Aires 1951.

[244] The Uniates (from Unitas, which means union) consist of the covert order of the Byzantine Rite Papists, who masquerade as Orthodox priests and actively seek to Latinize the faithful in Orthodox lands.

[245] Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus. [catholic is that which is believed] always, everywhere, and by everyone (St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, Ch. 2

[246] St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, 23, 16.

[247] Ibid.

[248] Jude 3.

[249] Gal. 1:8.

[250] Eph. 5:27. Cf. Origen, On Exodus, Hom. 9.

[251] Song of Songs 6:9.

[252] St. Augustine, Serm. De Symbol. Catech., 40, 635.

[253] Cf. Luke 10:16.

[254] Cf. Matt. 18:17.

[255] Cf. Matt 13:44-46.

[256] Present text. It is the publisher's sincere hope that with the broader title of "My Exodus", the amazing and most powerful testimony of our blessed Bishop Paul will challenge readers and attract seekers of the true Church of Christ, who may be disenchanted by the present day impasse of their religious institutions, to follow his great example. May his memory be eternal!