

he was called upon to quell a riot at the amphiteater where the Christians were electing a new bishop. They were going through some not-so-holy rowdyism when Ambrose arrived with the gendarmes. He had become a Christian relatively recently but had a good reputation and a recognized testimony as well as an accepted position as a civil leader. On his appearance at the riot the crowd began calling on him to be the next bishop..a man they could all quickly accept. A man of piety, he felt his unworthiness and lack of theological knowledge but he humbly accepted the call and went to work. His writings thereafter will reveal one of piety and practical devotion...and we still sing some of his hymns.

Incidentally, in passing, there is a great deal of tradition, etc., wrapped up in the history of these leaders. Sometimes it is impossible to sort out fact and rumor. So I try to give a middle-of-the-road presentation without solving the integrity problems..and that is why you may be reading another book and the author may treat them somewhat otherwise.

But, back to Ambrose. It was his preaching that was used to move the heart of Augustine. But he is more famous for the time in 390 when he withstood the emperor Theodosius and refused to grant him communion due to a slaughter committed at Thessalonica by his troops at his command. Ambrose required a public acknowledgement from Theodosius of his sin and a request for forgiveness. It is to the credit of Ambrose that he had such principles and the courage to act on them..it is to the credit of Theodosius that he saw the rightness of the matter and did make public confession and request for forgiveness and restoration. Such acts by bishops were not always successful, but where they were, they did much to promote the image of the meaning of the office of the bishopric.

The attitude of Ambrose towards Damasus, Bishop of Rome, is interesting and in the tradition of Cyprian. While he did not hold Damasus in personal high esteem--he seems to have been marked with a worldly character--he felt the office of bishop required full respect and yieldedness in its area and then, one step farther, that the Bishop in Rome, one of the most important churches, was rather a bishop of bishops or a first among bishops, apparently no