

We cannot assume that every bishop was happy with this sort of understanding but we must see that it existed and as such is a conditioning factor on all the life of the church.

But viewing these factors we can see that the Roman church, as we have known it, is a vastly different institution from the Christian church of the early centuries or from the church that was recognized by the rest of the Christian community as "catholic". When that is seen, one may proceed to see how the church developed and we can understand how the church of the Middle Ages rose from the historic catastrophies of the earlier centuries and how, in the same manner, the church of the Reformation rose from similar trials and how...but you will see how it goes and the story is repeated, ad infinitum, until the Lord comes, I fear.

Two major ideas important to the development of the Roman religious institution are:

--The Primacy of Peter: That Peter held first place among the Apostles and was, so to speak, "first among equals";

--The Chair of Peter: That having come to Rome for the establishment of that church, the authority of Peter was passed to successive bishops of Rome. Hence the party holding the position holds as well the implicit authority and power.

These are the fundamental claims behind the Roman system although to them are added many others. Most of the claimant statements grow from this base, however. TWT does not doubt that Peter served in Rome but doubts that there is any justification to a communication of power from level to level.

The Roman church has worked from these claims, of course, and has sought testimonial statements among other bishops and workers in the early church. Here, in a very brief summary form, are some of the early bishops of Rome and their attitude towards the see:

--Clement, 1st century: We read easily his letter to the Corinthians and note that there is nothing in it to suggest that he is or wishes to see himself an authority over or to the Corinthian church. He offers godly advice based on scriptural