

But there was no great mass of conversions and in time Islam would bring great persecution to the Greek and Slavic churches. Eventually it would win the honor of being the most persecutorial of all societies with regard to Christian circles and probably the Islamic persecution of Armenians early in this century has no rival in intensity or terror.

V.l.d.  
Papal  
Political  
Power

#### Development of the Papal States as a Nation

(This material is included at this point due to the political nature...it could be under V.2, Church Growth...but sometimes one has to make a decision and just live with it.)

WE have already discussed the fact of Rome's survival in the fall of the western empire. We suggested the prestige this gave the Roman bishop and indicated a bit of the extended authority that was his when there was no rival party. Whether we like it or not, at the inception of this period and for some time to come, there was no person of greater prominence or importance in the west than the bishop of Rome. He headed the church that offered spiritual stability and moved for a governmental force in a city that offered a continuing history. Much of this position would be capitalized by good men but would become a means of personal enrichment by dishonest men. The Roman office has had plenty of both in the course of history with the poor ones outnumbering the good ones on a ratio of about 10 to 1 or higher!!

#### The Leading Popes

##### Gregory I (590-604)

No doubt the most outstanding pope since Leo I and certainly one of the five most competent in the history of the Roman church. He is a great papal leader and a man of remarkable abilities. Probably his accomplishments were due to the unique constitution in which he combined regimented sagacity with superstition in an amazing and erratic formula.

At his assumption of formal power (590) he found the Norman hordes threatening from the south and the Lombards menacing Rome from the north. The eastern emperor seemed either unwilling or unable to help by this time. Accordingly Gregory mustered and prepared an army that successfully defended Rome and drove off