

Earlier I mentioned the claims some of the Roman bishops had made with regard to the superiority of the Papal chair. This, with the survival of the city of Rome and the coming of newer empires, made a formidable background for the developed claims of the popes of this age and continues to give papal support to the goals and aims of the papacy to the present time. We will sketch the chief contributing popes to this progression and mention largely the items which they contributed while offering relatively little estimation of their character, serviceability, or spiritual traits.

Symmachus (498-514)

In the clearest language yet given he propounded the dogma that the Bishop of Rome is judge of all and cannot be judged by any. He was elected out of a political riot and there followed many accusations against his ability and character. His defense was that the Bishop of Rome was not accountable on the same lines of life that other men are accountable. This view of papal infallibility does not become the rule of the church for many centuries but it is very well expressed by this bishop in this sort of ideal. His concepts went well beyond the ex-cathedra ideas of the later church and included personal conduct as well as official business.

Gregory the Great (590-604)

An extremely able pope, he gave the greatest impetus to structural church growth of any of the bishops up to his time. His moves in this area were these:

--A national status for the Vatican.

--The restoration of a public role in the service of the church...largely through music..of which he is remembered in the Gregorian chants. This cannot be minimized. While Gregory did not stress many things we like, he did see the church as being an institution in which the worshippers necessarily had a function.

--The required celibacy of priests. This makes the priest dependent on the church for his very existence. It developed greater loyalty and greater