

The most important developments came with the pontificate of Pius IX (1846-1878) whose rule in Rome is the longest in Roman history. He was strongly ultramontane and absolute in the desire for temporal power for the Vatican. He gave official statement to the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary in 1854 and in 1864 issued the Syllabus of Errors that, among other things, took issue with church/state separation, religious toleration, and any suggestion that the Roman pontiff was subject to any of the changing affairs of society.

Under Pius IX, the Vatican Council met in 1869-1870 and reaffirmed the ultramontane position with the pronouncement of Papal Infallibility. This was not received without protest and an Old Catholic church developed in Europe using the ideas of Dollinger and the insistence that only a council can be infallible...and this one was not in this pronouncement. (overly-simplified statement of the struggle) The solidarity of the church was emphasized at Vatican I and what might be called the protestant polarization was given greater prominence. The infallibility decree, as you must know, does not extend to whatever the pope does but to what he does when speaking "ex cathedra" In this role, particularly in definition of morals, doctrine, etc., he is given Divine help that the matter may be pronounced without error....a power desired by many pastors but claimed by only a few!

Perhaps the most difficult pill for the Roman church came in this period and that was the loss of the Roman (papal) states in 1870. Italy had been a collection of city-states, etc., and was being united under the aegis of Victor Emmanuel. His army overthrew the papal forces in 1870 and he obtained a plebiscite of the citizens of the Roman states as to their governmental preference. The vote of more than 100 to 1 favored Emmanuel (Emmanuel!) and argued for joining the new Italy. At this point the temporal power of the Vatican ended. The Italian government granted the pope the absolute possession of the Vatican, the Lateran Palace, and the Castle of the Holy Ann...but the territories were gone. The act ended what was, at the time, the longest civil state group in Europe. Interesting materials on this connexion may be seen in Martin: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.