

THE STATUS OF THE SEE OF ROME IN THE FIRST MILLENIUM OF THE EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

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In the first millennium of the Christendom, the primacy of the Roman Pope in jurisdictional terms was not acknowledged by all. Although Eastern churches regarded the Roman pope as *primus inter pares* (first among the equals).

Clement's epistle to the Church of Corinth is considered to be the first case from which the responsibility of the Roman See for other churches can be seen. The epistle urges the members of the Corinthian church to peace and order. In this epistle sent from Rome, a strong, authoritative and caring voice is clearly felt.

It is also necessary to analyze the letters sent in the opposite direction (from the East to Rome). For example, Ignatius of Antioch's letter to the Romans, unlike the rest of his letters, does not contain an exhortation or recommendation to guard against heresies, but only praise of the Roman Church who is "teaching others".

In the words of Irenaeus Lyon, "due to the supreme authority of the Roman Church, it is necessary that all churches, or Christians everywhere, agree (convenire) with it, because here the apostolic tradition has always been preserved by all".

It is also known that there was a difference of opinion between Polycarp of Smyrna and Pope Aniketus on the issue of celebration of the Easter. An agreement was not reached, but they have immediately reconciled, because they did not want to argue with each other about this issue. Both sides peacefully continued to follow their own different traditions.

Later on a conflict with Rome also arose over the issue of the baptism of heretics. In the Church of Rome, heretics were not rebaptized. But in the North African church, during the time of Cyprian of Carthage, the rebaptism of heretics was necessary. During the controversy, Cyprian says that no bishop had more power than another one.

However, Cyprian is "obviously in a defensive position" when confronting Rome. The Holy Father noted that he does not intend to impose his opinion on others, nor does he want to sever ties with Pope Stephen. According to researchers, in general, "Cyprian was imbued with deep respect for the Roman Church". For Cyprian, the Roman Cathedral is the basis and guarantee of the unity of the Church. That is why, when he faced certain destructive forces in his own church, he was always ready to turn to Rome, which he considered "the source of episcopal unity (principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis)".

Thus, such historical cases assist us to understand that in the early centuries the Roman pope did not have final and comprehensive power (as a monarch) over the rest of the churches. However, it is undeniable that the Roman See had exceptional authority, prestige and influence on the whole Christendom.