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PETER DAMIAN

*A Letter to Bishop Cunibert of Turin*

1064

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*Peter Damian was an uncompromising advocate of ecclesiastical renewal. He served the cause of reform by attending councils and undertaking missions as a papal legate, but especially by writing. He carried on a voluminous correspondence, and the excerpts here are from a treatise-length letter he wrote to Bishop Cunibert of Turin in 1064.*

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To Sir Cunibert, the most reverend bishop, the monk Peter the sinner sends his humble service.

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Peter Damian, Letter 112, *The Letters of Peter Damian*, trans. Owen J. Blum, in *The Fathers of the Church: Medieval Continuation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 5: 258–59, 266–69, 270–71, 285.

It is the norm of true love and friendship that brothers should foster such mutual affection that if anything reproachful be found in either of them, one will not hide it from the other. Such urgency proves to be both useful and upright, for as it brings everything into the open, it repairs that which needs correction and safeguards what is conducive to their well-being by a pure and sincere exchange of love. And so it happens, that as the delinquent's fault is called to his attention, he who corrects amasses a greater amount of grace. Among the various virtues, venerable father, with which your holiness is adorned, I must say that one thing greatly displeases me, which, on the occasion of my visit to you, caused me to be very angry with you, and which now compels me to bring it up again in this letter. For you have been permissive toward the clerics of your diocese, whatever orders they might have received, allowing them to live with their wives as if they were married men. God forbid that in your great prudence you should be unaware that such a practice is obscene and opposed to ecclesiastical purity, contrary to the commands of the canons, and certainly offensive to all the norms promulgated by the holy Fathers. This is especially true, since these very clerics of yours are otherwise decent people and properly educated in the study of the arts. Indeed, when they met me, they appeared to shine like a choir of angels and like a distinguished senate of the Church.

But after I learned of the hidden discharge flowing from this disease, light was suddenly converted into darkness, and my joy was turned into sorrow, and I at once recalled this saying of the Gospel, "Alas for you, lawyers and Pharisees! You are like tombs covered with whitewash; they look well from the outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all kinds of filth" (Matt. 23:27). How is it, father, that you watch out only for yourself, and that in regard to those for whom you must first give an account you are indolently asleep? Certainly, in other individuals productive chastity is not required; but in a bishop chastity is rightly considered unprofitable if it remains so sterile that it does not give birth to chastity in others. . . .

*[Peter then goes through numerous scriptural passages and excerpts from the Fathers and church councils, requiring the chastity of the clergy.]*

Therefore, since all the holy Fathers, who with the aid of the Holy Spirit fashioned the canons, without dissent unanimously concur that clerical chastity must be observed, what will await those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit by satisfying their own carnal desires? Because of a flux of momentary passion, they earn the reward of burn-

ing in eternal fire that cannot be quenched. Now they wallow in the filth of impurity, but later, given over to the avenging flames, they will be rolled about in a flood of pitch and sulphur. Now, in the heat of passion, they are themselves a very hell, but then, buried in the depths of eternal night, they must forever suffer the torments of a savage inferno. In themselves they now feed the fires of lust, but then with their inmost beings they will nourish the flames of a fire that is never extinguished. Oh, unhappy and pitiful men! By observing the law of their putrid flesh which awaits devouring worms, they despise the laws of him who came down from heaven and reigns over the angels. And so, in the words of the prophet, the Lord says to the reprobate, "You have preferred your body to me" (Ezek. 23:35), as if to say, "You placed your bodily pleasure before the law, and despised the commands of my precepts." Surely, the law of the human body is contrary to the law of God. Hence the Apostle says, "I perceive that there is in my bodily members a different law, fighting against the law that my reason approves and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members" (Rom 7:23).

## POPE GREGORY VII

*The Dictatus papae*

1075

*This list of twenty-seven assertions about papal authority appears in the register of Gregory's letters between documents dated March 3 and 5, 1075. Given the unquestioned authenticity of this register, the list was almost certainly dictated by the pope. These claims were not, however, distributed or circulated. There are no direct references to them in Gregory's correspondence or in the polemical writings of the late eleventh century. Even in canon law collections of the period they are only rarely cited. What was their purpose? H. E. J. Cowdrey has called attention to a statement of Peter Damian in a 1059 letter that Hildebrand/Gregory had asked him to compile papal decrees and statements on the authority of the Apostolic See and suggested that this list was Gregory's own draft of propositions on papal prerogatives. They may well have been prepared with the expectation that Henry IV would soon come to Rome to be crowned emperor. In exchange for his coronation, Henry would have been required to acknowledge the rights of the Roman Church. This scenario never developed, but the Dictatus papae gives us valuable evidence of Gregory's conception of his office on the eve of his bitter struggle with Henry IV.*

- I. That the Roman Church was founded by God alone.
- II. That only the Roman Pontiff may by right be called universal.
- III. That he alone can depose or restore bishops.
- IV. That his legate takes precedence in council before all bishops, even if he is of a lower rank, and has the power to pass a sentence of deposition against them.
- V. That the pope may depose the absent.
- VI. That, among other things, we ought not stay in the same house with those excommunicated by him.

*Das Register Gregors VII, 2.55a, ed. E. Caspar, in Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae Selectae, 2 (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1920), 201-8.*

VII. That only he may establish new laws as necessary, may form new parishes, may make an abbey of a canonry (and the contrary), and may divide rich dioceses and unite impoverished ones.

VIII. That only he may use imperial insignia.

IX. That all princes should kiss the feet of the pope alone.

X. That his name alone may be read out in churches.

XI. That this title [pope] is unique in the world.

XII. That he may depose emperors.

XIII. That he may transfer bishops from see to see as he thinks necessary.

XIV. That he may ordain a cleric from any church to wherever he wishes.

XV. That someone having been ordained by him may rule over another church, but not under the command of others, and that he ought not to accept a higher rank from any other bishop.

XVI. That no synod ought to be called general [meaning universal] without his mandate.

XVII. That no chapter or book may be regarded as canonical without his authority.

XVIII. That no ruling of his may be retracted by anyone and that he alone of all men may retract [a sentence he has given].

XIX. That he may be judged by no one.

XX. That none should dare to condemn someone appealing to the Apostolic See.

XXI. That major cases of any church whatsoever should be referred to him.

XXII. That the Roman Church has never erred, nor will it ever err, as scripture attests.

XXIII. That the Roman Pontiff, if he shall have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made holy by the merits of blessed Peter, as Saint Ennodius Bishop of Pavia attests, with many holy fathers supporting him, and as is contained in the decrees of blessed Pope Symmachus.<sup>2</sup>

XXIV. That by his order and license subordinate persons may bring accusations.

XXV. That he may depose or reinstate bishops without calling a synod.

<sup>2</sup>Ennodius of Pavia wrote a tract in 502 defending Pope Symmachus (498–514) from accusations of immorality; it asserted that popes could only be judged by God. An early collection of decrees supporting papal authority was attributed to Pope Symmachus.

XXVI. That someone not in concord with the Roman Church may not be held to be Catholic.

XXVII. That he may absolve subjects from fealty to unjust men.

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## The First Confrontation

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POPE GREGORY VII

*Admonition to Henry*

*December 8, 1075*

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*When things were going badly in the Saxon war, Henry had adopted a conciliatory posture with Gregory. The pope probably considered this a favorable sign that a penitent and pliant king would soon come to Rome to be instructed by the Holy See before coronation. All this changed in the summer of 1075 when Henry won a resounding military victory over the Saxon rebels at Homburg on June 9. Now in a position of strength, he resumed his campaign to restore royal authority. While he had been battling the Saxon rebels, events in Milan had changed rapidly in his favor. During Holy Week of 1075 the Patarenes precipitated a new wave of violence; this time they were defeated. Henry took the opportunity to appoint another imperial candidate as archbishop, a local Milanese cleric named Tedald. In doing so, he disregarded entirely the claims not only of the papal candidate to the see, Atto, but also those of his own earlier candidate, Godfrey. Henry also invested new bishops for two other Italian sees, Fermo and Spoleto. It is important to note at this junction that in these investitures Henry was acting entirely within his rights. Historians once believed there was a papal decree against lay investiture enacted at the Roman synod of 1075, but no such canon survives, and none of the documentation of the period clarifies the issue. Indeed, Gregory's objection to Henry's actions concerning Fermo and Spoleto had nothing to do with investiture: It was because the candidates were strangers to*

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*The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, ed. and trans. Ephraim Emerton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932; rpt. 1969), 86–90.

*him. It seems likely, however, that a proclamation against lay investiture was discussed at the 1075 synod but never promulgated. Some evidence of this lies in a number of ongoing disputes Gregory had with leading German prelates over their treatment of monastic institutions and accusations of simony. Gregory apparently felt there was little hope of reforming the church in the German lands if he could not exert greater control over the bishops there. This letter has sometimes been described as a papal "ultimatum," but there are numerous conciliatory clauses amidst Gregory's usual righteous rhetoric. There is no doubt, however, that the verbal admonitions the pope sent through the three legates mentioned at the letter's close were much more stern. They very likely made a blunt connection between full compliance with papal demands and imperial coronation, as well as spelling out the consequences—including excommunication and deposition—of continued disobedience.*

Gregory, bishop, servant of God's servants, to King Henry, greeting and the apostolic benediction—but with the understanding that he obeys the Apostolic See as becomes a Christian king.

Considering and weighing carefully to how strict a judge we must render any account of the stewardship committed to us by St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, we have hesitated to send you the apostolic benediction, since you are reported to be in voluntary communication with men who are under the censure of the Apostolic See and of a synod. If this is true, you yourself know that you cannot receive the favor of God nor the apostolic blessing unless you shall first put away those excommunicated persons and force them to do penance and shall yourself obtain absolution and forgiveness for your sin by due repentance and satisfaction. Wherefore we counsel Your Excellency, if you feel yourself guilty in this matter, to make your confession at once to some pious bishop who, with our sanction, may impose upon you a penance suited to the offense, may absolve you and with your consent in writing may be free to send us a true report of the manner of your penance.

We marvel exceedingly that you have sent us so many devoted letters and displayed such humility by the spoken words of your legates, calling yourself a son of our Holy Mother Church and subject to us in the faith, singular in affection, a leader in devotion, commending yourself with every expression of gentleness and reverence, and yet in action showing yourself most bitterly hostile to the canons and apos-

tolic decrees in those duties especially required by loyalty to the Church. Not to mention other cases, the way you have observed your promises in the Milan affair, made through your mother and through bishops, our colleagues, whom we sent to you, and what your intentions were in making them is evident to all. And now, heaping wounds upon wounds, you have handed over the sees of Fermo and Spoleto—if indeed a church may be given over by any human power—to persons entirely unknown to us, whereas it is not lawful to consecrate anyone except after probation and with due knowledge.

It would have been becoming to you, since you confess yourself to be a son of the Church, to give more respectful attention to the master of the Church, that is, to Peter, prince of the Apostles. To him, if you are of the Lord's flock, you have been committed for your pasture, since Christ said to him: "Peter, feed my sheep" (John 21:17), and again: "to thee are given the keys of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matt. 16:19). Now, while we, unworthy sinner that we are, stand in his place of power, still whatever you send to us, whether in writing or by word of mouth, he himself receives, and while we read what is written or hear the voice of those who speak, he discerns with subtle insight from what spirit the message comes. Wherefore Your Highness should beware lest any defect of will toward the Apostolic See be found in your words or in your messages and should pay due reverence, not to us but to Almighty God, in all matters touching the welfare of the Christian faith and the status of the Church. And this we say although our Lord deigned to declare: "He who heareth you heareth me; and he who despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke 10:16).

## EMPEROR HENRY IV

*Response to Gregory's Admonition**Early 1076*

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*The twenty-five-year-old king was at Goslar celebrating the Christmas holidays when Gregory's "admonition" arrived. His anger was evident in his immediate responses. He publicly consorted with those excommunicated counselors whom the pope had forbidden him to see, and he called an assembly of bishops and lay princes to convene at Worms in January. Although the number of lay leaders in attendance was low, a large majority of the bishops of the realm came to Worms. They renounced their allegiance to Gregory as pope, declaring him an arrogant usurper*

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*Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century*, trans. Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962; rpt. 2000), 150–51.

*of the Holy See. These two letters had two very different audiences. Henry sent the first to Gregory with a copy of the Worms renunciation. The second letter he circulated in Germany to cultivate support for his actions. He refers several times to Gregory's proclivity—in Milan through his support of the Pataria and in several German sees—to call upon the common people to disobey ecclesiastical lords whom the pope opposed.*

Henry, King by the grace of God, to Hildebrand:

Although hitherto I hoped for those things from you which are expected of a father and obeyed you in all respects to the great indignation of our vassals, I have obtained from you a requital suitable from one who was the most pernicious enemy of our life and kingly office. After you had first snatched away with arrogant boldness all the hereditary dignity owed me by that [Apostolic] See, going still further you tried with the most evil arts to alienate the kingdom of Italy. Not content with this, you have not feared to set your hand against the most reverend bishops, who are united to us like most cherished members and have harassed them with most arrogant affronts and the bitterest abuses against divine and human laws. While I let all these things go unnoticed through patience, you thought it not patience but cowardice and dared to rise up against the head itself, announcing, as you know, that (to use your own words) you would either die or deprive me of my life and kingly office.

Judging that this unheard of defiance had to be confuted not with words, but with action, I held a general assembly of all the foremost men of their kingdom, at their supplication. When they had made public through their true declaration (which you will hear from their own letter) those things they had previously kept silent through fear and reverence, they took public action to the end that you could no longer continue in the Apostolic See. Since their sentence seemed just and righteous before God and men, I also give my assent, revoking from you every prerogative of the papacy which you have seemed to hold, and ordering [you] to descend from the throne of the city whose patriariate is due me through the bestowal of God and the sworn assent of the Romans.