



[The Two Swords of the Church](#)

Posted on [18 May 2011](#) by [Ron Conte](#)

The one holy Catholic and truly Apostolic Church has two types of authority: spiritual and temporal. The spiritual authority of the Church is Her teaching authority, called the Magisterium. But the Church also has temporal authority. For in order to do the work of salvation, deeds are needed in addition to teachings. The Church needs to have rules for Bishops, priests, and deacons, for religious orders, and for all Her members. The Church needs to make decisions of the prudential order, and to issue judgments and rulings in particular cases. All of these types of deeds fall under the temporal authority of the Church, not under the Magisterium.

These two types of authority by the Church are symbolically represented by the two swords of the Gospel: “So they said, ‘Lord, behold, there are two swords here.’ But he said to them, ‘It is sufficient.’ ” (Lk 22:38). The Church has the authority to teach (doctrine), on matters of faith, morals, and salvation. But the Church also has temporal authority, so that She can make practical decisions (discipline) needed to function as a Church within the world, as a Church whose members on earth are sinners.

The temporal authority of the Church includes authority over Vatican City-State. But the main exercise of Her temporal authority is not political, but practical. The laws of Canon Law (in so far as these are not direct expression of teachings on faith or morals) are of the temporal authority of the Church. Decisions such as to approve or disapprove of a claimed private revelation, a written work, a particular translation of the Bible, or some other endeavor, are of the temporal authority. Rulings in particular cases, as when a marriage tribunal decides whether or not to grant an annulment, or a Bishops decides to suspend the faculties of a priest, or to close a parish church, are of the temporal authority.

The spiritual authority (Magisterium) of the Church issues dogmas and doctrines, but the temporal authority issues rules and rulings. The Magisterium teaches either infallibly (dogmas) or non-infallibly (doctrines that are not dogmas). The Magisterium acts either infallibly or non-infallibly (limited possibility of error). But the temporal authority is fallible. The rules and rulings of the temporal authority of the Church, including of the Pope, of an Ecumenical Council, of the Holy See, of Cardinals and Bishops, of Bishops’ Conferences, are all fallible exercises of the temporal authority.

The temporal authority of secular governments is, in theory, under the authority of the Church. The Church permits secular governments to exercise some temporal authority. But She also always retains the authority to judge if that exercise has not been good. All authority is of God, and there is only one God; therefore, both the spiritual authority and the temporal authority are One Authority, from God, given to the Church. And although civil authorities exercise, in part, this temporal authority, they do so on behalf of the Church. And the Church truly retains possession of that temporal authority which is lent to civil governments.

The spiritual authority is always above the temporal authority. Even when the Church exercises some temporal authority over Her own members (e.g. in Canon Law), Her spiritual authority is above her own exercise of temporal authority.

For more on this topic, see below my translation and commentary of Unam Sanctam.

by
Ronald L. Conte Jr.
Roman Catholic theologian and Bible translator

Unam Sanctam - Latin text with notes

Primary source for Latin text:

- Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, (Archbishop of Westminster, England), *The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*, (Catholic Publication Society: New York, 1875), p. 172-173.

Secondary sources for Latin text:

- Fr. Luigi Tosti, (Benedictine Monk, Abbey of Monte Cassino, Italy), *Storia di Bonifazio VIII e de suoi tempi*, Volume II, 1846; p. 304-306.
- Fr. Luigi Tosti, *History of Pope Boniface VIII and his times, with Notes and Documentary Evidence*, in six books, (Christian Press Association, New York: 1911) p. 537-538.
- Fr. Carl Mirbt, (professor of Church history at the University of Marburg, Germany), *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums ('Sources for the History of the Papacy')*, (Freiburg und Leipzig: Marburg, 1895) p. 88-90.
- Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian church*, Volume 5, (Scribner: New York, 1910), p. 27-28.

Latin Text:

Bonifatius, Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei.
Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

1. Unam Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam et ipsam Apostolicam urgente fide credere cogimur et tenere. Nosque hanc firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur: extra quam nec salus est, nec remissio peccatorum, Sponso in Canticis proclamante, 'Una est columba mea, perfecta mea: una est matris suae, electa genitrici suae:' [Canticles 6:8] quae unum corpus mysticum repraesentat, cujus caput Christus, Christi vero Deus. [1 Corinthians 11:3] In qua unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma. [Ephesians 4:5] Una nempe fuit Diluvii tempore arca Noe, unam Ecclesiam praefigurans, quae in uno cubito consummata, [Genesis 6:16] unum, Noe videlicet, gubernatorem habuit et rectorem, extra quam omnia subsistentia super terram legimus fuisse deleta.

Notes:

Schaff has 'futuram' instead of 'perpetuam' in 'Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.'

Tosti adds 'corporis' in 'cujus corporis caput Christus.' But Manning, Mirbt, and Schaff all lack corporis, and the word adds nothing to the meaning.

Manning has the typographical error of 'omnis subsistentia,' instead of 'omnia subsistentia.'

2. Hanc autem veneramur et unam; dicente Domino in Propheta, 'Erue a framea, Deus, animam meam et de manu canis unam meam;' [Psalm 21:21] pro anima enim, id est, pro seipso capite simul oravit et corpore: quod corpus unam scilicet Ecclesiam nominavit, propter sponsi, fidei, sacramentorum, et charitatis Ecclesiae unitatem. Haec est tunica illa Domini inconsutilis, [John 19:23-24] quae scissa non fuit sed sorte provenit.

3. Igitur Ecclesiae unius et unice unum corpus, unum caput, non duo capita quasi monstrum, Christus videlicet, et Christi vicarius Petrus Petrique successor; dicente Domino ipsi Petro, 'Pasce oves meas,' [John 21:17] 'meas,' inquit, et generaliter non singulariter has vel illas, per quod commisisse sibi intelligitur universas. Sive igitur Graeci, sive alii se dicant Petro ejusque successoribus non esse commissos, fateantur necesse se de ovibus Christi non esse; dicente Domino in Joanne, 'unum ovile et unicum esse pastorem.' [John 10:16]

Notes:

Tosti and Schaff lack 'et' in 'inquit, et generaliter,' but add 'est,' in 'necesse est, se'; Manning and Mirbt agree in adding 'et' and lacking 'est'. But neither adding 'et,' nor taking away 'est,' would seem to alter the meaning of the text.

Tosti alone adds a second 'unum' in 'unum ovile, unum et unicum esse Pastorem,' making the text read: 'one and only one Pastor.'

4. In hac ejusque potestate duos esse gladios, spiritualem videlicet et temporalem, Evangelicis dictis instruimur. Nam dicentibus Apostolis, 'Ecce gladii duo hic,' in Ecclesia scilicet, cum Apostoli loquerentur, non respondit Dominus nimis esse sed satis. [Luke 22:38] Certe qui in potestate Petri temporalem gladium esse negat, male verbum attendit Domini proferentes, 'Converte gladium tuum in vaginam.' [Matthew 26:52] Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis. Sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia exercendus. Ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis.

Notes:

St. Bernard (De Consideratione, Lib. iv. c. 3) writes:

"Uterque ergo Ecclesiae, et, spiritalis scilicet gladius et materialis; sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero et ab Ecclesia exercendus: ille sacerdotis, is militis manu, sed sane ad nutum sacerdotis et jussum Imperatoris."

"And both therefore, are of the Church, specifically, both the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly the former is to be exercised by the Church; the former is of the priest, the latter is by the hand of the soldier, but truly at the will of the priest and the order of the emperor."

[Latin text from: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

5. Oportet autem gladium esse sub gladio et temporalem auctoritatem spirituali subjici potestati: nam cum dicat Apostolus, 'Non est potestas nisi a Deo, quae autem sunt a Deo ordinatae sunt,' [Romans 13:1] non autem ordinatae essent, nisi gladius esset sub gladio, et tanquam inferior reduceretur per alium in suprema. Nam secundum beatum Dionysium, lex divinitatis est, infima per media in suprema reduci.

Notes:

Tosti lacks 'autem' in 'non autem ordinatae essent.'

Tosti has the word order: 'quae autem a Deo sunt, ordinatae sunt.'

Mirbt and Manning agree on the text above, except that Mirbt has the typographical error: 'ordinatae' and Mirbt has comma before 'a Deo'.

6. Non ergo secundum ordinem universi omnia aequae ac immediate, sed infima per media, et inferiora per superiora ad ordinem reducuntur. Spiritualem autem et dignitate et nobilitate terrenam quamlibet praecellere potestatem, oportet tanto clarius nos fateri quanto spiritualia temporalia antecellunt. Quod etiam ex decimarum datione, et benedictione, et sanctificatione, ex ipsius potestatis acceptione, ex ipsarum rerum gubernatione claris oculis intuemur. Nam veritate testante, spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem instituere habet et judicare, si bona non fuerit, sic de Ecclesia et ecclesiastica potestate verificatur vaticinium Hieremiae, 'Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et regna,' [Jeremiah 1:10] et caetera quae sequuntur.

Notes:

Schaff omits with an elipse (...) everything in n. 6 from 'Non ergo' through 'si bona non fuerit', then he agrees with the rest of the text above.

Tosti lacks 'et' in 'per media, et inferiora'.

Mirbt and Manning agree on the text above.

Hugh of St. Victor, in the 12th century, in 'De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei,' lib. II, c. 4, writes the following:

"Spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem et instituere habet ut sit, et judicare habet, si bona non fuerit."

"The spiritual authority holds [the ability] so that it may establish the earthly authority, and holds [the ability] to judge if it might not have been good."

[Latin text from: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

7. Ergo si deviat terrena potestas, judicabitur a potestate spirituali, sed si deviat spiritualis minor a suo superiori: si vero suprema, a solo Deo, non ab homine poterit judicari, testante Apostolo, 'Spiritualis homo judicat omnia, ipse autem a nemine judicatur.' [1 Corinthians 2:16]

8. Est autem haec auctoritas, etsi data sit homini et exerceatur per hominem, non humana, sed potius divina, [potestas,] ore divino Petro data, sibi que suisque successoribus in ipso [Christo], quem confessus fuit petra firmata, dicente Domino ipsi Petro, 'Quodcunque ligaveris,' [Matthew 16:19] etc. Quicumque igitur huic potestati a Deo sic ordinatae resistit; Dei ordinationi resistit, [Romans 13:2] nisi duo sicut Manichaeus fingat esse principia: quod falsum et haereticum [esse] judicamus: quia testante Moyse, non in principiis, sed in principio coelum Deus creavit et terram. [Genesis 1:1]

Notes:

Tosti and Schaff add 'potestas' in 'sed potius divina, potestas, ore divino Petro data'.

Tosti and Schaff add 'Christo' in 'successoribus in ipso Christo, quem'.

Tosti adds 'esse' in 'haereticum esse judicamus'; Schaff does not.

All of the additions of Tosti are useful in elucidating the meaning of the text.

Mirbt has parentheses before 'etsi' and after 'hominem', also he adds paraentheses around 'sicut Manichaeus'.

Otherwise Manning and Mirbt agree on the text above.

9. Porro subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis.

Notes:

Tosti and other sources lack 'et pronunciamus'; some sources place it in brackets and italics.

Schaff, Mirbt, and Manning agree with the above text.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, opusc. contra errores Graec. fol. 9:

"Ostenditur enim, quod subesse Romano Pontifici sit de necessitate salutis."

"For it is revealed that subjection to the Roman Pontiff is from the necessity of salvation."

[Dr. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, A Text-book of Church History, (Harper Brothers: New York, 1857), p. 351.]

Datum Laterani

xiv kal. Decembris,

[18 November]

pontificatus nostri anno octavo.

Fifth Lateran Council: "Et cum de necessitate salutis existat omnes Christi fideles Romano Pontifici subesse, prout divinae Scripturae et sanctorum Patrum testimonio edocemur, ac Constitutione fel. mem. Bonifacii Papae VIII. quae incipit 'Unam Sanctam' declaratur; pro eorundem fidelium animarum salute, ac Romani Pontificis et hujus sanctae Sedis suprema auctoritate, et Ecclesiae sponsae suae unitate et potestate, Constitutionem ipsam, sacro approbante Concilio, innovamus et approbamus."

"And since it arises from the necessity of salvation that all the faithful of Christ are to be subject to the Roman Pontiff, just as we are taught by the testimony of the divine Scriptures and of the holy Fathers, and as is declared by the Constitution of Pope Boniface VIII of happy memory, which begins 'Unam Sanctam,' for the salvation of the souls of the same faithful, and by the supreme authority of the Roman pontiff and of this holy See, and by the unity and power of the Church, his spouse, the same Constitution, being approved by the sacred Council, we renew and approve."

(Pope Leo X, Fifth Lateran Council, Session 11, 19 December 1516)

[Notes and translation by Ronald L. Conte Jr.]

Unam Sanctam - new English translation with notes

Note: the English text of Scripture verses within the text has been translated ad hoc from the Latin phrasing in the source text itself for Unam Sanctam; this differs significantly in several instances from the later Sixtine and Clementine Latin texts. My numbering (1. - 9.) has been added to the document.

Boniface, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God.
For perpetual remembrance.

1. Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to hold that there is One Holy Catholic and truly Apostolic Church. And this we firmly believe and simply confess: outside of Her, there is neither salvation, nor the remission of sins, just as the Bridegroom in the Canticles proclaims: "One is my dove, my perfect one. One is her mother; elect is she who bore her." [Canticles 6:8]. And this represents the one mystical body, whose head is Christ, and truly God [is the head] of Christ. [1 Corinthians 11:3] In Her, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. [Ephesians 4:5] For certainly, in the time of the Flood, the ark of Noah was one, prefiguring the one Church. And She, having been completed by [the measure of] one cubit, [Genesis 6:16] had one pilot and helmsman, that is, Noah. And outside of Her, everything standing upon the land, as we read, had been destroyed.

2. Thus, we venerate Her as the only one, just as the Lord said by the prophet: "O God, rescue my soul from the spear, and my only one from the hand of the dog." [Psalm 21:21] But he prayed for the soul, that is, for his very self, head and body together. And this body, which he named as the only one, is certainly the Church, because of the Bridegroom, the Faith, the Sacraments, and the love of the Church, united. She is that seamless tunic of the Lord which was not torn, [John 19:23-24] but was distributed by lot.

3. And so, the one and only Church is one body, one head, (not two heads like a monster), Christ certainly, and the vicar of Christ, [who is] Peter and the successor of Peter. For the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed my sheep." [John 21:17] He said "my" generally, not solely of these or of those. By this, it is understood that all [universas] were committed to him. Therefore, if either the Greeks or others declare themselves not to be committed to Peter and his successors, they necessarily admit themselves not to be among the sheep of Christ, just as the Lord says in John, "there is one sheepfold, and only one shepherd." [John 10:16]

4. We are instructed in the Gospel sayings that in Her and within Her power, there are two swords, specifically, the spiritual and the temporal. For the Apostles say, "Behold, there are two swords here," that is, in the Church. But when the Apostles were speaking, the Lord did not respond, "it is too much," but "it is sufficient." [Luke 22:38] Certainly, whoever denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, misunderstands the word of the Lord, saying: "Put your sword into its sheath." [Matthew 26:52] Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the former is to be exercised by the Church. The former is of the priest; the latter is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

Notes:

The Latin word 'patientiam,' in this context is translated as 'sufferance,' indicating a type of permission. But sufferance (patientiam) can also refer to a toleration for act that are contrary to one's will, to a certain forbearance, to restraint in exercising a right in the face of some degree of injustice or harm.

St. Bernard (De Consideratione, Lib. iv. c. 3) writes:

"And both therefore, are of the Church, specifically, both the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly the former is to be exercised by the Church; the former is of the priest, the latter is by the hand of the soldier, but truly at the will of the priest and the order of the emperor."

[My translation of the Latin found in: Dr. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, A Text-book of Church History, (Harper Brothers: New York, 1857), p. 351.]

5. Now one sword ought to be under the other sword, and so the temporal authority is to be subject to the spiritual authority. For though the Apostle said: "there is no authority except from God and those who have been ordained by God," [Romans 13:1] still they would not have been ordained unless one sword were under the other sword. And so what is inferior should be led forward by another, to what is highest. For, according to blessed Dionysius, it is a law of divine power that what is lowest is to be led forward by what is intermediate, to what is highest.

Notes:

Certainly, by 'what is highest' (suprema) is meant God Himself, for so Dionysius explicitly states in the text from which this teaching is drawn:

"This, then, is the all-sacred Law of the Godhead, that, through the first, the second are conducted to Its most Divine splendour."

[English text from: Dionysius the Areopagite, Works (1897), Volume 2, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, chapter 5, section 4.]

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/dionysius/works.iv.iii.v.html>

This "blessed Dionysius" is certainly the man called Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, an author of several important works of Christian theology, including 'The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,' which was relied upon in Unam Sanctam, n. 5 above. The true identity of this Dionysius, who wrote under the pseudonym of the convert from paganism mentioned in Acts 17:34, is hidden in obscurity. He appears to be a late fifth century Catholic priest who himself was converted from paganism. But despite his near-anonymity, his works have achieved a prominent place in Catholic theology. See these websites:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05013a.htm>

<http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/>

[1998 Speech of Pope John Paul II](#)

6. Therefore, it is not in accord with the order of the universe that all things should be absolutely equal, but rather the lowest through the intermediate, and the lower through the higher, in order. And so, to whatever extent the spiritual power excels beyond the worldly, in both dignity and rank, we must, to the same extent, clearly admit that the spiritual surpasses the temporal. And this, nevertheless, we distinguish with clear eyes from the gift of tithes, and from benediction and sanctification, by the reception of the authority itself, and by the government of the things themselves. For truth is the witness that the spiritual authority holds [the ability] to establish the earthly authority, and to judge if it might not have been good. And this, concerning the Church and the authority of the Church, the prophecy of Jeremiah verifies: "Behold, today I have appointed you over nations and kingdoms" [Jeremiah 1:10] and the rest that follows.

Notes: This last part of the passage is based almost word for word upon Hugo de St. Victor, De Sacramentis, II. 2, 4. -- "The spiritual authority holds [the ability] so that it may establish the earthly authority, and holds [the ability] to judge if it might not have been good."

[My translation of the Latin found in: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

7. Therefore, if the earthly power goes astray, it will be judged by the spiritual power; but if a lesser spiritual power goes astray, [it will be judged] by its superior; and truly, if the highest [power] goes astray, it will not be able to be judged by man, but by God alone. And so the Apostle testifies, "The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one." [1 Corinthians 2:15]

8. But this authority, even though it may be given to a man, and may be exercised by a man, is not human, but rather divine [power], having been given by the divine mouth [of Christ] to Peter, and to him as well as to his successors, by [Christ] Himself, [that is, to him] whom He had disclosed to be the firm rock, just as the Lord said to Peter himself: "Whatever you shall bind," [Matthew 16:19] etc. Therefore, whoever resists this authority, such as it has been ordained by God, resists the ordination of God. [Romans 13:2] Otherwise, he would be proposing two principles to exist, as did Manichaeus, and this we judge to be false and heretical. For Moses testified that God created heaven and earth, not in the beginnings, but "in the beginning." [Genesis 1:1]

9. Moreover, that every human creature is to be subject to the Roman pontiff, we declare, we state, we define, and we pronounce to be entirely from the necessity of salvation.

Notes: Saint Thomas Aquinas, opusc. contra errores Graec. fol. 9

"For it is revealed that subjection to the Roman Pontiff is from the necessity of salvation."

[My translation of the Latin found in: Dr. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, A Text-book of Church History, (Harper Brothers: New York, 1857), p. 351.]

Given at the Lateran,
18 November 1302,
in year eight of our pontificate.

[These notes and translation, by Ronald L. Conte Jr., are hereby placed in the public domain.]

Unam Sanctam - English translation (1875) by Cardinal Manning

Source for this translation:

- Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, (Archbishop of Westminster, England), The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance, (Catholic Publication Society: New York, 1875), p. 172-173.

Cardinal Manning's translation of Unam Sanctam:

Boniface, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God.

For perpetual remembrance :

1. Urged on by our faith, we are obliged to believe and hold that there is one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. And we firmly believe and profess that outside of her there is no salvation nor remission of sins, as the bridegroom declares in the Canticles, " My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her." And this represents the one mystical body of Christ, and of this body Christ is the head, and God is the head of Christ. In it there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. For in the time of the Flood there was the single ark of Noah, which prefigures the one Church, and it was finished according to the measure of one cubit and had one Noah for pilot and captain, and outside of it every living creature on the earth, as we read, was destroyed.
2. And this Church we revere as the only one, even as the Lord says by the prophet, " Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog." He prayed for his soul, that is, for himself, head and body. And this body he called one body, that is, the Church, because of the single bridegroom, the unity of the faith, the sacraments, and the love of the Church. She is that seamless shirt of the Lord which was not rent but was allotted by the casting of lots.
3. Therefore, this one and single Church has one head and not two heads, - for had she two heads, she would be a monster, - that is, Christ and Christ's Vicar, Peter and Peter's successor. For the Lord said unto Peter, " Feed my sheep." "My," he said, speaking generally and not particularly, " these and those," by which it is to be understood that all the sheep are committed unto him. So, when the Greeks or others say that they were not committed to the care of Peter and his successors, they must confess that they are not of Christ's sheep, even as the Lord says in John, " There is one fold and one shepherd."
4. That in her and within her power are two swords, we are taught in the Gospels, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword. For when the Apostles said, "Lo, here," - that is, in the Church, - are two swords, the Lord did not reply to the Apostles " it is too much," but " it is enough." It is certain that whoever denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, hearkens ill to the words of the Lord which he spoke, "Put up thy sword into its sheath." Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword ; the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by the Church ; the former by the hand of the priest, the latter by the hand of princes and kings, but at the nod and sufferance of the priest.
5. The one sword must of necessity be subject to the other, and the temporal authority to the spiritual. For the Apostle said, " There is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God " ; and they would not have been ordained unless one sword had been made subject to the other, and even as the lower is subjected by the other for higher things. For, according to Dionysius, it is a divine law that the lowest things are made by mediocre things to attain to the highest. For it is not according to the law of the universe that all things in an equal way and immediately should reach their end, but the lowest through the mediocre and the lower through the higher.
6. But that the spiritual power excels the earthly power in dignity and worth, we will the more clearly acknowledge just in proportion as the spiritual is higher than the temporal. And this we perceive quite distinctly from the donation of the tithe and functions of benediction and sanctification, from the mode in which the power was received, and the government of the subjected realms. For truth being the witness, the spiritual power has the functions of establishing the temporal power and sitting in judgment on it if it should prove to be not good. [1] And to the Church and the Church's power the prophecy of Jeremiah attests: " See, I have set thee this day over the nations and the kingdoms to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

[1] This passage is based almost word for word upon Hugo de St. Victor, De Sacramentis, II. 2, 4.

7. And if the earthly power deviate from the right path, it is judged by the spiritual power; but if a minor spiritual power deviate from the right path, the lower in rank is judged by its superior ; but if the supreme power [the papacy] deviate, it can be judged not by man but by God alone. And so the Apostle testifies, "He which is spiritual judges all things, but he himself is judged by no man."

8. But this authority, although it be given to a man, and though it be exercised by a man, is not a human but a divine power given by divine word of mouth to Peter and confirmed to Peter and to his successors by Christ himself, whom Peter confessed, even him whom Christ called the Rock. For the Lord said to Peter himself, " Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," etc. Whoever, therefore, resists this power so ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God, unless perchance he imagine two principles to exist, as did Manichaeus, which we pronounce false and heretical. For Moses testified that God created heaven and earth not in the beginnings but " in the beginning."

9. Furthermore, that every human creature is subject to the Roman pontiff, - this we declare, say, define, and pronounce to be altogether necessary to salvation.

Unam Sanctam - theological commentary

Unam Sanctam - English text with notes and commentary

[English text of quoted Scripture verses is translated ad hoc from the Latin phrasing as found in the source text for Unam Sanctam, which differs significantly from the later Sixtine and Clementine Latin texts.]

Boniface, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God.

For perpetual remembrance.

1. Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to hold that there is One Holy Catholic and truly Apostolic Church. And this we firmly believe and simply confess: outside of Her, there is neither salvation, nor the remission of sins, just as the Bridegroom in the Canticles proclaims: "One is my dove, my perfect one. One is her mother; elect is she who bore her." [Canticles 6:8]. And this represents the one mystical body, whose head is Christ, and truly God [is the head] of Christ. [1 Corinthians 11:3] In Her, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. [Ephesians 4:5] For certainly, in the time of the Flood, the ark of Noah was one, prefiguring the one Church. And She, having been completed by [the measure of] one cubit, [Genesis 6:16] had one pilot and helmsman, that is, Noah. And outside of Her, everything standing upon the land, as we read, had been destroyed.

Commentary: Our Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and our Savior compels us to believe in the Church that He established, and in the authority of the Church and of Peter and his successors. The ancient saying that 'Outside the Church, there is no salvation' is true only if the full nature of the Church is properly understood. All persons in a state of grace are, either formally or non-formally, inside the Church. Even persons who are formally outside the Church, such as non-Catholics, non-Christians, and all non-believers, may possibly be in a state of grace, and therefore may be inside the Church, at least non-formally. Most of these non-Catholics, who are in a state of grace, know that they are formally outside of the Catholic Church. But they may not know that they are each, due to the state of grace effected by the Cross of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit and the prayers and works of the one Catholic Church, non-formally inside the Church. It is an actual mortal sin to have full knowledge that the Roman Catholic Church is the path to salvation chosen by God for the human race, and yet to choose with full deliberation to remain outside of the Church. However, many who are formally outside of the Church do not have that full knowledge and full deliberation, and so their objective mortal sin is not an actual mortal sin; as a result, they may well be in a state of grace.

Pope John Paul II: "Since Christ brings about salvation through his Mystical Body, which is the Church, the way of salvation is connected essentially with the Church. The axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*"--"outside the Church there is no salvation"--stated by St. Cyprian (Epist. 73, 21; PL 1123 AB), belongs to the Christian tradition. It was included in the Fourth Lateran Council (DS 802), in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII (DS 870) and the Council of Florence (Decretum pro Jacobitis, DS 1351). The axiom means

that for those who are not ignorant of the fact that the Church has been established as necessary by God through Jesus Christ, there is an obligation to enter the Church and remain in her in order to attain salvation (cf. LG 14). For those, however, who have not received the Gospel proclamation, as I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, salvation is accessible in mysterious ways, inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, but nonetheless always in relation to her (cf. RM 10). It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace, because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her. It is also mysterious in itself, because it is linked to the saving mystery of grace, which includes an essential reference to the Church the Savior founded. In order to take effect, saving grace requires acceptance, cooperation, a yes to the divine gift. This acceptance is, at least implicitly, oriented to Christ and the Church. Thus it can also be said that *sine ecclesia nulla salus*--"without the Church there is no salvation." Belonging to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, however implicitly and indeed mysteriously, is an essential condition for salvation." [Pope John Paul II, *All Salvation Comes through Christ*, general audience, 31 May 1995.]

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19950531en.html

The text from the Song of Songs of Solomon says: "One is my dove, my perfect one. One is her mother; elect is she who bore her." [Canticles 6:8]. This perfect one is the Church; it can also be understood to be the Virgin Mary, who is the figure of the Church. The elect who bore the Virgin Mary can be understood figuratively as the entire chosen people, for this people was chosen and led by God in order to bear good fruit: first the Virgin Mary, and ultimately the Christ. Then from the side of Christ on the Cross, with the Virgin Mary's assistance, the Church was born. So in one sense, Mary is a figure of the Church, but in another sense, Mary is the Mother of the Church. And this is not a contradiction, since a daughter is like her mother.

Now many people mistakenly think of the Church as the Pope and the Bishops, the priests, deacons, and religious, and the laity. But that only describes the body of the Church. We must also include Christ as the Head of the Church, and the Holy Spirit as Her guide. For the Pope is only the visible head of the Church on earth; he is only the Vicar of Christ, his representative. The Head of the Church is Christ, and God is the Head of Christ. And so the authority of the Church is the same as the authority of Her Head:

[Matthew]

{28:18} And Jesus, drawing near, spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

{28:19} Therefore, go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

{28:20} teaching them to observe all that I have ever commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the age."

And this full authority, Christ transfers to the Church, first of all to Peter and his successors, but then also, in proper order and measure, to the other Bishops, and to the rest of the Church:

[Mark]

{16:17} And in response, Jesus said to him: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father, who is in heaven.

{16:18} And I say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

{16:19} And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound, even in heaven. And whatever you shall release on earth shall be released, even in heaven."

Unam Sanctam continues by saying that in this One Church, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

[Ephesians 4:5] There is and can only be one Church, because there is only one Savior, one faith in that one Savior, and one baptism into the one death of that one Savior. Christ, the head of the Church, is one Savior, and so the Church, His body, is also one.

Next, Pope Boniface considers the figure of the ark of Noah and the Flood: "For certainly, in the time of the Flood, the ark of Noah was one, prefiguring the one Church. And She, having been completed by [the measure of] one cubit, [Genesis 6:16] had one pilot and helmsman, that is, Noah. And outside of Her, everything standing upon the land, as we read, had been destroyed."

The Church has always interpreted the ark of Noah as being a figure of the Church. The human race before the Flood was very sinful, but this sinful human race was saved solely by the one ark, that is, by the one Church. The Flood could be considered to be a figure for the extent of sin, but more so is it a figure for the extent of the salvation offered as a remedy against sin. The water is also a symbol of the Baptism by which the one Church saves humanity.

The reference to the one cubit of the ark is interesting. The entire design of the ark is being referred to here by the measure used to build it, the cubit. The saying that the cubit is one means that the design of the ark is one plan. It also means that this design was completed, from the first to the very last cubit; it is a complete plan, lacking in nothing. Thus, the plan of God for salvation is one complete plan, lacking in nothing, stretched out through many centuries, all in accord with the one Christ. For there is no salvation except through Christ, and all things were created through Him, being patterned after Him. So Christ is that one measure by which the plan of salvation is designed and built and completed.

The one pilot and helmsman, Noah, is a figure for Christ, since Christ is the head of the Church. But this is also a figure for the Pope, who represents Christ on earth. The Roman Pontiff, like Christ, has both spiritual and temporal authority. He is not merely the pilot, but also the helmsman; he guides the Church with the teaching authority, like a pilot deciding the course that the ship will take; he also steers the Church along that course by exercising the temporal authority. So this one Church has two types of authority.

The statement that everything outside of the ark of Noah was destroyed reveals that no one is saved except through Christ. And the Church, as the body of Christ, is certainly the means to that salvation in Christ, just as the ark was the means of salvation of Noah's family, with Noah as the head of the family. Those who are truly, completely, and finally outside of the Church are only those who die in a state of unrepentant actual mortal sin. And these souls are utterly destroyed, in a sense, by the eternal sufferings of Hell, for they are outside of the ark of salvation.

2. Thus, we venerate Her as the only one, just as the Lord said by the prophet: "O God, rescue my soul from the spear, and my only one from the hand of the dog." [Psalm 21:21] But he prayed for the soul, that is, for his very self, head and body together. And this body, which he named as the only one, is certainly the Church, because of the Bridegroom, the Faith, the Sacraments, and the love of the Church, united. She is that seamless tunic of the Lord which was not torn, [John 19:23-24] but was distributed by lot.

The Pope perceives a doctrine of the Church within the spiritual sense of this verse of the Psalms. The Magisterium teaches from all of the truths of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, even those hidden in the spiritual sense, which are not explicitly stated, but are implicit to the Sacred Deposit of Faith when properly interpreted and understood. There is only one Church, and the unity of the Church is such that Christ is her head. The body of the faithful on earth are only part of the Church. The Pope, Bishops, clergy, religious, and laity are not the whole Church. The Church includes Christ as Her head, and the Holy Spirit as Her life and guide, as well as all the faithful in Purgatory and in Heaven.

3. And so, the one and only Church is one body, one head, (not two heads like a monster), Christ certainly, and the vicar of Christ, [who is] Peter and the successor of Peter. For the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed my sheep." [John 21:17] He said "my" generally, not solely of these or of those. By this, it is understood that all [universas] were committed to him. Therefore, if either the Greeks or others declare themselves not to be committed to Peter and his successors, they necessarily admit themselves not to be among the sheep of Christ, just as the Lord says in John, "there is one sheepfold, and only one shepherd." [John 10:16]

The Church has one head, but two types of authority. This point argues against those who would claim that secular governments hold the temporal power, and the Church holds only the spiritual power, as if humanity had two heads, i.e. two types of leaders, one with spiritual power, and another with temporal power. To the contrary, Christ holds all authority in heaven and on earth. Christ offers salvation to every human person solely through the one Church. Christ is the one head of the Church, and so the one Church holds all authority, not only spiritual authority, but also temporal authority. The head of the Church is certainly Christ Himself, and so Pope Boniface refers to Peter and each of his successors as the 'vicar' of Christ, meaning a representative who had the authority of another person. So still there is only one head to the Church, Christ alone. The authority of the Roman Pontiff is not his own, but is truly Christ's authority, held and exercised by Christ's representative.

In interpreting the Scripture "Feed my sheep," the Pope again finds an important doctrine on the spiritual level of meaning, not only on the literal/figurative level of meaning. The repeated use of the spiritual sense as the basis for doctrines essential to the faith, in the document *Unam Sanctam*, implies that the Magisterium can and does teach required beliefs from the spiritual sense, not only from the literal sense of Sacred Scripture. By this example, the opinion of Saints Augustine and Aquinas are overruled; their opinion states: "...for all the senses are founded on one - the literal - from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory, as Augustine says (Epis. 48). Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes on account of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense." (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 1, A. 10). To the contrary, the truths of the holy Catholic Faith are found on both the literal and spiritual levels of meaning, and the Magisterium is able to teach as required beliefs any truths found on either or both levels of meaning. Furthermore, it is contrary to the Faith to say that the Magisterium cannot teach a truth, as a required belief, from the spiritual sense alone, but only if it is also found in the literal sense. For then any and all teachings of the Magisterium from the spiritual sense would be superfluous, or would lack force. It is not possible for an entire level of meaning of Sacred Scripture to be superfluous to the Faith. Nor is it possible for the Magisterium to teach truth found in Sacred Scripture, and yet be unable to require belief in those truths (unless the same truth is also found in the literal sense). And the Magisterium has given us the example of *Unam Sanctam*, which teaches truths necessary to faith solely from the spiritual sense. Therefore, the opinion of Ss. Augustine and Aquinas is refuted.

Next, the Pope considers which sheep were entrusted by Christ to Peter, so that Peter would "Feed my sheep." The command of our Lord to Peter, repeated three times, contains no restrictions. Christ did not restrict the term 'my sheep' to only Roman Catholics, or to only the Latin Rite, or to only Christians. The Pope has authority over the whole human race, because he is exercising not his own authority, but the authority of Christ (cf. Mt 16:18; John 20:21; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 2:16). For every human person was created in the image of God, all things were created through Christ and for Christ: "For from him, and through him, and in him are all things." (Romans 11:36). Therefore, Christ has authority over all human persons, and He offers salvation to all human persons through the one Church. As a result, anyone who claims not to be among those sheep entrusted to Peter in effect is claiming not to be among the sheep of Christ. For the Church is one sheepfold, and no one is saved except in Her.

4. We are instructed in the Gospel sayings that in Her and within Her power, there are two swords, specifically, the spiritual and the temporal. For the Apostles say, "Behold, there are two swords here," that is, in the Church. But when the Apostles were speaking, the Lord did not respond, "it is too much," but "it is sufficient." [Luke 22:38] Certainly, whoever denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, misunderstands the word of the Lord, saying: "Put your sword into its sheath." [Matthew 26:52] Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the former is to be exercised by the Church. The former is of the priest; the latter is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

Secular society and various religious groups claim that the Church has authority only over Her own members, and even then only to a limited extent. They see the Church as a merely human institution. Many Catholics incorrectly think that the Church has authority only in the spiritual domain. But the definitive teaching of the Magisterium is that the Church has two types of authority, both the spiritual authority and the temporal authority. For Christ is the Head of the Church, and He has full authority over heaven and earth. Therefore, the Church has authority over all nations and all persons, over all governments, businesses, families, and over all groups of human persons and each individual human person. And this authority is from Christ.

The Church exercises Her temporal authority in two ways, directly and indirectly. She exercises her temporal authority directly over her own members by such means as Canon Law, liturgical norms, and various decisions of the prudential order made by the Holy See, by Bishops' Conferences, or by individual Bishops. But, at least in principle, all governments and other secular authorities have no authority except that which is delegated or permitted by the Church. All authorities are under the authority of the Church, according to the plan and will of God. Thus, Pope Boniface says that the temporal power in secular society is exercised on behalf of the Church, by the hand of secular authorities (represented by the use of the figure 'kings and soldiers'), but at the will and sufferance of the priest. By priest, he means those who hold and exercise the authority of the Church, first and foremost each successive Pope (the high priest of the Church), and then the Bishops, individually and also as a body with the Pope as their head. Secular society does not always acknowledge or obey this authority, hence the term used is not merely, 'at the will of the priest,' but 'at the will and sufferance of the priest.' This term 'sufferance' implies that the Church at times patiently endures some misuse of the temporal authority by secular governments, while exhorting and correcting them with her spiritual (teaching) authority.

These two types of authority of the Church are sometimes represented under the figure of two swords, and other times under the figure of two keys. The symbol of two keys crossed, one gold and one silver, is found in the papal coat of arms of Popes Benedict XVI, John Paul II, John Paul I, Paul VI, John XXIII, Pius XII, and other Popes, as well as in the Vatican coat of arms and the Vatican flag. The gold key represents the spiritual authority, and the silver key represents the temporal authority. The figure of gold is used for the spiritual authority, compared to silver for the temporal authority, because the spiritual authority is more important than the temporal authority. However, the Church, and especially the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, has always possessed both types of authority.

Notes:

The Latin word 'patientiam,' in this context translated as 'sufferance' indicates a type of permission. But sufferance (patientiam) can also refer to a toleration for act that are contrary to one's will, to a certain forbearance, to restraint in exercising a right in the face of some degree of injustice or harm.

St. Bernard (De Consideratione, Lib. iv. c. 3) writes:

"And both therefore, are of the Church, specifically, both the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly the former is to be exercised by the Church; the former is of the priest, the latter is by the hand of the soldier, but truly at the will of the priest and the order of the emperor."

[author's translation from the Latin found in: Dr. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, A Text-book of Church History, (Harper Brothers: New York, 1857), p. 351.]

The Latin word 'patientiam,' in this context translated as 'sufferance' indicates a type of permission. The Church holds both swords, and even when secular powers exercise temporal authority, it is in principle only by the will and permission of the Church. But sufferance (patientiam) can also refer to a toleration for act that are contrary to one's will, to a certain forbearance, to restraint in exercising a right in the face of some degree of injustice or harm. For the decisions of secular society in the exercise of temporal power are not always in agreement with the will of the priest, i.e. of the Church. Yet the Church forbears these errors, preferring to teach and to exhort, instead of taking all temporal power into Her own hands, as is Her right.

5. Now one sword ought to be under the other sword, and so the temporal authority is to be subject to the spiritual authority. For though the Apostle said: "there is no authority except from God and those who have been ordained by God," [Romans 13:1] still they would not have been ordained unless one sword were under the other sword. And so what is inferior should be led forward by another, to what is highest. For, according to blessed Dionysius, it is a law of divine power that what is lowest is to be led forward by what is intermediate, to what is highest.

The spiritual authority is above the temporal authority in two ways. First, the spiritual authority of the Church is above the temporal authority that the Church delegates or permits the secular governments to exercise. So even if the Church permits a limited separation of Church and State, the Church is above the State, not beneath it, not equal to it, and not truly and entirely separate from it. The Church's spiritual authority is always above the temporal authority exercised by the State on behalf of the Church. For that temporal authority is truly of the Church, not of the State, and it is delegated to the State by the Church, in a manner that is temporary, limited, and revocable. For, in principle, the Church is exercising Her own temporal authority, given to Her by Christ, indirectly through the State. This temporal authority remains in the ownership of the Church, even as it is being exercised by the State.

Second, the spiritual authority of the Church is above the temporal authority of the Church, whether that temporal authority is exercised directly or indirectly. So even when the Church exercises Her temporal authority directly, as for example in Canon Law, the spiritual authority remains above the temporal authority. Doctrine is always above discipline. Sound discipline is based on sound doctrine. But whenever there is a conflict between doctrine and discipline, doctrine must always prevail. For the truths taught by the Church in Her doctrines are a reflection of Christ Himself, whereas the disciplines of the Church are merely one of many possible means to follow Christ in particular circumstances.

Notes:

Certainly, by 'what is highest' (suprema) is meant God Himself, for so Dionysius explicitly states in the text from which this teaching is drawn:

"This, then, is the all-sacred Law of the Godhead, that, through the first, the second are conducted to Its most Divine splendour."

[Dionysius the Areopagite, Works (1897), Volume 2, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, chapter 5, section 4.]
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/dionysius/works.iv.iii.v.html>

And so the Church is that 'another' (alium), that 'intermediate' (media), which leads what is lesser (such as secular society) through what is intermediate, the Church on earth, to what is highest, God Himself. And the Church has this unique role because the Church is the body of Christ, with Christ Himself as the head, and with the Spirit of God as Her guide. Therefore, the authority of the Church is Christ's authority. Notice that the spiritual authority of the Church is not presented here as the highest authority, but rather as intermediate: higher than the temporal authority, but lower than the Supreme Authority of God.

This "blessed Dionysius" is certainly the man called Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, an author of several important works of Christian theology, including 'The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,' which was relied upon in Unam Sanctam, n. 5 above. The true identity of this Dionysius, who wrote under the pseudonym of the convert from paganism mentioned in Acts 17:34, is hidden in obscurity. He appears to be a late fifth century Catholic priest who himself was converted from paganism. But despite his near-anonymity, his works have achieved a prominent place in Catholic theology.

See these websites:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05013a.htm>

<http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/>

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1998/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981026_ed-cattolica_en.html

6. Therefore, it is not in accord with the order of the universe that all things should be led back to order equally and immediately, but rather the lowest through the intermediate, and the lower through the higher. And so, to whatever extent the spiritual power excels beyond the worldly, in both dignity and rank, we must, to the same extent, clearly admit that the spiritual surpasses the temporal. And this, nevertheless, we distinguish with clear eyes from the gift of tithes, and from benediction and sanctification, by the reception of the authority itself, and by the government of the things themselves. For truth is the witness that the spiritual authority holds [the ability] to establish the earthly authority, and to judge if it might not have been good. And this, concerning the Church and the authority of the Church, the prophecy of Jeremiah verifies: "Behold, today I have appointed you over nations and kingdoms" [Jeremiah 1:10] and the rest that follows.

Notes:

This last part of the passage is based almost word for word upon Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis*, II. 2, 4.

"The spiritual authority holds [the ability] so that it may establish the earthly authority, and holds [the ability] to judge if it might not have been good."

[Latin text from: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, *Manual of Universal Church History*, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

We are on a pilgrim journey to holiness and ultimately to God, our final end. But all the means used, in one way or another, to one extent or another, while on this journey, are not equal. The spiritual is greater than the temporal. The needs of the soul are greater than the needs of the body. The truths of doctrine are greater than the practices of discipline. The eternal moral law is greater than Canon Law and greater than the rules and rulings of the Holy See and of local dioceses. All is not equal.

The Church has authority over nations and kingdoms, and over all earthly authorities, including all governments at every level, all businesses and marketplaces, all groups of human persons of any religion or no religion, and all individual human persons. (cf. Jeremiah 1:10ff.).

However, distinction is to be made between that temporal authority assigned, or at least permitted, by the Church to secular government, and the temporal authority that the Church herself exercises over the faithful. The particular examples given by Pope Boniface are various types of gifts to the Church, and liturgical norms, such as benedictions and sanctifications. But the temporal authority of the Church over Her own disciplines is certainly not less than the temporal authority assigned or permitted by the Church to secular powers. For the temporal authority given to secular society is exercised by kings and soldiers, but the Church exercises direct temporal authority over the government of Herself. Even so, the exercise of the temporal authority by the Church Herself is below Her spiritual authority. For doctrine is greater than discipline.

The reference to 'gift of tithes' does not refer to a continuation of the Old Testament discipline of tithing (giving 10%), but rather to a figurative comparison between the Old Testament discipline of tithing and the New Testament discipline of giving freely and generously, as God grace and providence guides us.

[1 Corinthians]

{6:12} All is lawful to me, but not all is expedient. All is lawful to me, but I will not be driven back by the authority of anyone.

Saint Paul is referring to that type of law that is a discipline (i.e. a rule or ruling) under the temporal authority, and not the type of law that is doctrine (i.e. the eternal moral law). No discipline is binding in cases of necessity, especially the necessity of salvation.

Saint Thomas Aquinas: "If, however, the peril be so sudden as not to allow of the delay involved by referring the matter to authority, the mere necessity brings with it a dispensation, since necessity knows no law." (*Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 96, A. 6.)

This type of dispensation from law does not apply to the moral law, which is immutable and which falls under spiritual authority, but rather to any laws of temporal authority, such as human laws in so far as they are not direct expressions of the moral law, and to Canon Law and any other Church disciplines, rules, or rulings.

The circumstances under which a rule can be dispensed varies, depending on the weight of the rule and the weight of the reason for dispensation. Two main divisions of weight are distinguished, a just cause and a grave cause. But within each type, the weight of the reason also varies, as does the weight of the rule being dispensed. Canon Law even explicitly permits, on some lesser matters, the individual to decide, for a just reason, to dispense himself from a rule. For example:

Can. 920 §1. After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year.

§2. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year.

Can. 963 ... a person whose grave sins are remitted by general absolution is to approach individual confession as soon as possible, given the opportunity, before receiving another general absolution, unless a just cause intervenes.

The individual faithful can decide to fulfill his obligation to receive Communion at another time of the year, if he judges that there is a just cause. The individual faithful can decide to receive a second general absolution, if he judges that there is a just cause. And there are other such dispensations from Canon Law that the individual can grant to himself. Then there are some dispensations that can be granted by the pastor of a parish, and many dispensations that can be granted by the local ordinary (usually the Bishop in charge of the diocese).

In cases of grave necessity of salvation, all rules and rulings are dispensed in favor of the salvation of the soul of any and all individual human persons, without any exception. For necessity knows no law.

For example, suppose that a priest is a heretic, and a schismatic, and his faculties as a priest have been revoked (he has been laicized), and he has been excommunicated (*latae* and *ferendae*), and he is arrested by secular authorities, convicted of serious crimes, and given life in prison. But if, in prison, there is a Catholic who is near death, even this excommunicated and laicized priest is able to validly and licitly hear his confession, forgive his sins, and release him from any and all censures, including a *ferendae* excommunication reserved to the Holy See, even if another priest, one who is in good standing, is available. For the necessity of salvation overrules all rules.

Can. 976 Even though a priest lacks the faculty to hear confessions, he absolves validly and licitly any penitents whatsoever in danger of death from any censures and sins, even if an approved priest is present.

7. Therefore, if the earthly power goes astray, it will be judged by the spiritual power; but if a lesser spiritual power goes astray, [it will be judged] by its superior; and truly, if the highest [power] goes astray, it will not be able to be judged by man, but by God alone. And so the Apostle testifies, "The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one." [1 Corinthians 2:15]

The earthly power referred to here is that temporal authority that the Church has delegated to secular governments. Earlier, Pope Boniface referred to the misuse of this delegated temporal authority by saying that it is exercised at "the will and sufferance of the priest," thus implying that the Church often tolerates some error and misjudgments in secular authorities. Next, he referred to the same type of problem by saying that the Church, after delegating the use of Her temporal authority, retains the power "to judge if it might not have been good." So when temporal authority is exercised by secular governments, the possession of that power is still retained by the Church; it has been loaned and borrowed, not sold or given away. Therefore, the Church also retains the authority to judge the use of Her temporal authority by secular governments. And this is true for two reasons. First, the temporal authority exercised by secular leaders remains in the ownership of the Church. So if a neighbor borrows a possession from you, and misuses it to the harm of others, you could rightly judge and object to that misuse. For you retain ownership of what was only borrowed (and certainly, in the case of the Church, the temporal authority is borrowed without payment).

Second, the Church both retains and directly exercises her spiritual authority. And the spiritual authority is always above the temporal authority. Even when the Church exercises some temporal authority over Her own members (e.g. in Canon Law), Her spiritual authority is above her own exercise of temporal authority.

The lesser spiritual authorities would include theologians, religious, deacons, and priests, who are below the Bishops in authority; and Bishops, who are below the Holy See and the Roman Pontiff in authority. Although theologians, religious, and deacons do not teach or act with authority, they teach by faith from the authority of Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium, and they teach by reason, which is a type of authority. The term 'lesser spiritual authorities' can also be taken to refer to the non-infallible teachings of the Church, which are always subject to the higher spiritual authority of the infallible teachings of the Church.

The statement that the highest power cannot be judged by man is not to be interpreted such that a Bishop or Pope cannot be corrected by a lesser authority, by means of an argument based on faith and reason. For Saint Peter was the first Pope and the only Pope directly and immediately appointed by Christ. Yet when he went astray in his behavior, he was corrected by a lesser authority in the Church, the Apostle Saint Paul (Galatians 2:11).

Rather, this statement means that the highest power in the Church, the infallible teaching authority, is not subject to judgment by man, not by any Pope in his personal opinion, not by any Bishop or priest or deacon or religious or theologian or other laypersons. Some schismatics and heretics have fallen away from the Church because they put themselves above the infallible teaching authority of an Ecumenical Council or of a Pope, to judge and even to condemn these infallible teachings. But to the contrary, Pope Boniface taught that the highest spiritual authority is judged by God alone. And God does not condemn this highest spiritual authority, for both the authority to teach infallibly, and the corresponding ability to teach infallible, is of God.

8. But this authority, even though it may be given to a man, and may be exercised by a man, is not human, but rather divine [power], having been given by the divine mouth [of Christ] to Peter, and to him as well as to his successors, by [Christ] Himself, [that is, to him] whom He had disclosed to be the firm rock, just as the Lord said to Peter himself: "Whatever you shall bind," [Matthew 16:19] etc. Therefore, whoever resists this authority, such as it has been ordain by God, resists the ordination of God. [Romans 13:2] Otherwise, he would be proposing two principles to exist, as did Manichaeus, and this we judge to be false and heretical. For Moses testified that God created heaven and earth, not in the beginnings, but "in the beginning." [Genesis 1:1]

The two types of authority, spiritual and temporal, are both given by Christ to Peter and thereby to the universal Church. Even though both types of authority are exercised by men, by Pope and Bishops, by the various leaders in secular government, the authority itself is of God. A faithful Catholic might disagree with the spiritual authority of the Church on a point in a non-infallible teaching. Or a faithful Catholic might disagree with a particular point of Canon Law, or a particular decision of the temporal authority of the Church. But to oppose or reject the authority of the Church itself is to oppose God. It is similar with secular authorities, which in principle derive their temporal authority from the Church. A faithful Catholic may refuse to obey an unjust law. At times, the eternal moral law of God might require the faithful to oppose and to disobey an unjust law. But to oppose the authority itself of a secular government, one that has not departed substantially from its role to safeguard the common good, is to oppose God. For Scripture teaches that all true and just authority, spiritual and temporal, is ordained by God for our good and our salvation.

The heretic named Manichaeus taught that good and evil in the world is explained as proceeding from two principles, which oppose one another in all things, one good principle and the other evil principle. These opposing principles were said to be equal, as if there were one good god and one evil god (but even his concept of 'god' was not at all like the one true God, the Most Holy Trinity). And so the Pope compares the false idea that there are two authorities in the world, one of the Church and the other of secular governments, continually opposed to one another, as being similar in type to the error of the Manicheans. But this comparison is by way of analogy, not literally.

All authority is of God, and there is only one God; therefore, both the spiritual authority and the temporal authority are One Authority, from God, given to the Church. And although civil authorities exercise, in part, this temporal authority, they do so on behalf of the Church. And the Church truly retains possession of that temporal authority which is lent to civil governments.

9. Porro subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis.

9. Moreover, that every human creature is to be subject to the Roman pontiff, we declare, we state, we define, and we pronounce to be entirely from the necessity of salvation.

This teaching is based on the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas, in his work 'Against the Errors of the Greeks.'

Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, pars 2, cap. 38.

"Ostenditur etiam quod subesse Romano pontifici sit de necessitate salutis.... Et Maximus in epistola Orientalibus directa dicit: 'coadunatam et fundatam super petram confessionis Petri dicimus universalem Ecclesiam secundum definitionem salvatoris, in qua necessario salutis animarum nostrum est manere, et ei est obedire, suam servantes fidem et confessionem.' " <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/oce.html>

Translation: "For it is revealed that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is from the necessity of salvation.... And [Saint] Maximus [the Confessor] in the epistle to those of the East directly says: 'We state that the universal Church has been united and founded upon the rock of the confession of Peter, [and] according to the definition of salvation, in Her, by the necessity of salvation, our souls are to remain, and to her [our souls] are to be obedient, keeping her faith and confession.' "

Some translations have the wording as: "it is absolutely necessary for salvation". But the Latin plainly says "de necessitate salutis," meaning "from the necessity of salvation." The word salutis (salvation) is in the genitive case, meaning 'of salvation,' not 'for salvation.' And the preposition 'de' (from) and the grammatical case of 'necessitate' (ablative) cannot be ignored. Neither does the Latin word 'omnino' translate accurately as 'absolutely.' The word 'omnino,' means 'altogether,' and is derived from the word 'omnia,' meaning 'all.' The result is that subjection to the Roman Pontiff is not that type of necessity which is simple and absolute.

Baptism, which bestows on us the state of grace, is simply and absolutely necessary for salvation. Repentance from all actual mortal sins prior to death is simply and absolutely necessary for salvation. Dying in a state of grace is simply and absolutely necessary for salvation. But other things that are necessary for salvation are necessary in a secondary manner. For example, a Protestant who rejects the authority of the Pontiff might still be saved, if his sin is reduced in culpability due to ignorance. It is an objective mortal sin to reject the authority of the Roman Pontiff. But this sin might not also be an actual mortal sin, due to reduction in culpability so that it is either an actual venial sin, or not an actual sin at all.

Now the words of the Fifth Lateran Council, prove that the translation "from the necessity of salvation" is correct. For the Council used a different wording to repeat and to clarify the teaching of *Unam Sanctam*. Fifth Lateran Council: "Et cum de necessitate salutis existat omnes Christi fideles Romano Pontifici subesse, prout divinae Scripturae et sanctorum Patrum testimonio edocemur, ac Constitutione fel. mem. Bonifacii Papae VIII. quae incipit 'Unam Sanctam' declaratur; pro eorundem fidelium animarum salute, ac Romani Pontificis et hujus sanctae Sedis suprema auctoritate, et Ecclesiae sponsae suae unitate et potestate, Constitutionem ipsam, sacro approbante Concilio, innovamus et approbamus."

"And since it arises from the necessity of salvation that all the faithful of Christ are to be subject to the Roman Pontiff, just as we are taught by the testimony of the divine Scriptures and of the holy Fathers, and as is declared by the Constitution of Pope Boniface VIII of happy memory, which begins 'Unam Sanctam,' for the salvation of the souls of the same faithful, and by the supreme authority of the Roman pontiff and of this holy See, and by the unity and power of the Church, his spouse, the same Constitution, being approved by the sacred Council, we renew and approve."

(Pope Leo X, Fifth Lateran Council, Session 11, 19 December 1516)

The phrasing used by the Council cannot be translated as 'absolutely necessary to salvation.' For the verb used is 'existat' (to arise; it arises), and so the phrasing must be "it arises from the necessity of salvation," and not "it arises necessary for salvation." Also, the Council did not use the word 'omnino,' nor any word that could be translated as 'absolutely'. And so it is clear that the necessity to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is not simple and absolute, but secondary, since it arises from another greater necessity, salvation. The role of the Pope as the vicar of Christ and head of the Church, and the submission of the rest of the Church on earth to his authority, given to him by Christ, is necessary for the work of salvation of the Church. Certainly, rejection of the role and authority of the Pope is an objective mortal sin. But if it is not also an actual mortal sin, an individual might retain the state of grace and reach salvation, despite this objective mortal sin.

**Given at the Lateran,
18 November 1302,
in year eight of our pontificate.**

The teachings of this encyclical were not new teachings in the time of Pope Boniface, at the beginning of the 14th century. The teachings on the two swords of the Church, the spiritual authority and the temporal authority, are also found in the writings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (early 12th century) and Hugh of St. Victor (about the same time). In the mid 13th century, St. Thomas taught that subjection to the Pope was from the necessity of salvation. Pope Boniface obviously relied on these three theologians for much of the substance of this encyclical.

But notice that the Encyclical cites Scripture as its primary source for these teachings. These truths of the Faith are from Divine Revelation, which is the Sacred Deposit of Faith (Tradition and Scripture). They find their elucidation in the writings of Saints and theologians. And they are taught with authority by Popes and Councils. But these teachings are from God.

Ronald L. Conte Jr.
Roman Catholic theologian
December 16, 2009

Latin Translation Error in Unam Sanctam

The document [Unam Sanctam](#) was issued by Pope Boniface VIII in November of 1302. It remains an important magisterial document because it teaches that the Church has two types of authority:

1. the spiritual authority (usually called the Magisterium or teaching authority)
2. the temporal authority

Unam Sanctam is also important as an example of the use of Papal Infallibility prior to the Vatican I definition of the same (Unam Sanctam, n. 9).

[Unam Sanctam](#) was issued in Latin. A number of different translations from Latin to English are available, including [my translation](#) and one by [Cardinal Manning](#) in 1875.

However, the most common translation on the internet has this citation: "Transcribed by Bob Van Cleef, from a doctoral dissertation written in the Department of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, and published by CUA Press in 1927." Unfortunately, this translation -- at least as it was transcribed onto the internet -- contains a translation or perhaps merely a typographical error. Due to the nature of the internet, this erroneous translation has been widely disseminated.

The Latin text in question is as follows:

"4. In hac ejusque potestate duos esse gladios, spiritualem videlicet et temporalem, Evangelicis dictis

instruimur. Nam dicentibus Apostolis, 'Ecce gladii duo hic,' in Ecclesia scilicet, cum Apostoli loquerentur, non respondit Dominus nimis esse sed satis. [Luke 22:38] Certe qui in potestate Petri temporalem gladium esse negat, male verbum attendit Domini proferentes, 'Converte gladium tuum in vaginam.' [Matthew 26:52] Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis. **Sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia exercendus.** Ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis."

The sentence in question is in bold above. The Latin text has been taken from multiple reliable sources:

Primary source for Latin text:

* Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, (Archbishop of Westminster, England), *The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*, (Catholic Publication Society: New York, 1875), p. 172-173.

Secondary sources for Latin text:

* Fr. Luigi Tosti, (Benedictine Monk, Abbey of Monte Cassino, Italy), *Storia di Bonifazio VIII e de suoi tempi*, Volume II, 1846; p. 304-306.

* Fr. Luigi Tosti, *History of Pope Boniface VIII and his times, with Notes and Documentary Evidence*, in six books, (Christian Press Association, New York: 1911) p. 537-538.

* Fr. Carl Mirbt, (professor of Church history at the University of Marburg, Germany), *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums* ('Sources for the History of the Papacy'), (Freiburg und Leipzig: Marburg, 1895) p. 88-90.

* Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian church*, Volume 5, (Scribner: New York, 1910), p. 27-28.

All of these above sources have the same exact wording for the passage in question. So the Latin text is not at issue; it plainly says:

Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis. Sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia exercendus. Ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis.

I'll explain the text and its translation in a manner that will, hopefully, be understandable to those readers who do not know Latin.

Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis.

Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material.

The translation of the above sentence is not in dispute. The sentence states that the Church has two types of authority: spiritual and material (or temporal). Thus, the Church can issue doctrines, under Her spiritual authority, and also rules and rulings, under Her temporal authority. The temporal authority of the Church also includes overseeing temporal governments, human laws, and society in general. The Church permits temporal governments to exercise substantial temporal authority. Even so, the Church retains the authority to correct any errors in government and society, as *Unam Sanctam* later explains: "Therefore, if the earthly power goes astray, it will be judged by the spiritual power...." (*Unam Sanctam*, n. 7).

The next two sentences are where the problem arises:

Sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia exercendus.

Ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis.

my translation:

Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the **latter** is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the **former** is to be exercised by the Church. The **former** is of the priest; the **latter** is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

Cardinal Manning's translation (1875)

Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword ; the **latter** is to be used for the Church, the **former** by the Church ; the **former** by the hand of the priest, the **latter** by the hand of princes and kings, but at the nod and sufferance of the priest.

The meaning is fairly obvious. The latter (material or temporal) authority is exercised by temporal governments, but on behalf of the Church. In other words, secular society is, in the view of God, under the authority of the Church, which can teach and correct human laws, governments, and society in general. The former (spiritual or teaching) authority is exercised directly by the Church. The former (spiritual or teaching) authority is in the hand of 'the priest', in other words, of the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and priests. The latter (temporal authority) is in the hand of secular leaders, but always under the oversight of 'the priest', i.e. the leaders of the Church. This teaching on the two types of authority of the Church is clear and simple. It should not be controversial to any well-instructed Catholic.

However, the erroneous translation changes the text and its meaning:

Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the **former** is to be administered for the Church but the **latter** by the Church; the **former** in the hands of the priest; the **latter** by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

The difference between the correct and incorrect translations is the reversal of the first use of 'former' and 'latter'. Instead of having the latter (material or temporal power) exercised by secular governments on behalf of (or 'for') the Church, the erroneous translation has the Church exercising that material power. This leaves the 'former' spiritual power to be exercised 'for' the Church, rather than 'by' the Church.

The second use of 'former' and 'latter' makes the error even clearer. The former (spiritual) authority is in the hands of the priest; this is correct. The Church exercises all of Her spiritual authority directly; it is not exercised 'for' the Church by others. The latter (material or temporal power) is, to a large extent but not exclusively, exercised by 'kings and soldiers', i.e. by secular governments. Of course, the Church retains the direct exercise of temporal authority over discipline and temporal matters within the Church, and the authority to judge the actions of secular governments.

So a conflict arises in the erroneous translation between the first and second uses of former and latter. The first use of latter has the material power erroneously exercised 'by' the Church; but the second use correctly asserts that this latter power is exercised 'by the hands of kings and soldiers'. It is an obvious error. Either a power is exercised by the Church ('the priest'), or it is exercised by secular governments ('kings and soldiers') under the purview of the Church. And if the former spiritual authority is exercised 'for' (not 'by') the Church, then someone else would be exercising the Church's spiritual authority, which cannot be the case.

The erroneous translation has transposed the first use of the terms 'former' and 'latter'.

The text should read:

the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the former is to be exercised by the Church

The latter material or temporal authority is exercised by secular governments 'on behalf of' the Church. And this is why the rest of the quote says that this same 'latter' authority is exercised "by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest." The temporal authority of secular governments is under the higher authority of the Church; that power is exercised 'for' or 'on behalf of' the Church by those governments. The former spiritual authority is exercised 'by' the Church directly.

So the translation should read: "latter ... former ... former ... latter". The erroneous text reverses the order of the first two, as if it said: "former ... latter ... former ... later".

In the Latin text, the order of 'former' and 'latter' is quite obvious:

"Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis. Sed **is** quidem pro Ecclesia, **ille** vero ab Ecclesia exercendus. **Ille** sacerdotis, **is** manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis."

The word 'ille' means 'former' in Latin, and obviously refers to the spiritual sword (or power) of the Church, which is the former since it is mentioned first. The word 'is' in Latin is a pronoun referring to the other term, to the material (or temporal) sword (or power). As someone who [has translated the entire Latin Vulgate Bible into English](#), I can tell you that this point is not arguable. But even if you do not know Latin, you can clearly see the order of the Latin words:

"is ... ille ... ille ... is" (latter, former; former, latter)

But the erroneous translation has reversed the first two terms. The error is simple, blatant, inarguable, and makes the meaning of the text contradictory. And yet this error continues to persist and spread online.

Various different but correct translations are found on these websites:

1. [my translation at CatholicPlanet.com](#)

Translated from multiple Latin sources

Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the former is to be exercised by the Church. The former is of the priest; the latter is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

2. [Cardinal Manning's translation \(1875\)](#)

Source: Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, *The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*, (Catholic Publication Society: New York, 1875), p. 172-173.

Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword ; the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by the Church ; the former by the hand of the priest, the latter by the hand of princes and kings, but at the nod and sufferance of the priest.

3. [Document: Pope Boniface VIII, Unam Sanctam](#)

Source: *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Bettenson, 2nd ed. (Oxford, U.K., Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 159-161.

Both are in the power of the Church, the spiritual sword and the material. But the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by her; the former by the priest, the latter by kings and captains but at the will and by the permission of the priest.

4. [Unam Sanctam: Pope Boniface VIII on the Two Swords, 1302](#)

Source: "The Bull Unam Sanctam of Boniface VIII," in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. III, no. 6, (Philadelphia: The Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1912), 20-23; reprinted in ed. John L. Beatty and Oliver A. Johnson, *Heritage of Western Civilization*, vol. 1, 7th edition, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 319-21.

Both, therefore, the spiritual and material swords, are in the power of the Church, the latter indeed to be used for the Church, the former by the Church, the one by the priest, the other by the hand of kings and soldiers, but by the will and sufferance of the priest.

5. [Pope Boniface VIII: Unam Sanctam](#)

Source: *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation*, by the Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas. Imprimi Potest: Daniel H. Convay, S.J., Provincial, Missouri Province; Nihil Obstat: Malachi J. Donnelly, S.J., Censor Deputatus; Imprimatur: Edward J. Hunkeler, D.D., Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, 20th April 1955. ©1955 by B. Herder Book Co. © 1973 by TAN Books & Publishers, Inc.

Both of these, that is, the spiritual and the temporal swords, are under the control of the Church. The first is wielded by the Church; the second is wielded on behalf of the Church. the first is wielded by the hand of the priest, the second by the hand of kings and soldiers but at the wish and by the permission of the priests.

The above correct versions of the document are five different translations by different translators with different wordings -- all with the same meaning. Each has the spiritual sword exercised 'by' the Church, and the material (temporal) sword exercised 'for' or 'on behalf of' the Church.

The erroneous translation, found on the following several websites, is merely one erroneous version of the document, which has been copied again and again onto different websites.

NewAdvent.org (site administered by Kevin Knight)

"Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the former is to be administered *for* the Church but the latter *by* the Church; the former in the hands of the priest; the latter by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest."

PapalEncyclicals.net (site administered by Martin Beckman)

"Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the former is to be administered *for* the Church but the latter *by* the Church; the former in the hands of the priest; the latter by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest."

EWTN

"Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the former is to be administered *for* the Church but the latter *by* the Church; the former in the hands of the priest; the latter by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest."

This error is a lesson in how errors spread over the internet. One person asserts an error, and it is repeated again and again. The error becomes associated with websites that are otherwise generally reliable. And this gives the error an apparent reliability that it does not deserve. But then, to correct an error, once it is asserted, is difficult.

by

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20 October 2011

Ref. the whole document: <https://ronconte.wordpress.com/2011/05/18/the-two-swords-of-the-church/>

Look also: <https://aboutphilippines.ph/catholicchurch.html#Vatican>