HOLY SPIRIT SEMINARY COLLEGE
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The Situation of the Church
In an age of Absolutism and Gallicanism

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I) Introduction: The Age of Absolutism defined

Different sources delimit the Age of Absolutism differently. For example, Wikipedia defines it from 1610-1789. BookRags, an academic and research website, puts up for sale a history lesson plan which defines it from 1650 to 1789. Thomas Page, a history professor, defines it from 1660-1789. Despite the disagreement in defining the beginning, most of them agree that the Age of Absolutism ends with the French Revolution. Therefore, Max Beloff’s book, which is entitled “Age of Absolutism, 1660-1815”, must have its own justification. On one hand, these different opinions show the arbitrariness of imposing the notion of a period on a continuous development. On the other hand, they indicate the importance of delimiting one’s turf in dealing with historical issues.

Since this essay will touch upon the historical situation of the Catholic Church when she struggled with the absolute monarchs in Europe, and Gallicanism in particular, and there are different ways to write about history, the present author will take a biographical approach. He will choose the reigns of the popes from Leo XI (1605) to Clement XIV (1774)

5 Max Beloff, Age of Absolutism, 1660-1815 (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962), pg. 11
as the timeline because there is no better way to illustrate the situation of the Catholic Church than the biographies of the popes. After all, history would be bland without personalities. Parallel to this major timeline would be a collection of players, including kings and cardinals, against the popes. Among them would be Henri IV, Louis XIII and Louis XIV, the French kings; Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, their prime ministers etc. By pitching popes against kings, it is hoped that the narrative would be more engaging.

To begin with Pope Leo XI is to illustrate the interference of the major political players over the papacy. To finish at the eve of the American War of Independence and the Suppression of the Society of Jesus is to illustrate the lowest ebb of papal authority and Church influence over against the surrounding monarchs. For centuries, the Church has been and still is on the defensive.

I) 1. The Rise of Absolutism

A few words must be said about the rise of absolutism. On the social economic level, the European states were evolving from feudal to bureaucratic and the class of artisans and merchants arose in towns from agricultural communities in the European economies. As a result of Reformation, a power shift was also happening between the Church and the states. Hubert Jedin summarizes it well.

Now it was the princes ... who determined adherence to religion and creed. The Council of Trent took place in agreement with the princes, and only with their cooperation could it be enforced and implemented. To an even higher degree the Counter Reformation was their work ... The Catholic princes not only made use of their right to determine the religion of their
subjects; while protecting the Church and promoting reform and even reconquering lost territory for her, they extended their own authority in the ecclesiastical sphere, frequently with the consent or at least the toleration of the papacy.\textsuperscript{6}

The Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555 declared that each prince had the right to decide which religion his subjects would follow --- “cuius region, eius religio”. Despite this “peace”, religious wars continued to rampage throughout Europe. On one hand, to wage so many wars, the princes needed money and manpower. Therefore they needed to take back the collection of taxes into their own hands and even opened up new sources of revenue. Church property became easy targets. On the other hand, tired of frequent wars, the people were eager to surrender their freedom to an absolute monarch to bring them prosperity and peace. Absolutism was on the rise, thanks to Reformation and Counter Reformation.

Due to the limitation of space and scope of this paper, the present author will focus on the absolutism in France, mentioning other countries such as Spain, Portugal, Austria and Prussia when they were engaged with France within the time frame of this paper, viz. 1605-1774. So, let’s turn our attention to the Gallican Church and Gallicanism.

I) 2. Gallicanism

France has been called the eldest daughter of the Church since 753 A.D. Her supportive role to the Holy See has earned her many special

privileges. Thus, the Gallican Church has developed a unique tradition. Gallicanism is then a complex of theological and political doctrines, administrative and judicial practices, and religious passions that characterized French Catholicism from the late Middle Ages to the French Revolution.\(^7\) It is manifested in different “flavours”.

First of all, members of the Parlement viewed themselves as guardians of the holy decrees of the Gallican Church and wished to act as the necessary intermediary between the national Church and the Pope. No papal document and no papal legate could enter France without the consent of the Paris parlement.\(^8\)

Secondly, French theologians believed that a pope might err but not the Church. They liked to quote Jerome, “\textit{orbis maior est urbe}”: the world is greater than the city, to support their position. They taught that each one owed obedience to the Church united in general council. Yet, they acknowledged the primacy of the Pope.\(^9\)

Thirdly, the French bishops claimed for themselves the “Liberties of the Gallican Church”: \textit{administrative}, permitting them to deliberate among themselves, especially in councils; \textit{fiscal}, allowing them to levy taxes and to dispose of the income; and \textit{judicial}, giving them the right to be the sole judges of fellow bishops when these had failed to fulfill their duties. After the Council of Trent, the bishops came into conflict with statesmen. They came to accept the separation of the religious power

\(^7\) C. Berthelot du Chesnay, J. M. Gres-Gayer, “Gallicanism”, \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., Vol. 6 (Detroit: Gale, 2003), pg. 73

\(^8\) \textit{Ibid}, pg. 74

\(^9\) \textit{Ibid}, pg. 75
from the civil power. The “Déclaration du clergé français” approved by the Assembly of the French Clergy in 1682 was the zenith of episcopal Gallicanism.

Lastly, French kings derived many benefits from signing concordats with popes. The 1472 Concordat with Pope Sixtus IV provided that major benefices should be at the king’s disposal. Kings could appoint bishops of their own heart. The 1516 Concordat with Pope Leo X granted the king in perpetuity the unique privilege of naming to consistorial benefices (cardinals) but said nothing about the papal right to collect annates, which was the first year’s revenue of an ecclesiastical benefice.

These different manifestations easily blended together when the prime minister was a cardinal. We will meet two of them below.

I) 3. Jansenism

The Jansenism controversy deserves a full-length essay on its own. In this paper, it is unavoidable for the present author to oversimplify. Simply put, Jansenism was an unsound theology blended with rigorism in morality. It had been taught in Sorbonne, the Faculty of Theology in the University of Paris and had become a popular spirituality among the French people. The French Jesuits were the first to condemn it because Jansenism sounded very much like Calvinism. They sought the Holy See to pronounce so. Meanwhile, prominent thinkers, such as Blaise Pascal, and spiritual people, such as the Abbot of St-Cyran, defended it. The
controversy spilt over to other theological issues such as the authority of the Pope versus general councils etc. Even Sorbonne was split into two camps. France had become a battlefield. The French kings who wanted unity among their subjects passed laws to suppress it. The Holy See had issued an unprecedented number of briefs, bulls and constitutions to condemn it: *In eminenti* (Urban VIII 1642); *Cum occasinoe* (Innocent X 1653); *Ad sanctam Beati Petri sedem* (Alexander VII 1656); *Regiminis Apostolici* (Alexander VII 1665); *Vineam Domini Sabaoth* (Clement XI 1705); *Universi Dominici gregis* (Clement XI 1708); *Unigenitus Dei Filiius* (Clement XI 1713); *Pastoralis officii* (Clement XI 1718); *Auctorem fidei* (Pius VI 1794) etc. Such pronouncements of condemnation provided ample occasions to worsen the relation between France and the Holy See. But Jansenism managed to survive with crafty proceedings, chicanery and lack of frankness on the part of Jansenists. Even the French Revolution was not able to extinguish it.\(^{12}\)

II) What had happened

Henry IV (1594-1610)

In 1585, Pope Sixtus V declared that Henry de Bourbon (1553-1610), the head of Protestant party in the Wars of Religion, had forfeited his rights to the French throne. It was necessary for him to convert from Calvinism to Catholicism before he would become the King of France. Finally, on February 27, 1594, Henry IV was crowned King of France. Ten months later

on December 27, 1594, Jean Chastel attempted to assassinate King Henry IV. The Parlement of Paris took this opportunity to ban the Society of Jesus because Chastel had once been a Jesuit student. It was September 17, 1595. Pope Clement VIII finally declared Henry IV, the King of France free from all excommunication, thus clearing him from any more obstacles to the French throne. In 1598, Henry IV enacted the *Edict of Nantes* to grant religious freedom to the French Protestants. In 1600, he married Marie de Medici, resulting in an increase of French influence in Italy.

Between 1602 and 1604, he and his deputy, the Duke of Sully, attempted to make the crown absolute by introducing *Paulette*, a tax to make offices hereditary and establishing *élections* throughout France in which royal officials, rather than those of the provincial estates and towns would divide and collect taxes. Such moves aimed at reducing the nobles of their incomes. In 1603, he enacted the *Edict of Rouen* to save the Jesuits, allowing them to remain in all places where they were established.

In 1605, he spent 300000 scudi on securing the election of Leo XI, who was also a Medici, a relative of the French Queen. Leo XI was Pope for only 27 days. His election on 1st April 1605 was the triumph of Henry IV over the Hapsburg Spain. 62 cardinals entered the conclave after the death of Pope Clement VIII. The leader of the Italian party among the cardinals joined hands with the French party to elect a Medici against the express wish of

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King Philip III of Spain.\textsuperscript{15}

In his foreign policy, Henry IV gathered weaker States, many of which were Protestant, around France to counterbalance the Hapsburgs of both Spain and Germany. Though he held respect and a conciliating attitude towards the Holy See, through fear of the reformers and the parlementaires, Henry IV did not dare to allow the publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent in France. He was assassinated by Ravaillac on 14 May 1610.\textsuperscript{16}

The background has been laid. France was marching towards absolutism and Gallicanism was on the rise.

**Pope Paul V (1605-1621)**

With a lawyer canonist background, Camillo Borghese was elected Pope Paul V on 16 May 1605, nineteen days after the death of Pope Leo XI. He was a keen defender of the interests of the Church in every nation. He quarrelled with the Republic of Venice over anti-clergy ordinances and issued interdicts to bend Venice into submission. Trying to protect the interests of Catholics, he wrote a friendly letter to James I of England to congratulate him for his accession to the throne. He resolved the disputes among Catholics in Austria and beatified Ss. Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Philip Neri, Theresa of Carmelite and Isidore of Madrid etc.\textsuperscript{17} The Thirty Years War in Germany, yet another religious war, broke out in 1618.


Louis XIII (1610-1643) & Cardinal Richelieu (1624-1642)

Louis (1601-1643) was nine when he was crowned king. Louis’ mother, Marie de Medici, became regent until 1617. During this period of time, some French nobles, supported by French Protestants rebelled. Thus Louis XIII was suspicious of them both. When the Thirty Years War broke out in 1618, the French Court was not sure which side to support. Rivalry with the House of Hapsburg meant Louis should support the Protestant powers. On the other hand, his strict Catholic upbringing urged him to support the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II. When Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) was made the president of the Council of Ministers, he helped Louis build up an absolute monarchy in France and secured French advantages in the Thirty Years War. He vowed “to make the royal power supreme in France and France supreme in Europe.” French nobles were one of the obstacles standing in the way to absolutism. They were able to raise private armies and build fortifications. In 1626, Louis XIII issued an Edict, ordering the demolition of the feudal castles in France, thus making French nobles unable to rebel.

Richelieu was fearless in making alliances with foreign Protestants to bring down the Hapsburg in Austria. On question of the relations between the temporal and the spiritual powers, Richelieu admitted the supreme power of both the Pope and the king. In the disputes between the Holy See and the

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For The Edict of 1626 see http://history.hanover.edu/texts/demcastl.html
French Church, he most frequently acted as a mediator. Richelieu made Cardinal Mazarin his successor.\textsuperscript{20}

**Gregory XV (1621-1623)**

Alessandro Ludovisi succeeded Paul V to become Pope Gregory XV in 1621. He introduced new regulations of papal election to counter political influences and party considerations in the College of Cardinals. In 1622, he created the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and canonized Ignatius, Neri, Theresa and Isidore. Relation with England was good and in France, his good relation with Louis XIII allowed the Capuchins, the Jesuits and the Franciscans to convert many heretics to Catholicity.\textsuperscript{21}

**Urban VIII (1623-1644)**

Maffeo Barberini was elected Pope Urban VIII to succeed and inherited a Holy See with a debt of 16 to 18 million scudi from Gregory XV. Urban was such a heavy builder that he earned the pasquinade: \textit{“Quod non fecerunt Barbari, fecerunt Barberini”} and left a debt of 35 million scudi in 1640. Scholars find it reasonable to brand him a pro-France pope to explain his decisions during the Thirty Years War because the Hapsburg (Austria and Spain) dominance in Italy was a greater danger to the papacy than any threat from France.\textsuperscript{22} However, long time ago, Michael Ott had defended that the Pope refused to join the alliance with France, Venice and Savoy


against Spain in 1624; brought about the Treaty of Monzon which gave equal rights to France and Spain on the Valtellina in 1626 and again refused to enter the league with France, Venice and Savoy at the beginning of the War of Mantuan Succession in 1629. In 1642, he issued the Bull, "In eminenti" to condemn Jansenism in France. So, we cannot brand him pro-France because of his actions in the Thirty Years War. His efforts to restore Catholicism in England met little success. His papacy was also marred with the trial and condemnation of Galileo by the Roman Inquisition.23

Cardinal Mazarin (1642-1661)

Mazarin continued Richelieu’s policy against the Hapsburg of Austria. He succeeded in bringing the Thirty Years War to an end with the Treaty of Westphalia, giving Alsace (without Strasburg) to France. He ended the war with Spain in the Peace of the Pyrenees, gaining for France Roussillon, Cerdagne and part of the Low Countries. In foreign affairs, he laid the foundation for Louis XIV’s greatness in Europe by forming the League of the Rhine. But his foreign policy was indifferent to the interests of Catholicism. He even prepared an armed expedition against Avignon to bully Pope Innocent X. In domestic affairs, he defeated the Parliamentary Fronde and the Fronde of the Nobles, thus consolidating the absolutism of Louis XIV. His anti-Jansenism policy was less a matter of theology than a matter of politics. After Mazarin’s death in 1661, the 24-year-old Louis XIV was ready to assume personal control over all France.24

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Louis XIV (1643-1715)

Louis XIV (1638-1715) had epitomized French absolute monarchy with this quote, supposedly his, “L’Etat c’est a moi”. To minimize the nobles’ threat to his rule, he moved them to reside in his palace. He consolidated all powers in his council of a few assistants chosen by himself — Colbert, for finance and justice; Louviois, for war and Lionne for foreign affairs etc. He believed that a king was the proprietor of the Church’s wealth and it was inadmissible that ecclesiastics should not contribute to the necessities of the State. The assemblies of the clergy were watched over by his ministers and his relation with the papacy will be more fully narrated below. He repealed the Edict of Nantes with the Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685 to remove the threat of French Protestants to his absolutism. Like his father, Louis XIV died and left his throne to young Louis XV who was only five.25

Innecent X (1644-1655)

Though not acceptable to the French, the factions united to elect Giambattista Pamfili the next Pope.26 The first thing Pope Innocent X needed to do was to take legal action against the Barberini for the misappropriation of public moneys. Antonio and Francesco Barberini fled to Paris where they found a powerful protector in Cardinal Mazarin, the successor of Cardinal Richelieu. Innocent X confiscated their property, and in 1646, issued a bull to deprive cardinals, who had left the Ecclesiastical

States without papal permission and should not return within six months, of their cardinalate. The French Parlement declared the papal ordinances null and void. Pope Innocent X yielded only when Cardinal Mazarin was prepared to send troops to Italy to invade the Ecclesiastical States.

In 1640, Portugal gained independence from Spain. Both Urban VIII and Innocent X, in deference to Spain, refused to acknowledge the new king and withheld their approbation from the bishops nominated by him. The treaty which ended the Thirty Years War in 1648 had somehow to reconcile the interests of over 190 secular princes and rulers, many of them Protestant.27 The solemn bull issued by Innocent X in which he purported to ‘condemn, reprove, quash and annul’ the treaty, was simply ignored.28 In 1653, Innocent X, desiring good contacts with Cardinal Mazarin and the anti-Jansenist French bishops who were in the majority, issued a bull “Cum occasione” to condemn five Jansenism propositions.29

Alexander VII (1655-1667)

After a conclave of eighty days, Fabio Chigi was elected Pope. From the very beginning of Alexander’s pontificate, his relationship with France was tense. Cardinal Mazarin, the French prime minister, had always been hostile to Rome. He prevented Louis XIV from sending the usual embassy of obedience to Alexander VII and hindered the appointment of a French ambassador to Rome. Flexing his absolutist muscle, the 22-year-old Louis

27 Eamon Duffy, Saints & Sinners --- A History of the Popes, pg. 231
28 ditto, pg. 232
XIV quarrelled with the Pope in 1662 over the traditional right of asylum granted to ambassadors, in this case his Créqui, in Rome. Louis occupied Avignon and humiliated the Pope with the Treaty of Pisa in 1664. On the issue of bishops’ appointment, Alexander VII had to comply fully with the wishes of Louis XIV. In 1665, he confirmed the condemnation of Jansenism again by the bull “Ad Sacram” which caused a violent outbreak of emotion in France.  

Clement IX (1667-1669)

Giulio Rospigliosi was a virtuous and charitable Pope. In his reign, he secured the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle between France and Spain. The Church finance returned to health. Seeing that war with Holland was unavoidable, Louis XIV wanted to settle religious quarrels and reunite the kingdom. On 14 January 1669, Clement IX helped him by issuing the Clementine Peace which brought to an end the doctrinal controversies for almost thirty years. A few days before he died, he appointed seven cardinals, bringing the complement of the college back up to the traditional seventy.

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32 Burkhart Schneider, “The Papacy in the Period of French Hegemony”, pg. 801
Clement X (1670-1676)

The French and Spaniard were again at loggerheads for four months and twenty days before they finally agreed to elect the eighty-year-old Emilio Altieri the next Pope. Clement X worked hard to form a defensive alliance against the Turks to preserve the peace of Europe. But he was menaced by the ambitious Louis XIV and began his long struggle concerning the régale, the revenues of vacant dioceses and abbeys.\(^{33}\) The French also wanted Clement X to appoint more French cardinals. In 1675, when the Pope delayed appointments, the French Ambassador, Cardinal d’Estrées badgered the aged and frail Pope, pushing him back into his chair when the Pope tried to end the audience.\(^{34}\)

St. Innocent XI (1676-1689)

Benedetto Odescalchi was a pious, unselfish and charitable cardinal. He accepted election to the papacy with extreme reluctance, and only after forcing all the cardinals to agree to his fourteen-point reform programme for the Church. He inherited a Holy See with a debt of 50 million scudi and soon he was able to balance the book.\(^{35}\) But all his efforts to induce Louis XIV to respect the rights of the Church was useless. In 1678, Innocent called Louis to abandon further extension of the regále. Innocent’s stand was presented as a breach of the liberties of the French Church. Anti-papal feeling mounted in France.\(^{36}\) In 1682, Louis XIV convoked an Assembly of

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34 Eamon Duffy, *Saints & Sinners --- A History of the Popes*, pg. 236
35 Ibid, pg. 237
36 Ibid, pg. 238
the French Clergy which, on 19 March, adopted the four famous articles, known as “Déclaration du clergé français”. Innocent refused approbation to bishops who took part in the assembly, abolished the much abused right of asylum and filled the vacant archiepiscopal See of Cologne. Louis XIV retaliated by taking possession of the papal territory of Avignon, imprisoning the papal nuncio and appealing to a general council. Nor did he conceal his intention to separate the French Church entirely from Rome. But the Pope remained firm. French influence caused his beatification procedure in the 18th century to be dropped.\textsuperscript{37} Innocent XI was finally canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1956.\textsuperscript{38}

**Alexander VIII (1689-1691)**

Pietro Ottoboni was already eighty when he was elected Pope. He reigned for only sixteen months. Louis XIV restored to him Avignon, and renounced the long-abused right of asylum for the French Embassy. Still in 1690, Alexander declared the Declaration of Gallican Liberties null and invalid.\textsuperscript{39}

**Innocent XII (1691-1700)**

The conclave lasted for five months. After many failed attempts at a compromise, the seventy-five-year-old Antonio Pignatelli was elected Pope. In 1693 Pope Innocent XII induced King Louis XIV of France to repeal the “Déclaration du clergé français”. The bishops who had taken part in the Declaration sent a written recantation to Rome, whereupon the Pope sent


\textsuperscript{38} Burkhart Schneider, *The Papacy in the Period of French Hegemony*, pg. 807

his Bull of confirmation to those bishops from whom it had been withheld. It was greatly due to the arrogance of Martinitz that Innocent XII advised King Charles II of Spain to make a Frenchman, the Duke of Anjou, his testamentary successor, an act which led to the “War of the Spanish Succession”.  

Clement XI (1700-1721)

Giovanni Francesco Albani was only fifty one when he was elected. His pontificate was troubled by wars. In his efforts to establish peace among the powers of Europe and to uphold the rights of the Church, he met with scant success. One of his first public acts was to protest against the assumption, in 1701, by the Elector of Brandenburg of the title of King of Prussia. He acquiesced and acknowledged the validity of Philip V, King of Spain and thus embittered Austria. Leopold was succeeded by Joseph I who immediately raised the question of Jus primarum precum, the right of the crown to appoint to vacant benefices. The Austrians invaded the Papal States. Clement gave way in 1709 and acknowledged the Archduke Charles as King of Spain who revived the Monarchia Sicula to exclude the Pope from any authority over the Church in Sicily. In 1713, he signed the bull Unigenitus Dei Filius to draw the curtain on the Jansenism controversy. Meanwhile, Louis XIV had died in 1715 and French hegemony in Europe began its decline. Minor players began to assert themselves.

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Innocent XIII (1721-1724)

Michel Angelo de’ Conti was elected the next Pope. He invested Emperor Charles VI with the Kingdom of Sicily and received his oath of allegiance in 1722. When, a year later, the Emperor invested the Spanish prince Don Carlos, with Parma and Piacenza, the Pope protested on the ground that these two duchies were under papal suzerainty. Like his predecessor, he gave an annual pension to the English Pretender, James III, the son of the dethroned Catholic King, James II, and even promised to aid him with 100,000 ducats, in case an opportunity should offer itself to regain the English Crown by force of arms.\footnote{Michael Ott, “Pope Innocent XIII”, \textit{The Catholic Encyclopedia}, Vol. 8 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910).}

Benedict XIII (1724-1730)

Pietro Francesco Orsini was a Dominican monk who had no political experience. His love of peace led him to attempt a settlement of the dispute in regard to the ecclesiastical privileges of the Kings of Naples (\textit{Monarchia Sicula}) by a revocation of the constitution of Clement XI (1715) and by granting to the King of Naples (and Sicily) and his successors the right to appoint a spiritual judge in ecclesiastical affairs, reserving, however, the most important cases to the Holy See. The quarrel with Victor Amadeus of Savoy was compounded by giving to the king the right of patronage over the churches and monasteries in his dominions, without, however, conceding any claim to the incomes from vacant benefices. Towards John V, King of Portugal, the Pope exhibited extraordinary firmness in refusing a claim based on the privileges held by other courts to propose candidates for
the cardinalate. This was in consequence of the protests made by the cardinals against the election of Vincenzo Biechi, Nuncio to Lisbon. He relied on rapacious ministers, such as Coscia and Lercari, to handle temporal affairs and thus the finances of the Holy See were in a very bad shape.\textsuperscript{43}

**Clement XII (1730-1740)**

Lorenzo Corsini was seventy-eight with failing eyesight when he was elected the next Pope. He had been blind since 1732. He facilitated the reunion with the Greeks and proceeded with vigour against the French Jansenists. Through the efforts of his missionaries in Egypt, 10000 Copts, together with their Patriarch, returned to the unity of the Church. Clement persuaded the Armenian Patriarch to remove from the diptychs the anathema against the Council of Chalcedon and St. Leo I. In his dealings with the powers of Europe, he managed by a union of firmness and moderation to preserve and restore harmony; but he was unable to maintain the rights of the Holy See over the Duchies of Parma and Piacenza.\textsuperscript{44}

**Benedict XIV (1740-1758)**

Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini was perhaps the greatest scholar among the popes. After six months of fruitless effort and constant intrigue, the longest since the Western Schism, he addressed the conclave, saying: \textit{“If you wish to elect a saint, choose Gotti; a statesman, Aldrovandi; a donkey, elect me.”} He was duly elected. An enumeration of his principal dealings with the


heads of states of Portugal, Spain, Sardinia, Naples and Prussia, will show that Benedict wisely abandoned, in most cases, the shadow of temporal authority to maintain the substance of spiritual supremacy. At the close of his pontificate the only question of importance in the foreign relations of the Holy See which had not been successfully settled was that concerning the Patriarchate of Aquileia over which the Republic of Venice and the emperor claimed control.  

Clement XIII (1758-1769)

Bracing the gathering anti-Jesuit storm, Carlo Della Torre Rezzonico was elected Pope. Absolutism and Jansenism were the traditional enemies of the Holy See in its government of the Church, but a still more formidable foe was rising into power and using the other two as its instruments. This was the party of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. They planned to destroy the Jesuits first. In Portugal, there was Pombal and in France, the Parlement. Spain rounded up all Jesuits and shipped them to Civitaveccia. Closer home in 1768, the Duke of Parma, once part of papal territory and now a Bourbon fief, issued an edict forbidding appeals to Rome except by the Duke’s permission, and banned all papal bulls or other documents which had not been countersigned by the Duke. Clement declared the decree null and void, and justified his action by appealing to the bull In Coena Domini. Portugal declared it treason to print, sell, distribute or make a judicial reference to In Coena Domini, and Naples, Parma, Monaco, Genoa, Venice

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and Austria followed suit. The Parlement of Paris banned the publication of the papal condemnation; the ambassadors of the Bourbon powers demanded its withdrawal. France occupied Avignon; Naples occupied Benevento and planned to divide the Papal States up among its Italian neighbours. The Pope was surrounded and literally died of a heart attack after the ambassadors of France, Spain and Naples presented him identical demands the total and entire suppression of the Jesuits throughout the world.

**Clement XIV (1769-1774)**

Suppression of the Jesuits became the major issue on the conclave and the Catholic powers were agreed that no friend of the Jesuits should be elected. Giovanni Vincenzo Antonio Ganganelli, who distanced himself from the Jesuits once elevated to the cardinalate, was duly elected. To keep the peace with Catholic princes in order to secure their support in the war against irreligion, Clement hastened to settle as many as he could by concessions and conciliatory measures. The first casualty was the Suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 in a brief. Consequently, the Holy See was given back Avignon and Benevento. The hostile and schismatical manœuvres against the Church continued unabated in many Catholic countries. In France a royal commission for the reformation of the religious orders had been at work for several years, notwithstanding the energetic protests of Clement XIII. Without the Pope's consent it had abolished in 1770 the congregations of Grandmont and of the exempt Benedictines; it had threatened the Premonstratensians, the Trinitarians, and the Minims with the same fate. The Pope protested, through his nuncio to Paris, against such abuses of the

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47 Eamon Duffy, *Saints & Sinners --- A History of the Popes*, pg. 244-245

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secular power, but in vain. The Celestines and the Camaldolese were secularized that same year, 1770. The doctrines of Febronius were prevalent at the Austrian court, and more than once Maria Theresa came into conflict with the Pope. She refused to suppress a new edition of Febronius, as Clement XIV requested. She lent a willing ear to the "Grievances of the German nation", a scheme of reforms in the Church making it more dependent on the prince than on the Pope. She legislated for the religious orders of her dominions without consulting Rome. Portugal, whilst it made a certain outward show of goodwill towards Rome, continued to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs and to impose on colleges and seminaries an education more in accord with French philosophism than with the spirit of the Church. The Pope was beset on all sides and caved in. Now, we lower the curtain at the eve of the American War of Independence.  

III) Conclusion:

Nothing can happen without God’s consent and there is nothing new under the sun. The encroachment of Church’s interests and the limitation on papal authority by temporal states is nothing new. Despite human sinfulness, God’s saving grace continues to work through His people, His popes and His Church. We witness this in the history of the Catholic Church. We are witnessing this in mainland China and elsewhere nowadays. Rulers and their deputies come and go. God and His people and His Church, stay forever. When will they ever learn?

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