



"Drowning in the Tiber (Part 6)"
Responding to Francis Beckwith's *Return to Rome:*
Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic

The Papacy
tiber053109(6)
Matthew 16 and Selected Scriptures



Introduction: The Papacy

"This term is employed in an ecclesiastical and in an historical signification. In the former of these uses it denotes the ecclesiastical system in which the pope as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Jesus Christ governs the Catholic Church as its supreme head." [The Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Papacy"]

I. The Papacy and the Bible

A. Three Passages from the NT (Matthew 16:13-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:31-34)

B. Back to the Central Passage: Matthew 16:13-19

1. Three main interpretations as to Peter's confession:

1)

2)

3)

Question: How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel? Answer: "By proclaiming and openly witnessing, according to the command of Christ, to believers, one and all, that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, by proclaiming and witnessing to all unbelievers and such as do not sincerely repent that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them so long as they are not converted. [The Heidelberg Catechism, Answer to Question 84]

2. Binding and Loosing (cf. Matthew 18:15-20)

II. The Papacy and History

A. Historical Evidence

"There is, however, another interpretation of this text with a better pedigree than most Catholics realize. It may jolt them to hear that the great Fathers of the church saw no connection between it and the pope." [Peter De Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, 24]

B. Biblical Evidence

C. It's all about power

1. Early on, the three centers of Christianity were Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome

2. There's Crusades and the Inquisitions of the middle ages

3. The reign of Bloody Mary

4. Vatican I, 1870

"In his travels, John Paul presents the papacy as the champion of truth and the rights of man. He takes it for granted that popes have never contradicted one another on essentials or deviated from Gospel truth. This part on truth aims to show by numerous illustrations that these assumptions are false. Apart from the fact that the tenth-and-fifteenth century papacy was the heresy, the denial of everything Jesus stood for many popes have made astonishing errors. They have repeatedly contradicted one another and the Gospel. Far from championing the dignity of man, they have times without number withheld from Catholics and non-Catholics the most elementary rights. . . . History explodes the myth of a papacy lily-white in the matter of truth. In an age of barbarism, the popes led the pack; in an age of enlightenment, they trailed the field. And their record was worst when, contrary to the Gospel, they tried to impose the truth by force." [De Rosa, 151]

D. Francis Beckwith's conclusions

Conclusion: