

1059-04-12 – SS Nicholas II – Bulla 'In Nomine Domine' [Papal Version]

In the name of the Lord God our Saviour Jesus Christ, in the year of his incarnation 1059, in the month of April, in the 12th indiction - the holy Gospel being placed before us and the most reverend and blessed apostolic pope Nicholas presiding, while the most reverend archbishops, bishops, abbots and venerable priests and deacons assisted -in the church of the Lateran patriarch, which is called -the church of Constantine, this same venerable pontiff decreeing by apostolic authority, spoke thus concerning the election of the supreme pontiff:

Ye know, most blessed and beloved fellow bishops and brothers-nor has it been hidden from the lower members also - how much adversity this apostolic chair, in which by God's will I serve, did endure at the death of our master and predecessor, Stephen of blessed memory: to how many blows, indeed, and frequent wounds it was subjected by the traffickers in simoniacal heresy; so that the columns of the living God of the chief seemed almost to totter already, and the net of the chief fisher to be submerged, amid the swelling blasts, in the depths of shipwreck. Wherefore, if it please ye brethren, we ought prudently to take measures for future cases, and to provide for the state of the church hereafter, lest-which God forbid-the same evils may revive and prevail. Therefore, strengthened by the authority of our predecessors and of the other holy fathers, we decree and establish.

2. That-lest the disease of venality creep in through any excuse whatever-the men of the church shall be the leaders in carrying on the election of a pope, the others merely followers. And surely this order of electing will be considered right and lawful by those who, having looked through the rules or decrees of the various fathers, also take into consideration that sentence of our blessed predecessor Leo. " No reasoning permits," he says, " that those should be considered as among the bishops who have neither been elected by the clergy, nor desired by the people, nor consecrated by the bishops of their province with the approval of the metropolitan." But since the apostolic chair is elevated above all the churches of the earth, and thus can have no metropolitan over it, the cardinal bishops perform beyond a doubt the functions of that metropolitan, when, namely, they raise their chosen pope to the apex of apostolic glory.

3. They shall make their choice, moreover, from the lap of this [Roman] church itself, if a suitable man is to be found there. But if not, one shall be chosen from another church.

4. Saving the honour and reverence due to our beloved son Henry who is at present called 'king, and will be in the future, as it is hoped, emperor by God's grace; according as we now have granted to him and to his successors who shall obtain this right personally from this apostolic see.

5. But, if the perversity of depraved and wicked men shall so prevail that a pure, sincere and free election can not be held in Rome, the cardinal bishops, with the clergy of the church and the catholic laity, may have the right and power, even though few in numbers, of electing a pontiff for the apostolic see wherever it may seem to them most suitable.

6. It is to be clearly understood that if, after an election has been held, a time of war, or the endeavours of any man who is prompted by the spirit of malignity, shall prevent him who has been elected from being enthroned according to custom in the apostolic chair: nevertheless he who has been elected shall, as pope, have authority to rule the Holy Roman church and to have the disposal of all its resources; as we know the blessed Gregory to have done before his consecration.

But if any one, contrary to this our decree promulgated by a synodal vote, shall, through sedition or presumption or any wile, be elected or even ordained and enthroned: by the authority of God and of the holy apostles Peter and Paul he shall be subjected, as Antichrist and invader and destroyer of all Christianity, to a perpetual anathema, being cast out from the threshold of the holy church of God, together with his instigators, favourers and followers. Nor at any time shall he be allowed a hearing in this matter, but he shall irrevocably be deposed from every ecclesiastical grade, no matter what one he had previously held. Whoever shall adhere to him or show any reverence to him, or shall presume in any way to defend him, shall be bound by a like sentence. Whoever, moreover, shall scorn the import of this our decree, and shall attempt contrary to this statute, presumptuously to confound and perturb the Roman church, shall be condemned with a perpetual anathema and excommunication and shall be considered as among the impious who do not rise at the Judgment. He shall feel against him, namely, the wrath of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and shall experience in this life and in the next the fury of the holy apostles Peter and Paul whose church he presumes to confound. His habitation shall be made a desert, and there shall be none to dwell in his tents. His sons shall be made orphans and his wife a widow. He shall be removed in wrath, and his sons shall go begging and shall be cast out of their habitations. The usurer shall go through all his substance and strangers shall destroy the results of his labours. The whole earth shall fight against him and all the elements oppose him ; and the

merits of all the saints at rest shall confound him, and in this life shall take open vengeance against him. But the grace of Almighty God will protect those who observe this our decree, and the authority of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul will absolve them from the bonds of all their sins.

I, Nicholas, bishop of the holy Catholic and apostolic Roman church, have signed this decree promulgated by us as it stands above. I Boniface, by the grace if God bishop of of Albano, have signed. I, Humbert, bishop of the holy church of Sylva Candida, have signed. I, Peter, bishop of the church of Ostia, have signed. And other bishops to the number of 76, with priests and deacons have signed.

trans in Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), pp. 361-364

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(c)Paul Halsall Mar 1996 halsall@murray.fordham.edu