

## The Pope Declares His Own Power

### POPE BONIFACE VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (1302)

*In late 1302, after several years of bitter conflict with King Philip IV of France over control and taxation of the French clergy, Pope Boniface VIII issued a papal bull declaring the official church position on the proper relationship between church and state. Notice that through-out, the pope uses the "royal we," that is, the plural "we" instead of "I" when talking about himself.*

1. We are obliged by the faith to believe and hold that we do firmly believe and sincerely confess -that there is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and that outside this Church, there is neither salvation nor remission of sins .... In which Church there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." ... Of this one and only Church, there is one body and one head, two heads, like a monster-namely Christ, and Christ's vicar is Peter, and Peter's successor, for the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed my sheep." "My sheep," He said in general, not these or those sheep; wherefore He is understood to have committed them all to him ....
2. And we learn from the words of the Gospel that in this Church and in her power are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. ... Truly he who denies that temporal sword is in the power of Peter misunderstands the word of the Lord, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." 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, the one sword, then, should be under the other, and temporal authority subject to spiritual...
3. If, therefore, the earthly power err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; and if lesser power err, it shall be judged by a greater. But if the supreme power ( the papacy), it can be judged by God not by a man... for this authority, although given to a man and exercised by a man, is not human, but rather divine, given at God's mouth to Peter and established on a rock from him and his successors in Him whom he confessed, the Lord saying to Peter himself, "whatever thou shalt bind," etc. whoever therefore resists this power thus ordained of God, resists the ordinance of God..... Furthermore, we declare, state, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff.

### Document Questions:

- According to Pope Boniface, what is the proper relationship between the authority of the Pope and the authority of earthly rulers? What is the basis for that relationship?