

The Investiture Controversy was a conflict between Pope Gregory VII and the German King Henry IV over who had the right to appoint church officials in the Catholic Church. In the Roman Council of 1074 presided over by Gregory he declared: "Those who have been advanced to any grade of holy orders, or to any office, through simony, that is the payment of money, shall hereafter have no right to officiate in the holy church."¹ This statement as well as several others made throughout the *Dictatus Papae*² offended and enraged secular rulers across Western Europe, especially Henry IV the Holy Roman Emperor, who previous to Gregory's pontificate had appointed church officials at their pleasure. This was the escalation of a growing and serious rift between the Church in Rome and the secular power in the Holy Roman Empire. Pope Gregory VII was one of the greatest popes to ever occupy the papal throne; he was a true reformer who acted out of religious zeal; however his decisions had far ranging religious as well as political consequences across Europe, including his removal from Rome by Emperor Henry IV in 1083, and his death in exile in 1085. Nevertheless, his ideals and goals were realized after his death at the Concordat of Worms in 1122,³ which put an official and final end to lay investiture.⁴

¹ Brian Tierney, ed., *The Middle Ages: Sources of Medieval History* vol. 1. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 121.

² The *Dictatus Papae* is a decree by Gregory VII made in 1075, enumerating the powers and rights of the Pope and the church. 27 axiomatic statements are contained in this document, which vastly expands the power of the papacy. It also lays the groundwork for the establishment of a Papal monarch later in the middle ages.

³ Walter Ullmann. *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972), 171.

⁴ Lay Investiture is the appointment or gift of office of church officials and clergy such as bishops, abbots, and archbishops by secular monarchs

Over the years scholars have examined the life of Gregory VII. Innumerable journal articles cover nearly every aspect of Gregory's life, examining the influences that caused his burning desire for Church reform. Several books published in recent years take a detailed and comprehensive view of Gregory's life and career. A key aspect of studying the life of Gregory is the struggle for power between church and state, a common issue through out the history of the western world. Gregory's action had a profound effect on this relationship and was one of the first cases of a conscious decision to attempt to separate the two powers completely.

Of a few prominent authors who have contributed to the study of Gregory, Uta-Renate Blumenthal has produced significant scholarship on Gregory VII and the era he lived in. Her works focus specifically on the Investiture controversy and the relationship between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. This is an extremely important dynamic to analyze when trying to understand the actions and events of Gregory's pontificate. Blumenthal's book *The Investiture Controversy*⁵ is a very authoritative look on the events of the Investiture Controversy and the impact it had on the legacies of Gregory and Henry, as well as examining the motivation by both sides. The work aims to set the Investiture Controversy into a wider context of the relationship between popes and secular monarchs in Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and to understand the social dynamic that made this controversy such a powerful event, in the history of medieval Europe.

⁵ Uta-Renate Blumenthal. *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

Another author that has done extensive work on the life of Gregory is H.E.J Cowdrey, who has published copiously on Gregory's life.. His *Pope Gregory VII*, it is an outstanding biography first published in 1998, as well as the first comprehensive biography of Gregory VII written in nearly 50 years.⁶ This work draws directly on primary sources from Gregory's life time, in order to gain an understanding of the events and actions of Gregory as well as his thoughts, feelings, and motivations regarding his own actions. Cowdrey takes a much more comprehensive and detailed look at the life of Gregory than any other author to date. It is a detailed examination of nearly every aspect of Gregory's life and gives a clear analysis of aspects of the event that are little thought of such as the role of geography in the investiture controversy. The work provides an analysis that is essential in understanding the politics and history of the Middle Ages, and establishes a understanding of the issues that lead to the establishment of a medieval papal monarchy.

Gregory's original Register as well as a large collection of personal letters still exist. The Register is a record of all correspondence held by the Pope while in office, it as an invaluable collection of primary sources when examining the life of Gregory. These primary sources allow a much closer and more detailed examination of the person of Gregory as opposed to many other Popes of his era, of which little record survives. With this unique opportunity it is easy to take a look into the mindset of Gregory by reading his own words in his correspondence with

⁶ H.E.J. Cowdrey. *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*. (Oxford University Press, 1998), vii.

his church peers and lay Nobility across Europe. This window into his thoughts and personality is an extremely useful tool to understanding Gregory's religious zeal for reform.

Gregory was a well travelled individual of his time. While working in Rome under his predecessors on the papal throne he was often sent as an envoy of the pope to secular rulers as well as ecclesiastic officials throughout Europe. These travels and interaction in his career created the opportunity to make contacts that allowed for the amount of correspondence held by Gregory throughout his time in office.

The roots of rift between the Church and the secular rulers of Europe date back to the eleventh century, to the rule of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III (the father of Henry IV). Who was an extremely pious and religiously devout ruler and was encouraged by cardinals and bishops of the church in Rome as well as at home in the Holy Roman Empire to intervene in church affairs in Rome.⁷ The intervention was needed because of the abdication of Pope Gregory VI at the Council of Sutri in 1046.⁸ Gregory freely admitted that he had purchased the papacy, and that is why he abdicated in 1046. After which Henry appointed a new pope Clement II and continued to appoint popes when needed until his death in 1056. He appointed these Popes because he saw it as his duty to elevate the papacy above the politics of the Roman state which previously had a huge impact on who sat on the papal throne. However his

⁷ Blumenthal,51.

⁸ Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968),71.

appointment of popes would lead to desire by the church to end secular involvement in papal affairs, which was addressed during the pontificate of Gregory. Because of the succession of German Popes who were appointed by Henry III and owed their office to him, they were seen as more loyal to the Emperor rather than God. Issues between the church and Holy Roman Empire escalated under Pope Alexander II (r.1061-1073) over the appointment of the archbishop of Milan.

The Investiture Controversy came to be the seminal event of Gregory VII's pontificate. To understand the effects of the controversy, and to probe his motives, events leading up to the Investiture Controversy need to be examined and the mind set of Gregory; what his motivation was and why he dramatically disrupted the established order in Europe at the time through his efforts at papal reform.

The investment of church offices by lay officials began as early as the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, when Kings began to build and endow churches. These churches fell under the protection of the King that built it, so the King would appoint the official at the head of the church. In return for this the appointed clergy would have ultimate loyalty to the man who appointed them, not to the far away Pope in Rome. The reason for this control by local nobility was the weakness of the Church at large; the Papacy was bogged down by the chaos that ensued in Rome following the fall of the Empire. With the city and papacy struggling to adapt to the new political situation, it could do little to control the activities of the church

that weren't directly in the vicinity of Rome. However Canon law that stated bishops were to be elected by the clergy and the people of the future see⁹, but this rule was largely ignored by lay officials. The nobility saw it as their God given right to appoint church officials, especially with the church being on their lands and in many cases the building of the church was paid for by the nobility. This meant these lay appointed clergy's loyalty to the church and the pope in Rome could have been compromised, "the capital fact of ecclesiastical life in the early Middle Ages was the affairs of the Church were managed by Kings and Princes"¹⁰

This tradition of appointment by a secular leader of church officials continued for nearly two centuries, until during the reign of Charlemagne a reforming council was held in 802¹¹ began to address the issue of lay investiture. The council recognized churches as proprietary lands and buildings, and in this council the right of laymen to appoint or depose priests without first having the permission of the diocesan bishop. But it also stipulated that no nomination could be refused by a bishop if the individual nominated meet certain education and morals standards.¹² This clause was added to allow laymen to still have a relatively large amount of control over the church officials that would be on their land. At this time in church history the

⁹ Basis for the claim of lay investiture being against canon law can be found in the decisions of the second council of Nicaea held in 787. It was the first to declare that lay appointed clergy were void and to be removed from their positions. Lay investiture was also addressed in 869 at the Fourth Council of Constantinople which upheld the decision of lay appointed clergy being void by deposing Photios a layman who was appointed as the Patriarch of Constantinople and reinstating Ignatius who was his predecessor. Further readings on this can be found in *Images of the divine: the theology of icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council*.(see bibliography) and in *A concise history of Christian thought* (see bibliography)

¹⁰ Robert Wilken, "Gregory VII and the Politics of the Spirit," *First thing; A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*. Vol. 89 (1993),3.

¹¹ Blumenthal,5.

¹² ibid

possession of abbeys, monasteries, and churches became important in the power politics of the era.

In the late 10th and early 11th century there was a monastic movement across Europe that was associated with the monastery at Cluny in central France. The monastery was in a unique situation; the land for the monastery was endowed by a lay official William I of Aquitaine in 909¹³ but this noble never kept any form of control over the monastery or the abbot who presided over it, the decision of who was abbot was made by the monks. This became the archetype for monasteries through Christian Europe. The idea behind Cluny was to reestablish monastic piety across Europe and arrest the decay of religious life throughout the continent.¹⁴ The prominence of the abbots that were the leaders of this monastery and the influence they exerted over monasteries across Europe coupled with development of the idea of a monastery dedicated to renewal of religious zeal without the influence of lay officials over the governing of their land holdings would prove to be an important concept that heavily influenced a young man by the name of Hildebrand who would later adopt the name Gregory VII when elected to the papal throne.

This new monastic ideal spread to all corners of Europe, where there were increasing numbers of Cluniac monasteries focusing on a religious renewal of religious zeal and desire to

¹³ H.E.J. Cowdrey. *Popes and Church Reform in the 11th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000),15.

¹⁴ Schafer Williams. *The Gregorian Epoch: Reformation, Revolution, Reaction?* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company),15.

serve God in a more pure fashion.¹⁵ This religious austerity was alive in the monastery of Santa Maria on the Aventine Hill in Rome, where the young Hildebrand began his religious education under his maternal uncle Laurentius who was the presiding abbot.¹⁶ Hildebrand went on to become a Benedictine monk in Rome. His upbringing in the strict monastic order, which was very dedicated to the familiarity and understanding of scripture, would lay the basis for his purpose and motivation throughout his life. This is when he began his career in the church, he became a cleric in minor orders under the Archpriest of San Giovanni, who was later elected Pope Gregory VI in 1045¹⁷ and elevated Hildebrand to his chaplain. When Gregory VI was deposed Hildebrand had to follow him into exile in Germany. This was very much not to the liking of the young monk who didn't like the idea of being separated from the center of the Church in Rome.

The reform movement really began to gain popularity in the church in the middle of the 11th century¹⁸ The practices of lay investiture and simony (the purchase of ecclesiastic office, usually done by paying off a noble with gold or land, in order to appoint a certain individual to a position in the church) were recognized as not being in accordance with the ancient laws of the church and the push for a reform began in earnest. The reform movement came to significance

¹⁵ L. M. Smith "Cluny and Gregory VII," *English Historical Review*. vol. 26, no. 101 (Jan., 1911), 20-33.

¹⁶ Thomas Oestreich, "Pope St. Gregory VII" *Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003). Online: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06791c.htm> accessed April 29th, 2010.

¹⁷ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 29.

¹⁸ Blumenthal, 64.

under the pontificate of Leo IX (1049-54), Leo insisted on an election in harmony with canon law, that is to say elected by the clergy and the people of Rome not appointed by the Emperor.¹⁹ Leo came from an area on the border between France and Germany known as Lotharingia. The movement for reform began as early as the 8th century in this particular region,²⁰ so by the time Leo was elected to the Papal throne he came from a region with a long standing tradition of reform in the church and monasteries as well. This tradition of reform follows him to his office in Rome in 1049²¹, among those who entered Rome with Leo was the young monk Hildebrand.

Leo was faced with major challenges during his rule as Pope, but he was resolute in standing up for reform in the Catholic Church, and fought aggressively against increasingly common practices within the church, such as clerical marriage and simony.²² In April 1049 he held his first synod at the Lateran palace, the purpose of the synod was to have proceedings against bishops accused of simony. Any bishop who could not prove that he was not installed through simony was immediately deposed and all consecrations by simonists were declared void. These announcements caused uproar in the Lateran palace, with clergy of all levels

¹⁹ Blumenthal,70.

²⁰ Ibid.7.

²¹ Ibid.71.

²² Ibid.74.

claiming that such a decree would mean the end of church services across Europe.²³ As a result Leo capitulated and required 40 days of penance for the clergy involved with simony.

Hildebrand's time spent under Leo was ten years of faithful service to the Pope and the church as a whole; he continued to increase his status and position in the church. His position however tends to be exaggerated during this period, although he did become a very prominent member of the church at the time, it is unlikely that he was the brain or driving force behind the papacy as some historians have suggested. In 1050 he became the administrator of St. Paul's basilica.²⁴ This office made him an archdeacon. Then following Leo's death in 1054, Victor II (r.1055-1057) was elected to the papal throne, and under Victor, Hildebrand continued to gain experience working within the Papal government. During the 1050's Hildebrand was also charged with several papal missions across the continent. These papal missions got him acquainted with several prominent figures, both lay and ecclesiastical throughout the continent. These trips also spread his name and reputation across Europe. Thus helping Gregory to become a well known official in Rome.

Next in the line of Popes, working towards reforming the Church was Pope Nicholas II (r.1059-61) who condemned lay investiture, and issued a revolutionary decree eliminating the

²³ J.P. Whitney, "Gregory VII," *English Historical Review*, vol. 34, no.134.(April 1919),135.

²⁴ Cowdrey *Pope Gregory VII*,31.

Holy Roman Emperor from papal election.²⁵ These actions by earlier Popes were laying the foundations for the events to come during the Pontificate of Gregory. Gregory was elected pope in 1073 his reign lasted till he was deposed by Henry the IV in 1083 but another pope was not elected in Rome till after the death of Gregory, who died in exile in 1085.²⁶

Gregory is considered by most contemporary scholars to be one of the greatest popes to occupy the papal throne. This acknowledgement coming only after the historical success of his reforms after his reign, he was the forerunner of change in the church. His ideals and decisions gave the Church new impetus for reform and piety for the centuries to follow. At the time of his rule many of his contemporaries despised him and loathed his ever increasing use of papal powers.²⁷ Gregory changed the mold of what it was to be Pope; he took the long standing practices of lay officials across Western Europe and completely altered them. Gregory had a view of the church that was not shared by many of his contemporaries; he viewed the church “... as a divinely ordered society, working out by its life and authority the purposes of God.”²⁸ Because of this very devote view of the church he differed from most clerical society at the time, who were members of the feudal aristocracy, they had land and power and were concerned with the secular aspects of their life rather than their duties to the church.²⁹ Before the reign of Gregory the church was seen as a political and secular power only using religion as

²⁵ Blumenthal,84.

²⁶ Whitney,137.

²⁷ Whitney,132.

²⁸ Ibid.,137.

²⁹ I.S. Robinson. “Pope Gregory VII, the Princes and Pactum” *The English Historical Review*. (Oct. 1979),728.

a means to control. This is changed with the reforms of Gregory he changes the position of the church to what he believes it should be, focused on religion and on obeying canon law.³⁰

Gregory came to the office with a sense of a mission for God not with a wish for power.³¹

This marked distinction and purpose of changing the church to become more like a monastic order that's sole purpose was the salvation of laymen's souls can be seen by his seeming reluctance to be elected to the papal throne. In his letters to some of his contemporaries he expresses his reluctance to be elected to the esteemed office for fear of not living up to the position.³² He never actively campaigned for this position but accepted this calling because he saw that it was what the people of the church wanted and if he was the individual they elected to lead them, then he saw that as the will of God. Because of his religious fervor if that was the will of God then he had no choice but to accept his position and put forth his best effort and do what he saw as right in the eyes of the Lord.³³ In a letter to the Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna Gregory says "... the Roman people was at first so unwontedly quiet and passed the reins of counsel in [my] hand, that this seemed clearly to have happened by the mercy of God."³⁴

³⁰ Whitney,136.

³¹ Ibid. 137.

³² Cowdry *Pope Gregory VII*,34.

³³ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*,530.

³⁴ H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085: an English Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3. Gregory's letter to Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna about his election, Rome: 26 April 1073.

In 1074 a Lateran council was called by Gregory that condemned both simony and clerical marriage. Then in 1075 Gregory went one step further by issuing the *Dictatus Papae*, in which he not only instituted moral reform by established lofty claims for papal power³⁵. Among the claims in the dictate of the Pope where: “3. [The Pope] alone can depose or reinstate bishops. ... 7. That for [the Pope] alone is it lawful, according to the needs of the time, to make new laws... 12. That it may be permitted to [the Pope] to depose emperors... 19. That [the Pope] himself may be judged by no one... 22. That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity... 26. That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic... 27. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men.”³⁶ All of these statements drastically increase the power of the Pope, and by so doing it usurps power held by secular leaders.

The Pope grants himself the ability to do almost whatever he wants in matters involving the church and even matters not involving the church. This action of granting himself power on a scale that is parallel to that of a Roman Emperor is very offensive to secular nobility in Western Europe, especially to Henry IV, who in 1059 at the age of six had already lost the right of emperors to approve of papal elections.³⁷ The lay community at large seemed to be somewhat docile when Gregory was making these changes. Henry lost a lot of popular support

³⁵ Tierney,121.

³⁶ Ibid, 121-122.

³⁷ Ullmann,144.

within the Empire when he was later excommunicated; showing the legitimacy a large number of lay people gave to the decisions of Gregory. Now Gregory is taking large amounts of power from him and breaking the long intertwined Papal-Imperial relationship dating back to the coronation of Charlemagne. This is an outrage to Henry.³⁸

Gregory had a history of being arrogant and dominating. He would defend his personal opinions despite any evidence to the contrary quite vehemently even if this caused him to be at odds with everyone else.³⁹ Gregory was a strong personality with even stronger personal convictions, and these strong personal and religious convictions gave him the ability to stand up to the powerful royalty of Western Europe and not back down. Gregory believed that God was on his side, and with that strong conviction, he felt he had nothing to fear.⁴⁰ Gregory did not follow the example set by a number of Popes in the past, which their ideas and decrees should be based on political maneuvering or aimed at gaining political power, instead be believed in doing what was right for the church based on the will of God.⁴¹ Henry on the other hand, had liked the status quo that had prevailed in previous centuries. This status quo had entrusted the Emperor with the majority of power in Europe, and Henry wished to keep the balance of power in his favor, which was what he attempted to do when he appointed Clement III anti-pope in 1080 as a response to being excommunicated.

³⁸ Tierney, 122.

³⁹ Blumental, 115.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 116.

⁴¹ Ibid. 117.

Henry responded with a letter to the Pope, in which he addresses him by the name Hildebrand and says he is “not pope but [a] false monk”⁴². This is the upmost insult to the Gregory to not be referred to by his papal name but instead the name he gave up when he became pope. It is the worst way Henry could conceivable refer to Gregory. Henry goes on to make the case that royal power is conferred on the secular leaders by God in divine appointment.⁴³ He also says Gregory is acting as if he was God himself and he had given the kingdoms to the nobility of Europe.⁴⁴ Henry goes on to level charges against Gregory saying he is a false Pope and is not worthy of being the Pope. The Emperor sums up his letter by asking Gregory to descend from the throne and “be damned throughout the ages.”⁴⁵ Gregory

respond “... in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, through thy power and authority, I deprive King Henry... of the government over the whole kingdom of Germany and Italy, and I release all Christian men from the allegiance which they have sworn or may swear to him, and I forbid anyone to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who seeks to diminish the glory of thy Church should lose the glory which he seems to have.”

The act of being excommunicated effectively labels Henry as an enemy of all Christian nations. This is the most powerful political weapon the Pope has, and it was used on Henry. This caused the Henry to call the diet of Worms when the majority of German episcopate and

⁴² Tierney, 123.

⁴³ Ibid. 122.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 124.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 124.

⁴⁶ Cowdrey, *The Register*, 186. Excommunication of Henry IV Feb. 20, 1076

two archbishops who declared that they would no longer be bound to the Pope and no longer obey him.⁴⁷ This is the opportunity that rebellious factions in the Holy Roman Empire had been waiting for, and under the guise of religious zeal they rebel against the King.

The Saxon princes were at the center of this rebellion, they had just recently been released from captivity. Henry was at a strong disadvantage at this point and agreed to do penance and be obedient to the Pope. Henry went along with this in order to maintain some control over his kingdom. Henry did penance at Canossa in 1077 which was quite the humiliating experience for the Emperor, his instructions for penance given by Gregory were he was to enter the inner court alone then “placing his crown upon the earth, and despoiled of all royal attire, barefooted, with the white woolen garment of penance thrown over his ordinary garments”⁴⁸ he would wait for the Pope. This lasted three days and nights before Gregory would allow the King into the building. Once inside Henry prostrated himself on the ground and cried out with tears in his eyes “Spare me, pardon me, good Father, I entreat you.”⁴⁹ This was the most humiliating thing Henry would ever have to endure in his lifetime, and this penance was accepted by Gregory,⁵⁰ who; as a priest saw this as simply the return of a lost sinner to the fold of God.

⁴⁷ Blumental, 122.

⁴⁸ Ethel Wilmot-Buxton. *The Story of Hildebrand: St. Gregory VII.* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1920), 108.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 109.

⁵⁰ Blumental, 123.

This gave Henry some room to work and maneuver politically and militarily, he and his royal supporters had been absolved and could now openly fight for his crown with the rebellious factions, effectively taking away their justification for fighting. If he was back in good graces with God via the blessing of the Pope, then there was no more justification for the Saxon Princes . In light of the actions taken by Henry in the following years, there can be little doubt that the only reason he gave penance was to regain control of his kingdom, not out of any actual religious conviction or want to be loyal to Gregory. But by giving penance this legitimized the claims in the *Dictatus Papae*, forever altering the church and monarchs interactions.⁵¹

A clear understanding of the mindset of Gregory can be seen by examining his correspondence with are recorded in his register. A clear insight into the feelings of Gregory is shown in his letter to the abbot of Cluny Hugo in 1075. In the letter Gregory is asking Hugo for sympathy for the burdens of papal office. Gregory is essentially treating Hugo like his confessor in this letter, although since he is pope he has no sins to confess. He enumerates the problems he is having and the struggles of the office. "I find myself so weighed down by the burden of my own actions, that I have no hope of salvation save the mercy of Christ."⁵² Gregory is clearly distraught about what is happening in the church and is actively trying to help the situation, but

⁵¹ Blumenthal, 124.

⁵² Ephraim Emerton. *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 64, Gregory's letter to Hugo of Cluny Jan. 22, 1075

acknowledges he is doing what he is doing because is religiously devote and wants to please God.

In the letter to Hugo Gregory also discusses his disappointment in the Church and that "...[he] find scarce any bishops who live or who were ordained according to the law and who govern Christian people in the love of Christ and not for worldly ambition."⁵³ That is the state of the church as Gregory sees it, and that is why he implements the reforms that he does. He is trying to rectify the situation, so that the church might once more be pleasing to God.

Throughout all of Gregory's correspondence there is a strong fervor and focus on God, he is pope so it is quite natural that God is the focus of his writings, but he is so adamant and consistent throughout his letters that there can be no doubt of his true motivation behind his actions. Before all else Gregory's motivation and his drive was religious. His actions and correspondence through his life illustrated his familiarity with the Bible and the values taught with in it. Gregory was dedicated to the virtues of obedience, righteousness, and pursuit of peace. These were the values that drove Gregory's life. However his religious zeal was often misinterpreted for political gain.

Henry went on to win the battle for his crown and owed no small part of his success to the fact that he had done penance and been forgiven by Gregory. But after the rebellion in his country was under control Henry could go back to dealing with the Pope and attempting to put

⁵³ Emerton, 65.

things in order or at least back to the way he thought they should be. At a synod held at Brixen in June 1080 Gregory was formally deposed.⁵⁴ And Henry appointed Clement III as Pope, Henry was subsequently excommunicated once more. And upon hearing news of this Henry in 1084 invaded Italy and the city of Rome and its people opened their gates to Henry causing Gregory to flee. He called on the Normans for aid was rescued from the city by them and went into exile in southern Italy. A new pope was elected later that year.⁵⁵ King Henry had the final say in the personal round of conflict between the two over investiture, and he would staunchly support rights of monarchs to elect officials to office.⁵⁶

The investiture controversy would continue on for many years, eventually resulting in victory by the church at the Concordat of Worms in 1122.⁵⁷ But it was a long and difficult struggle. The conflict was a result a new breed of clergy and monks who wanted to reform the church and to abide by canon law, despite the contradictions with long standing traditions of Western Europe, most notably in the areas of simony and Lay investiture. Gregory VII was one of these reformers and he was fervent in doing what he believed was the will of God no matter the cost. Gregory issued his *Dictatus Papae* not with the intent of insulting or undermining the authority of the secular nobility in Western Europe, but unfortunately for him that is exactly

⁵⁴ Blumenthal, 125.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 126.

⁵⁶ Wilken, 46.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 47.

what he did. Gregory was determined to change the church into what he believed God's vision was for it no matter the cost.

Gregory's altruistic motives again come into focus in his letter to the "...Faithful to protect the Church from her enemies"⁵⁸ in 1084 where he calls those who are true to the church to continue on in his fashion and labor to keep the church pure and free, and pleasing to God. He discusses his life and how "...by divine inspiration Mother Church raised [him], unworthy and God knows unwilling, to the apostolic throne..."⁵⁹ And although he didn't want to be pope he committed himself whole heartedly to the position because that is what God wanted, and because of Gregory's absolute devotion to the will of God, he "labored with all [his] power..."⁶⁰ to make the church pure and Catholic.

He wrote his *Dictatue Papae* with the best intentions but unfortunately for him, the way the document was written it seemed arrogant and directly aimed at undermining the secular nobility, especially to Henry IV it was extremely offensive. At the time of his reign Gregory was seen as the devil incarnate for his wicked actions but in historical review, the precedent he set and the change he affected with his revolutionary ideas elevates him to the status as one of the best and most successful Popes to occupy the Papal throne. Gregory's intent in his life can be best summed up by his last words on his death bed in May 1085: "I have loved justice, hated

⁵⁸ Emerton, 193.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 194.

⁶⁰ Emerton, 195.

iniquity, that is why I die in exile.”⁶¹ Even in his death he looks at himself as a martyr for the will of God.

⁶¹Blumenthal, 126.

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