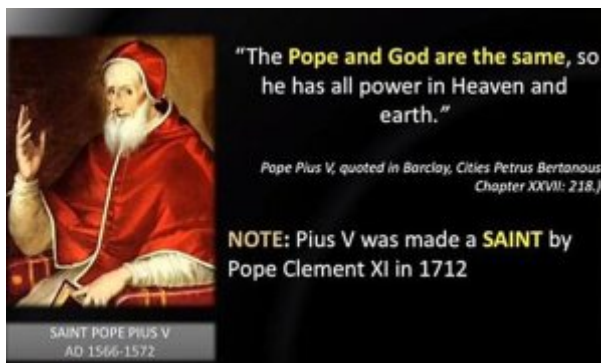


# Papal Power



This is from chapter 11 of *"All Roads Lead to Rome? The Ecumenical Movement"* by Michael de Semlyen.

Roman Catholicism is seen as a dual system. It is both a Church and a global, political power. Within or without the reciprocal 'Mutual Assured Destruction' capability of the superpowers, **the Vatican wields the greatest political power on the face of the earth.**

'Although without armies, navies and super hydrogen bombs, the Vatican has more power at its disposal than if it had the greatest military capability. The Pope's government is as important as that of the USA, of Russia or of China except that territorially and spiritually it is far larger and it exerts more influence than the three combined.' (A. Manhattan: Vatican Imperialism in the 20th Century: 1965 Zondervan)

Like other great multinational organizations, the Roman Catholic Church has a planned long-term strategy. The papacy has a continuity of a kind that no other organization or nation on earth can match. Nations and giant corporations are subjected to economic imponderables or electoral changes, but the Vatican is not constrained in this way. She is able to plan well ahead. Corporations plan five or ten years ahead, the Vatican is able to construct a strategy over many decades and can exercise the clout to implement it.

History shows how Rome throughout the centuries has been able to steadily accumulate power and influence, unless or until she over-reaches herself or decides there is a need to change direction.

For example, under Pius IX in the late 19th century she over-reached herself and lost the papal states and much of her temporal power. In this (20th) century, in the '60s, under John XXIII and Paul VI, believing she was no longer backing a winner, she totally changed direction. Pius XII's policy of opposing Communism, first by backing the Fascist dictators and afterwards through 'the Cold War' (spawning the rabid anti-Communism of such as committed Roman Catholic senator Joe McCarthy), was abandoned. **The Vatican had concluded that it was backing the wrong side.** In came a brand new two-pronged strategy, both political and ecclesiastical, temporal and spiritual. Co-existence with both communism and capitalism, coupled with acceptance of

Protestantism and other heretical religions (or 'separated brethren'), would provide the new route towards world dominion.

As Krushchev was turning away from Stalinism, so in the late 1950s were Vatican strategists turning away from Pius XII's policies. As the final plans for Vatican II were laid, so was the rapprochement taking place, which would lead to the forming of the 'Vatican-Moscow alliance'. **After the failed attempts of more than three decades of political interference to oppose Marxism, the Vatican set about working with it.** As we have now seen, Marxism did not fare well with this new arrangement.

The new face of the papacy, conciliatory and more human, exemplified by John XXIII, was to be the face shown to the world, that of Vatican II and the new ecumenism, and soon also that of liberation theology and the new politics. Behind the face is the strategy and a plan to 'evangelize the world.' This also includes **the conversion to the Mother Church of Soviet Russia**, as promised by Our Lady of Fatima.

### **Economic Power**

The Roman Church's unparalleled wealth is legendary, although, in these days of careful image building, the Vatican is at pains to deny it, and even to plead poverty. The frequent appearance of articles in the newspapers about the hard-pressed position of Vatican finances helps to foster this impression. Few people outside the system realize the prodigious capacity of the Church to raise funds. In his 1957 book *The Vatican contre la France*, Edmond Paris described; 'The gigantic financial power which the Vatican represents in the world today. Is it realized for instance that one-third of the land in Spain is hers? – and that in South America she owns vast expanses? And this does not include innumerable other properties spread over the rest of the globe. ... Already Peter's pence from 400 million faithful, legacies, offerings and Masses (all geared to helping loved ones through the pains of purgatory), ensure the Holy See a revenue that may be termed astronomical ... One cannot help noting that, from the temporal point of view, the Church's most beneficial years were those of the Second World War – at the end of which we have seen, facing a Europe that was bloodstained, ruined and completely plundered by the Nazis, the Vatican overflowing with the most fabulous riches.'