

# Medieval Sourcebook:

## Valentian 1: Decree on Papal Power 445

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*The following edict was issued by the western emperor, during Leo I's pontificate:*

Since, then, the primacy of the Apostolic See is established by the merit of St. Peter (who is the chief among the bishops), by the majesty of the city of Rome, and finally by the authority of a holy council, no one, without inexcusable presumption, may attempt anything against the authority of that see. Peace will be secured among the churches if every one recognize his ruler.

[After a reference to the independent action of certain prelates of Gaul, the edict continues.] Lest even a slight commotion should arise in the churches, or the religious order be disturbed, we herewith permanently decree that not only the bishops of Gaul, but those of the other provinces, shall attempt nothing counter to ancient custom without the authority of the venerable father [Papa] of the Eternal City. Whatever shall be sanctioned by the authority of the Apostolic See shall be law to the, and to every one else ; so that if one of the bishops be summoned to the judgment of the Roman bishop and shall neglect to appear, he shall be forced by the moderator of his province to present himself. In all respects let the privileges be maintained which our deified predecessors have conferred upon the Roman church.

translated in J. H. Robinson,

*Readings in European History, (Boston: Ginn, 1905), pp. 72*