

# VICARIUS FILII DEI

## THE OFFICIAL TITLE OF THE POPE OF ROME

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***Vicarius Filii Dei* means Vicar (or Vicegerent) of the Son of God. The title is applied to the pope of Rome, and proclaims that, next to God and Christ, he is the third ruler of all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.**

**This title is inscribed on the papal three-tiered crown which he wears. It is shaped like three domed beehives, in order to give it the appearance of three rounded crowns, one on top of another—indicating that he wears a triple crown as ruler of heaven, earth, and under the earth.**

Although, for long centuries, the official title of the pope of Rome has been *Vicarius Filii Dei*, official Vatican authorities currently claim it was never a title of the pope. Their problem is that this, the special title of the pope for centuries, adds up to 666, which Revelation 13:18 says is the Number of the Beast. In order to avoid that identification, it is said that *Vicarius Filii Dei* has never been his title.

**This present tract has been prepared to prove that *Vicarius Filii Dei* definitely is the official title of the pope of Rome, and that it used to be written on his crown (also called a mitre).** Throughout this tract, all bold print is ours.

### DENIAL OF EARLIER ADMISSION

*Our Sunday Visitor* has for years been the largest Roman Catholic newspaper in America. **On November 15, 1914, it stated on page 3 that “the title of the Pope of Rome is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. This is inscribed on his mitre”** (see pages 2 and 3 of this tract, where that article is quoted in full).

In its April 18, 1915, issue, *Our Sunday Visitor* again stated that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was the pope’s title, and that it was written on his crown. Here is that two-paragraph article.

“What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope’s crown, and what do they signify, if anything?”

**“The letters inscribed in the Pope’s mitre are these: *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God.** Catholics hold that the Church which is a visible society must have a visible head. Christ, before His ascension into heaven, appointed St. Peter to act as His representative. Upon the death of Peter the man who succeeded to the office of Peter as Bishop of Rome, was recognized as the head of the Church. **Hence to the Bishop of Rome, as head of the Church, was given the title ‘Vicar of Christ.’**”

“**Enemies of the papacy denounce this title** as a malicious assumption. But the Bible informs us

that Christ did not only give His Church authority to teach, but also to rule. Laying claim to the authority to rule in Christ’s spiritual kingdom, in Christ’s stead, is not a whit more malicious than laying claim to the authority to teach in Christ’s name. And this every Christian minister does.”—*Our Sunday Visitor*, April 18, 1915, p. 3.

(Contrary to what the above paragraph says, there is a great difference between teaching about Christ—and ruling as though one were Christ.)

**But then, in its August 3, 1941, issue, the *Visitor* reversed itself and declared that *Vicarius Filii Dei* is not on the pope’s mitre.** It is an intriguing fact that this changeover was not made in ignorance of the November 15, 1914, admission for the 1941 denial uses an illustration from that 1914 article! (See pp. 2-3 of this tract.) Here is the complete statement:

“A pamphlet has come to me entitled ‘*The Mark of the Beast.*’ It identifies the Pope with this ‘mark’ referred to in Revelations XIII, 17, 18.

“It is too bad that the Seventh Day Adventists, who are so sensitive of criticism themselves, should circulate a pamphlet so antagonistic to the Catholic Church.

“The question you ask has been answered many times, although not in recent years, in this paper. If we have recourse to the best Biblical scholars or exegetes, we find them applying the test from Revelations to Nero, the arch-persecutor of Christianity in the first century. To give color to their accusation, **enemies of the Church publicize something that is not at all true, namely that the Pope’s tiara is inscribed with the words ‘VICARIUS FILII DEI’**, and that if letters in that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666.

**“As a matter of fact, the tiara of the Pope bears no inscription whatsoever.**”

“Sometime ago a clergyman by the name of Reginald Ernest Hull gave a Latin ending to his two Christian names and then figured out what the sum total would be if he translated the letters into Roman numerals, and 666 eventuated. Your own name might spell that number.

“Here is the manner in which it was done: Reginal[d]us Ernestus Hull: From his first name four numerals were drawn I L D V; from his second name only the letter V was extracted; from his surname the three Roman numerals, namely V L L.

“Now the Roman numeral ‘D’ stands for 500;

the L stands for fifty and since there are three 'L's' they would effect 150; the three 'U's', which are identified with a 'V' would mean 15 more, and the letter 'T' would signify one—the total 666.

"The first thirty Popes lived in the golden age of Christianity and twenty-nine of them died martyrs for Christ. Imagine any one of them being designated the 'beast' of the Apocalypse. Among the 262 Popes who ruled over the Catholic Church from the time of Christ, all but four or five, even according to the unwilling admission of unfriendly historians, were among the holiest men of their times. The few unworthy ones, who were placed on the throne of Peter reached that position through the intrigue of civil rulers. Only five Popes have ruled over the Church during the greater part of the last century and every person, unless he be absolutely uninformed or ignorant, would rate them among the saintliest people. We say 'unless the person were uninformed or ignorant,' designedly, because the lives of these Popes have been written by Protestants as well as Catholics.

"It is very strange that people can regard themselves as religious and still engage in an apostolate of vituperation and slander."—*Our Sunday Visitor*, August 3, 1941, issue, p. 7.

(Contrary to the above statement, many history books have been written about the evil pontiffs and the fact there were so many of them.)

The 1941 statement, just above, clearly denies facts which the first maintained. Since 1941, the position of Rome has been that *Vicarius Filii Dei* is not, and has never been, a title of the pope, nor is it on his crown.

But history teaches us something far different. Consider these facts:

**The Donation of Constantine was one of the most important ancient documents drafted by Rome.** Although a Vatican forgery, it was considered to be an extremely important legal document. Written about A.D. 760, it declared that Constantine had given much of the land and rulership of Italy to the pope. **The document said that the pope's title was *Vicarius Filii Dei*.**

"The Donation of Constantine [is] . . . the most famous forgery in European history. The Donation of Constantine (*Constitutum Constantini*), written probably not long after the middle of the eighth century, became widely known through its incorporation in the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals (about 847-853). Parts of it were included in most of the medieval collections of canon law."—*Christopher B. Coleman, The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine, Yale University edition, p. 1.*

Here is the actual text of part of this Donation in English:

"The Emperor Constantine the fourth day after his baptism conferred this privilege on the Pontiff of the Roman church, that in the whole Roman world priests should regard him as their head, as judges do the king . . . As the blessed **Peter is seen to have been constituted vicar of the Son of God** [Latin: *Vicarius Filii Dei*] on the earth, so the Pon-

tiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a supremacy greater than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity is seen to have conceded to it."—*Op. cit.*, p. 11.

Here is the key sentence in the original Latin text:

"Sicut B. Petrus in terris **vicarius Filii Dei** esse videtur constitutus, ita et Pontifices, . ."—*Op. cit.*, p. 12.

Although later unmasked as a forgery (written by priests about A.D. 760, and not by the Emperor Constantine about A.D. 336), **this document carefully stated that the pope's title as vicegerent to God was the basis of his authority.**

Here is another Catholic statement on this subject:

"The highest power in the world, the **Vicar of the incarnate Son of God** . . . sat in his tribunal . . .

"[His is] the temporal power of the **Vicar of Jesus Christ.**"—*Henry Edward Manning, The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, London: Burns and Lambert, 1862, pp. 46, 140.*

It should come as no surprise that the pope is said to be next to God in power and authority, for he is frequently said to possess the authority of God.

"The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws . . . Petrus de Ancharano [d. 1416] very clearly asserts this in *Consil. 373, no. 3 verso*:

"**The pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man, but of God, and he acts in the place of God upon earth,** with the fullest power of binding and loosing his sheep."—*Lucius Ferraris, "Papa," art 2, in his Prompta Bibliotheca [Handy Library], Vol. 6, Venice: Gaspar Storti, 1772, p. 29 [translated from the Latin].*

"Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions [infernorum]."—*Op. cit.*, p. 26.

"We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff himself is [1] the successor of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles; and [2] the true vicar of Christ, [3] the head of the whole church, and [4] the father and doctor of all Christians; and that to him, in the blessed Peter, was given, by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule, and govern the universal church, as is contained also in the acts of the ecumenical councils, and in the sacred canons."—*Council of Florence, Session XXV, July 6, 1439, Definitio, in J.D. Mansi, ed., Sacrorum Conciliorum [Holy Councils], Vol. 31, Col. 1031 [translated from the Latin].*

"We [the pope] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty."—*Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter "The Reunion of Christendom," dated June 20, 1894, translated in The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, New York: Benziger, 1903, p. 304.*