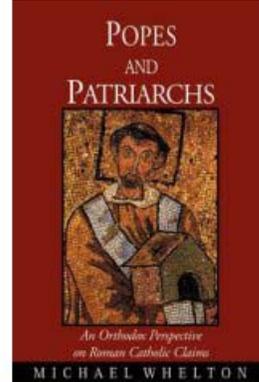


Basil and the Westerners: A Response to Michael Whelton's Book *Popes and Patriarchs*

I was recently made aware of a book entitled [*Popes and Patriarchs*](#) by Michael Whelton published in 2006 by Conciliar Press. I don't have the time to address everything in Whelton's book, but since he refers briefly to my book [*Upon this Rock*](#) (pgs. 105-106 Chrysostom; 120-121 Basil) I thought I would use his section on Basil as an example of his carelessness and disregard for context.



I was also made aware that James Likoudis, a Greek Orthodox convert to Catholicism has written a 41 page [rebuttal](#) to Whelton's book. He also has a link [here](#) where he addresses Whelton's errors entitled [*A Pre-schism Eastern Bishop on the True Church*](#). For those who want to take a deep look at the history of the Meletian Schism to better understand the context of St. Basil's comments and letters, I have provided a thorough chapter from Herbert's book *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* here.

I posted a paper [here](#) concerning Whelton's comments about St. John Chrysostom as explained in my book. Since I had already debated this topic at length with William Webster several years ago (all the debates can be seen [here](#)), I provided the text of my Webster debate. This also demonstrates how biased and confused Whelton is.

I suggest that an objective reader should read the appropriate pages in my book *Upon this Rock* (especially pgs. 206-209 for Basil), then read Whelton's response and judge for themselves.

Setting the Stage

Now I want to address the two comments that Whelton excised from two footnotes in my book regarding St. Basil. He is cherry picking from my context the same way he does from Basil. He fails to give the fuller context either of St. Basil's words or my comments. It seems that opponents of the Papacy are wont to be selective with Scripture and the Fathers, to the detriment of other very important points and the overall context. Whelton's book is no exception.

First, Whelton tries to poison the well and discredit my research with a condescending and inaccurate statement that "I am sure Mr. Ray is quoting from another source and is thus unaware of the entire context of the letter." He is *sure* that I did not have the full text of Basil's *Letter 214* in front of me? He is wrong. Not only did I have it in front of me then, but I do now as well—and I knew and know the context. Not only did I have it in front of me but I quoted the material fairly in the overall context. I have the Eerdman's 38-volume set of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* and *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* which Whelton used as his primary source. The complete set is on my shelf and on my laptop. I

also have the complete set of *The Fathers of the Church* published by Catholic University of America which has the *Letters of St. Basil* in two volumes.

Second, Whelton plucks a few phrases from two extensive footnotes without regard to the overall context of my thought and explanations. Unhappily, he does the same with St. Basil's writings—trumpeting only the passages that suit his purpose and only then after putting his spin on them. In *Upon this Rock* I took pains to deal with passages that do not always appear to fit in with Catholic theology but I don't ignore them or wash over them. One needs to be fair and balanced with the whole work of any given Father and not just excise favorable quotations.

Third, I was, and I am, very aware of the context of Basil's *Letter 214* and my conclusions are *not*, as Whelton would suggest, "A more glaring case of quoting out of context would be hard to find" (p. 120). He has obviously put his spin on this letter but I think he is reading it with blinders on which I will attempt to demonstrate.

Setting the Context

Context is important. The East, unlike the West (basically Rome), was riddled with heresies in the early centuries and frequently appealed to Rome to deliver them. Even St. Basil writes to the pope (of which Whelton does not inform his readers) appealing for the pope's help. He wrote,

"It has seemed to me to be desirable to send a letter to the bishop of Rome, begging him to examine¹ our condition, and since there are difficulties in the way of representatives being sent from the West by a general synodical decree, to advise him [the Bishop of Rome] to exercise his own personal authority in the matter by choosing suitable persons to sustain the labors of a journey,—suitable, too, by gentleness and firmness of character, to correct the unruly among us here."²

¹ We learn from Rivington that in the original Greek, the word "examine" is "the verb of which *bishop* is the substantive form" (*The Primitive Church and the See of Peter*, 213). The word "bishop" derives from the Greek word for "oversee".

² *Letter 69, to Athanasius* in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 8:165. We have 366 letters written by Basil to a wide variety of persons. This letter was written about 371 A.D. The Eastern churches were in dismal condition due to heresy and schism, caused especially by Arianism. Basil confides in Athanasius that the only way out of the mess, in his estimation, was to appeal to the bishop of Rome. He tells Athanasius that he has appealed to the bishop of Rome to "*act on his own authority in the matter.*" Basil must have understood the Roman Church to have superior authority and the right to exercise it in the Eastern churches. He knows that if the bishop of Rome speaks, those in contention will have to submit. He does not expect anyone to oppose the decision on technical grounds, by claiming that Rome has no authority to make such a determination. Basil accepted Rome's authority and must have been assured that the other bishops of the East would accept it as well. Rivington comments, "The relation of Rome to the East must have been recognized by St. Basil as that of a superior authority, and he must have been well assured that his Eastern co-prelates held the same view (Ibid., 214). Ray Ryland writes, "All the significant heresies of the early centuries of the Church arose and flourished in the East. Often these heresies were espoused by the emperor of the East. At one time or another, and in some instances frequently, the Eastern patriarchal sees were occupied by heretics. Easterners were adept at creating heresies, but lacked dominical authority to resolve them. In every single instance, it was the papacy that had to come to the rescue" ("Papal Primacy and the Council of Nicaea" *This Rock*, June, 1997 [San Diego, CA: Catholic Answers],

Is this appeal to the See of Rome an exception? No, the East was frequently appealing to Rome. In 377 Basil wrote his *Letter 263*, to the “Westerners,” during the reign of Pope Damasus I. Listen to his appeal,

“It is these [heretics] that we implore your diligence³ to denounce publicly to all the churches of the East. . . . I am constrained to mention them by name, in order that you may yourselves recognize those who are stirring up disturbance here, and may make them known to our Churches. . . . You, however, have all the more credit with the people, in proportion to the distance that separates your home from theirs, besides the fact that you are gifted with God’s grace to help⁴ those who are distresses.”⁵

But to make sure the point is well made and to demonstrate one more time St. Basil’s view of the authority, orthodoxy, and ability of the West (the Pope and the Western Synod), let’s give one more example—, not just of Basil’s view of the West, but also those before him.

“Nearly all the East (I include under this name all the regions from Illyricum to Egypt) is being agitated, right honorable father [Pope Damasus], by a terrible storm and tempest. The old heresy, sown by Arius the enemy of the truth, has now boldly and unblushingly reappeared. Like some sour root, it is producing its deadly fruit and is prevailing. The reason of this is that in every district the champions of right doctrine have been exiled from their Churches by calumny and outrage, and the control of affairs has been handed over to men who are leading captive the souls of

26–27).

³ Basil writes the letter to the “Westerns” which was not a loose confederation of various Christians. The “West” was ordinarily represented by the Roman Synod. To appeal to this body, headed by the bishop of Rome, was the long-standing custom of the churches.

⁴ Or “the grace of God conferred on you for the oversight of those in trouble.”

⁵ *Letter 263, To the Westerns* in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 8:302, written in 377 A.D. The heresies of Arius, Apollinarius, Paulinus and others had overtaken the Eastern Churches and Basil, the bishop of Caesarea, appeals to the West for immediate assistance in the form of a letter condemning the heretics. Basil refers to the “grace of God conferred on you for the oversight of those in trouble” which can hardly be seen as anything other than Rome possessing a special charism, beyond a mere primacy of honor. Basil sees Rome as the caretaker of the troubled Eastern churches.

Later in the letter Basil mentions a heretic who lied to, misled the Roman bishop, and was thus reinstated by returning with a letter from Pope Liberius and “showing it.” This is clear indication, not only that heretics and deceitful bishops saw Rome as having jurisdictional authority over the East, but also the orthodox bishops, since a letter from the bishop of Rome was enough to reinstate a deposed bishop. As Miller writes, “By the end of the fourth century, many Byzantines admitted that the Roman bishop received from God the grace to uphold and pass on undefiled the truth of the gospel. . . . The East recognized that the Roman Church had been spared, compared to itself, from the inroads of heresy. This nearly spotless record of doctrinal orthodoxy provided the Easterners with a reason for accepting Rome’s special role within the *koinonia*. . . . Due to this dissension in the East, the leaders of both orthodox and heterodox factions sought the support and approbation of the Roman see. According to Shotwell and Loomis, during these crises, the Orientals were ready to admit that Rome ‘had received from God through Peter the priceless gift which the Eastern prelates as a body seemed to lack, namely, the power to hold fast to the truth and transmit it undefiled to posterity’” (J. Michael Miller, *The Shepherd and the Rock* [Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1995], 124–125).

the simpler brethren. I have looked upon the visit of your mercifulness as the only possible solution of our difficulties. . . . [I have] been constrained to beseech you by letter to be moved to help us. . . . In this I am by no means making any novel request, but am only asking what has been customary in the case of men who, before our own day, were blessed and dear to God, and conspicuously in your own case. For I well remember learning from the answers made by our fathers when asked, and from documents still preserved among us, that the illustrious and blessed bishop [Pope] Dionysius, conspicuous in your see as well for soundness of faith as for all other virtues, visited by letter my Church of Caesarea, and by letter exhorted our fathers, and sent men to ransom our brethren from captivity.”⁶

And here I have provided the whole footnote (number 6 here, but number 131 in my book) which Whelton fails to provide for the reader—especially to establish the context of my statement.

Understanding *Letter 214*

It might behoove Whelton to pay more attention to context himself, not only within a letter but within a series of letters and the historical situation. I scanned an excellent history of this whole event as it relates to Basil into a PDF file which you can read [here](#) (and [part 2](#) on Chrysostom).

In *Letter 214* St. Basil is writing to a governmental figure named Terentius who was not necessarily on Basil’s side since he had been won over by the opposition party. Basil was very concerned and trying to sway him to his side. We know this from a subsequent letter, *Letter 216* “To Meletius, bishop of Antioch,” in which Basil writes,

⁶ *Letter 70* in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 8:166. The letter has no official address though it is obviously addressed to Pope Damasus (r. 366–384 A.D.). Again previous practice and ancient custom acknowledge the special place of the Roman bishop. Basil remarks elsewhere that certain men were “carrying about letters from the westerns, handing over the bishopric of Antioch to them.” What right had Rome to hand over Eastern bishoprics to anyone? How could Rome prove its primacy in any stronger terms than to hand the Antiochean bishopric over to someone of its own choosing? Obviously Rome had the right and duty of overseeing such ecclesiastical matters and Basil recognized this authority. But we must be clear and not say more than can be rightly said. Understanding the authority of bishops and patriarchs over their particular sees, the East considered their bishops able to function without constant input, so to speak, from Rome, though Rome did have final jurisdiction. Timothy Ware reminds us of what he and the Orthodox believe: “Orthodox believe that among the five Patriarchs a special place belongs to the Pope. The Orthodox Church does not accept the doctrine of Papal authority set forth in the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870, and taught today in the Roman Catholic Church; but at the same time Orthodoxy does not deny to the Holy and Apostolic See of Rome a *primacy of honour*, together with the right (under certain conditions) to hear appeals from all parts of Christendom. . . . But as with Patriarchs, so with the Pope: the primacy assigned to Rome does not overthrow the essential equality of all bishops. The Pope is the first bishop in the Church—but he is the *first among equals*” (*The Orthodox Church* [Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1993], 27, 28). The Orthodox place the supreme authority of the Church in the Ecumenical Council (of which they accept the first seven), yet we have shown repeatedly that the authority of the Roman bishop was not only exercised in the East as needed, but was the sure source of apostolic teaching as early as Clement in the first century.

Besides all this it was reported to me that they had seduced to their faction that most excellent man Terentius. I wrote to him at once as forcibly as I could, to induce him to pause; and I tried to point out their disingenuousness.⁷

There were heretics in the area. They had gained power in some circles. Basil was appealing to everyone he could and playing his cards as aggressively and as carefully as possible, trying to remedy the situation. Knowing that Terentius had been persuaded by the heretics he wrote to him very strategically and diplomatically to win him over.

The situation is such that the Romans do not seem to have all the facts and there are papers sent by them circulating which have carried great weight, even to the point where they were used to install a bishop, even though it was not to Basil's liking. The authority of the West, namely Rome, was such that letters from Rome had tremendous authority. Based on earlier actions and the acceptance of the East, Rome assumes the authority to install a bishop in the East and expects the East to obey. Basil demonstrates this himself in the earlier quotes provided. The letters from the Westerners seemed to have such authority that no one in the East seemed capable of countermanding them, not even the likes of Basil—which is possibly why Basil is appealing to a governmental figure such as Terentius.

When Basil writes to Terentius he does so diplomatically. He does not denounce Rome or suggest they don't have the authority to do what they've done. He, like Irenaeus two centuries before him, disagreed with a decision made by Rome, but never denies that Rome has the authority to do so. This is an important point! It is one thing to disagree with an authority; it is another to deny the authority exists. You don't find that in Basil's writings!

He cajoles Terentius, even with what could be viewed as mild flattery, with a seeming attempt to get Terentius to join him and act on his behalf, to assist him against the heretics, to understand the whole situation. He seems to downplay Rome in order to appeal to the clout of Terentius. This is not just theology; this is also politics.

Whelton makes a lot of hay with Basil's words,

And, although it is a grand testimony in their favor, I only hope it is true and confirmed by facts. But I shall never be able to persuade myself on these grounds to ignore Meletius, or to forget the Church which is under him, or to treat as small, and of little importance to the true religion, the questions which originated the division. I shall never consent to give in, merely because somebody is very much elated at receiving a letter from men. Even if it had come down from heaven itself, but he does not agree with the sound doctrine of the faith, I cannot look upon him as in communion with the saints.⁸

⁷Schaff, P. (1997). (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series Vol. VIII*. Basil: Letters and Select Works. (255). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.)

⁸Schaff, P. (1997). *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series Vol. VIII*. Basil: Letters and Select Works. (253). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

Basil grants that Rome may not have all the facts, and their support of a bishop other than the choice of Basil is a “testimony in their favor” (namely Basil’s adversaries). It seems Basil is not sure of all the details himself and hopes what came from Rome “it is true and confirmed by facts.” But he knows Meletius personally—he knows his holiness and orthodoxy. He cannot accept a judgment against him from others who do not know him as well as he does, or who fail to have all the facts. We must remember that the authority and infallibility of Rome does not mean they will always have all the facts, do everything in a timely or proper manner or that they cannot make prudential mistakes or missteps. Infallibility only means they cannot err in faith or morals when they are defining doctrine.

Whelton would have us believe Basil is repudiating Rome by stating he will oppose them because they are merely *men*. But if one reads this more carefully, that is not at all what Basil is doing. Basil is using hyperbole. If Whelton implies that Basil rejected Rome and did not accept the letters received from Rome by those elated because they received letter from men (Rome)—implying that Rome had no authority—they were just men arrogating authority—then he proves too much. Because the next thing Basil says is that *even if [the letter] had come down from heaven itself [from God himself]*, he could not agree with it. Agree with what? That Meletius was to be ousted and that such a one as Paulinus should assume the chair of bishop.

This was a statement of resistance to the bishop installed by Rome and a statement of his utter love and devotion for the orthodoxy and friendship of Meletius. It was not a blatant denunciation of Rome that Whelton would have us believe. Why? Because if Basil here denounces Rome, he denounces God as well. This is hyperbole used to express his devotion to Meletius and to impress upon Terentius the seriousness of the situation.

The hyperbolic statement that based on the knowledge and decisions made so far, he would be unable to persuade himself to ignore Meletius or give in to Paulinus merely because the others were elated to have a letter from Rome. Neither a letter from Rome nor even a message from heaven would persuade him of Meletius’ unworthiness or Paulinus’ worthiness.

If, for example, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that my wife was unfaithful and that I was to put her aside and take another woman which they did not know had an adulterous past. No matter if these men—supreme human authorities or not—ruled this way or not, I could never persuade myself of her unfaithfulness or ignore her. Nor could I accept the adulterous woman as my new wife. I could say—with great hyperbole and truth—“I will never be persuaded of my wife’s unfaithfulness or of the suitability of the adulterous woman.” I think Basil felt himself in roughly a similar situation with his loyalty to Meletius. He was primarily expressing his utter confidence in his friend, *not* a rebellion or rejection of Rome— or of heaven.

Whelton says “a more explicit denial of Roman authority is hard to imagine.” But remember, no where do we find Basil rejecting Rome’s authority. He could have easily

said “I reject Rome’s presumed authority which they have unlawfully arrogated to themselves. Who are they anyway? I utterly reject them and any headship they try to impose on me or the East.” You will *never* find such words. And, even in his distress, he is still respectful of the “westerners” as even Whelton admits when he writes, “St. Basil has no desire to disrespect the bishop of Rome (‘I accuse no one’).”⁹

Rome was seemingly not aware of the details of the situation and had not acted yet for any number of reasons (consumed with other issues and problems, poor or lengthy communications, less than attentive administration, etc.). Even today Rome often moves slowly.

Basil’s statement must be read in the context of his fuller understanding of Peter and Rome which Whelton deprives his readers of knowing. He is too concerned to twist a few words of Basil out of context—not only the immediate context but the lifelong context *and* the whole context of the rest of the Eastern Fathers who looked to Rome.

Where did the East look to for Help?

On page 123 of his book Whelton comments that “[Basil] never appealed to the bishop of Rome as the ‘supreme pastor,’ possessing supreme authority—*jure divino*” Well maybe not in those exact words, but Whelton may not have read enough of Basil’s letters (*Letter 69* cited earlier) to recall him begging the bishop of Rome “to exercise his own personal authority in the matter” to “correct the unruly among us here.”

Also, in *Letter 70* Basil addresses Pope Damasus as “right honorable father” and admits that “nearly all the East . . . is being agitated” and concedes that the pope’s authority is “the only possible solution of our difficulties.”

Whelton provides several quotations where Basil looks to Athanasius “for leadership, guidance, consolation, and healing of the spiritual sickness of the Church” which is a far cry from appealing to Athanasius as a superior—as the East had habitually looked to Rome for final arbitration and judgments. He fails to remind us that even Athanasius appealed to Rome. In his *Defense before Constantius*, Athanasius wrote,

“When I left Alexandria, I did not go to your brother’s headquarters, or to any other persons, but only to Rome; and having laid my case before the Church (for this was my only concern), I spent my time in the public worship.”¹⁰

⁹ “In 379 St. Basil died, a few years before the council of Constantinople which achieved, in a large measure, what he had so long striven for. The bitter things which he said about the Pope do not amount to a denial of papal authority, but they show him to have inclined to the opinion widely accepted in the East at that date, that Rome was a source of final arbitration to be appealed to only when all else had failed. It was an attitude to the papacy which tended to regard it as something legitimate but extraordinary in the government of the church” (Winter, Michael. *St. Peter and the Popes* [Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1960], pg. 200). This is not denying papal authority; rather, it is recognizing a patriarch’s authority within his own see to manage the daily affairs of the church. This was necessary especially since the distance and poor communication that prevailed. But, Rome was still the final arbitrator and the papacy ruled as Peter had among the apostles.

¹⁰ *Defense before Constantius* 4 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 4:239, Athanasius writing to Emperor Constantius. This passage seems to present the equation: Rome = Church. It is

Today it is snowing here in Michigan. In fact, we already have over a foot of snow and our city is shut down—even the Sunday Masses are cancelled. But we still have phones, faxes, e-mail and the internet. These things were not available to facilitate communications in the early centuries of the Church. Communication was done by messengers with letters traveling the far distances from one country, even continent, to another. Rome was over 1,300 treacherous miles from Antioch as the crow flies. To travel by land would have been nearly twice that distance. Weather would often postpone communication with Rome for many months. One wonders how modern communications might have altered the understanding and response of Rome.

In this exact timeframe Basil commented to Presbyter Dorotheus (*Letter 215*),

I have therefore given my letter to the government treasurer, who is traveling by the imperial post, and I have charged him to show the letter to you first. I cannot understand how it is that no one has told you that the road to Rome is wholly impracticable in winter, the country between Constantinople and our own regions being full of enemies. If the route by sea must be taken, the season will be favorable.¹¹

We also know from Acts 17:12 that winter was rough even for sailing and that much of the Mediterranean Sea was impassible during winter months. Imagine the difficulty of communications. We know that Rome was often preoccupied and unable to get the full story or have the time or speed necessary to fully act as it was required. We know that even in 96 AD Clement of Rome, third successor from Peter, apologized to Corinth,

Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have happened to ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us.¹²

While Rome was over 1,300 miles away as the crow flies and inaccessible during winter, Alexandria in Egypt on the other hand was only 500 miles away, accessible all year around and a relatively short trip by ship from Seleucia (port of Antioch). Thus, the orthodox Athanasius, patriarch of one of the principle patriarchates was much easier to

interesting that the orthodox bishops looked to and took refuge in Rome. It was the heretics and schismatics that opposed Rome's primacy, not those of orthodox faith. As Winter says, "The East had undergone many changes in less than half a century. Caesaropapism [supreme authority over the church exercised by a secular monarch; in other words, the regime in which Caesar would be Pope] had appeared, Arianism was going from strength to strength, and opposition to the Pope was following in its train. . . . The latter half of the fourth century would see the restoration of Nicene orthodoxy [in the East], and the first half of the fifth century would witness the re-establishment of the Pope's authority. The third evil of the Eastern church, caesaropapism, was never remedied" (Michael Winter, *Saint Peter and the Popes* [Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1960], 191).

¹¹Schaff, P. (1997). *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series Vol. VIII*. Basil: Letters and Select Works. (254). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

¹²Roberts, A., Donaldson, J., & Coxe, A. C. (1997). *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I: Translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. The apostolic fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. (5). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

correspond with and much more familiar with the current situation in the East since he himself was also suffering from the heresy of Arianism and Caesaropapism [supreme authority over the church exercised by a secular monarch; in other words, a regime in which Caesar would effectively be Pope].

Is it surprising that Basil would also write to Athanasius? Of course not, Basil was bishop of a diocese in Palestine, whereas Athanasius was the Patriarch of one of the five principle or patriarchal churches—the Patriarchate of Alexandria (the others being Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome). But his appeal to Athanasius for help in no way minimizes the position or authority of Rome, or Basil’s recognition of that.

A Few of Many Significant Quotations from Eastern Fathers

St. Jerome, also writing from the East to Pope Damasus (same as Basil) wrote,

“Since the East, shattered as it is by the longstanding feuds, subsisting between its peoples, is bit by bit tearing into shreds the seamless vest of the Lord. . . . I think it my duty to consult the chair of Peter, and to turn to a church whose faith has been praised by Paul. I appeal for spiritual food to the church whence I have received the garb of Christ. The wide space of sea and land that lies between us cannot deter me from searching for ‘the pearl of great price’. . . . Though your greatness terrifies me, your kindness attracts me. From the priest I demand the safekeeping of the victim, from the shepherd the protection due to the sheep. Away with all that is overweening; let the state of Roman majesty withdraw. My words are spoken to the successor of the fisherman, to the disciple of the cross. As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the church is built! This is the house where alone the paschal lamb can be rightly eaten. This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails. But since by reason of my sins I have betaken myself to this desert which lies between Syria and the uncivilized waste, I cannot, owing to the great distance between us, always ask of your sanctity the holy thing of the Lord.”¹³

And though the quotes could be multiplied, another significant Eastern voice rings out from Jerusalem. Sophronius (c. 560-638), the Patriarch of Jerusalem from 634-638, appealed to Pope Martin I (r. 649-655) as the authority that could stop the heresy of Monothelism:

I would like to denounce Monothelism before the eminent Chair, the teacher of all the chairs; I mean your superior and divine chair, since it may completely heal the wound. Your chair has been accustomed from the beginning to rule with apostolic and canonical authority. It is very evident, indeed, that it is not only the keys to the kingdom of heaven that Peter, alone among all, received. Besides the keys of heaven, by which he can open and shut for the well-being of believers and the misfortune of unbelievers,

¹³ *Letter of Jerome to Pope Damasus* 15, 2 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 6:18 and written between 374–379 A.D.

this true head and director of the apostles, was the first entrusted with feeding the sheep of the entire Catholic Church ... and the only one authorized to strengthen his colleagues and spiritual brothers when they become shaken, on account of the foreknowledge of God Incarnate who, for our sake, gave him power and priestly authority over them all” (Mansi, vol. 10, col. 896; cited in Martin Jugie, AA, *Le Schisme Byzantin* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1941), 78).

Witness to the primacy and divine origin of the Roman See is given by Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662). He notes that,

“since the Incarnation of the Word, all the Christian Churches of the entire world have not had, and still do not have, any but this most sublime Church as a base and foundation” (Migne, PG, vol. 91, col 137-140; Cited in Jugie, 79).

Speaking of the Roman See, he likewise observes that

This Apostolic See, which, from the incarnate Word of God Himself, as well as all the holy synods, according to the sacred canons and decisions, has received the sovereignty, authority and power (*imperium, auctoritatem et potestatem*) of binding and loosing over all the holy Churches of God in the entire world, in and through all things” (Migne, PG 91, 144 (in Latin only); Mansi, vol. 10, col. 692; Jugie, 79).

A final Eastern Father worthy of mention is Theodore of Studium (759-806). Not only does he affirm the divine origin of papal primacy, he also recognizes the Pope as the final judge of all heresies. As he writes:

Since Christ our God gave to Peter, after the keys to the kingdom of heaven, the dignity of supreme pastor, it is necessary to submit to Peter, that is to say, to his successor, all the novelties introduced into the Church by those who deviate from the truth” (Ibid., PG 99, 1017; Jugie, 94).

In another passage, Theodore refers to the Pope as “the limpid and always inalterable source of orthodoxy” and “the tranquil port and judge of the universal Church against all the storms of heresy” (Ibid., PG 99, 1156; Jugie, 95).

Eastern Fathers such as Flavian, Sophronius, Maximus the Confessor and Theodore the Studite manifest an understanding of papal authority that is completely Catholic and in accord with the teachings of Vatican I and Vatican II.

So, Whelton is wrong about Basil and wrong about the East. He is wrong about the papacy and his book is riddled with inconsistencies and problems. I wish I had time to go page by page, but I don't. This will have to suffice; after all, I've already said peace in *Upon this Rock*.

“When we hear the name of Peter, that name does not cause our minds to dwell on his substance, but we figure to our minds the properties that are connected with him. For we at once, on hearing that name, think of the son of him that came from Bethsaida, Andrew’s brother; him that was called from amongst fishermen unto the ministry of the Apostleship; him who on account of the pre-eminence of his faith received upon himself the building of the Church” (*Adv. Eunom.* 4 in Capel, *The Faith of Catholics*, 2:22).