NAPOLEON AND THE POPE

Prayer
Scripture: Revelation 15:3,4.
Hymn: 640 "Now Thank We All Our God"

The Thermidorian Reaction of 1794 which brought the fall and death of Robespierre, also brought the Reign of Terror to an end. Republican radicalism with its revolutionary excesses waned. The influence of the Parisian proletariat declined with a corresponding rise in the power of the bourgeois members of the National Convention. Under the bourgeois leadership the law against suspects was repealed, the Revolutionary Tribunal was suppressed and the Place de la Révolution was renamed the Place de la Concorde.

The National Convention that had been called in 1792 to draw up a new constitution had completed the new constitution in 1793. The constitution of 1793 was never put into effect due to France's occupation with the foreign wars and the Reign of Terror. It was a radically democratic constitution that called for universal manhood suffrage. It was dominated by the spirit of Rousseau. It was called the "Constitution of the Year I."

After The Thermidorian Reaction the National Convention dominated by the bourgeoisie prepared the "Constitution of the Year III," which was put into effect in 1795. It reflected the bourgeois distrust of the proletariat. The constitution provided for a legislature of two chambers. A lower house of five hundred members would propose laws. The upper house, A Council of Ancients, of two hundred-fifty members, would examine and enact the laws. The executive authority was vested in a committee of five Directors chosen by the legislature. The Directory would appoint ministers of state to enforce the laws. The electorate was restricted to tax payers and the holding of office was limited to property owners.

This constitution of 1795 would survive in name until 1804 but the real government by the Directory lasted only four years (1795-1799).

The French Republic under the Directory continued the motto of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" (Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité). The Convention and the Directory were strongly anti-Christian but with liberty of worship and freedom of religion exiled Catholics and their clergy flocked back to France. Royalists and Protestants also returned. Abbé Grégoire, who had resisted the anti-Christian movement in the Convention from its beginning, early in the winter of 1794-1795 delivered a powerful and long speech on liberty of worship in the Convention. He led a great revival of religion in France, opening the churches in his diocese on New Year's Day of 1795. He was the first French bishop to resume episcopal functions. He sent out a pastoral letter
announcing the reconciliation of Christianity and the Revolution. A revival of Catholicism spread all over France. The Constitutional Clergy reorganized on the basis of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the four Gallican Articles. The Catholic Clergy reorganized without state support. They held a national council in 1797 and the old parishes were restored. The Protestants also resumed worship without state support.

Almost from the beginning of the revival the Catholics were divided into three groups. The bourgeoisie favored the Constitutional clergy. The peasants and many of the non-juring priests favored papal Catholicism. There were also Royalist Catholics who supported the claim of Louis XVIII to the French throne.

FROM THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC TO THE RISE OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Under the Directory war continued with Austria, Sardinia and Great Britain. The successes of the French armies had already forced Spain, Prussia, and Holland to make peace with the French Republic. The veteran generals, Pichegre, Jourdan, and Moreau, commanded armies that were to cross the Rhine, sweep through southern Germany, through Austria and then through northern Italy. The young officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, who had attracted attention by driving the British from Toulon in 1793 and who had protected the National Convention from the Royalists and uprisings of the Parisian populace in 1795, was put over the army to drive the Austrians from Italy. The older generals in the North met with little success, but Napoleon in lightning fashion defeated five Austrian armies in Italy, driving the Austrians out of Italy and forced them to sign the treaty of Campo Formio (1797). He also defeated the Sardinians. The Directory ordered him to take Rome and to despoil the pope who had caused the French Republic so much trouble. The pope had to sue for peace and the Directory not only demanded indemnity for all the war expenses caused by the pope's encouraging the alliance against France, but also the Directory required that Pope Pius VI retract all his bulls and letters against the Revolution. The pope refused and violated the truce by appealing to Austria to rescue him from the French. Napoleon moved quickly to take the papal states and to levy harsher terms against the pope with heavier indemnity. In a riot in Rome a general of the French Embassy was killed. The French army marched on Rome. Roman radicals demanded the abdication of the pope and announced the Roman Republic. The pope went into exile, dying at Valence in 1799. The radicals sang the Te Deum in St. Peter's over the deposition of the pope. The French made it impossible to elect a new pope in Rome.

Napoleon's Italian Campaign (1796-1797) made him a popular hero in France and a threat to the Directory. His marriage in 1796 with Josephine Beauharnais, widow of a revolutionary general and mistress of one of the Directors, had helped open the way to greater influence in French politics. When Napoleon proposed a campaign in Egypt to destroy Great Britain's trade with India the Directory was glad to accept the proposal to get the hero
out of France.

Napoleon's successes in Egypt were not as great as his reports claimed but the campaign greatly enhanced his popularity with the French people. As a result of the campaign many treasures of Egyptian antiquity were sent back to France. The Rosetta Stone was discovered which proved the key for deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. Napoleon was checked in Syria and defeated by the British under Lord Nelson in a naval battle at the mouth of the Nile. Napoleon was able to elude the British warships and returned to France the national hero.

Napoleon had left a France that was victorious and successful. He returned to a France that was in deep trouble. The Directors had proved men of very mediocre talents. They had devoted themselves to personal gain rather than to the good of the state. Their government was notorious for bribery and corruption. It had become obvious to the proletarians and peasants that the Revolution had been exploited by the bourgeoisie for their own advantage. There was still great poverty and suffering in France. Babeuf led an insurrection of socialist radicals that called for compulsory equalization of wealth and the abolition of poverty. The army suppressed the insurrection and Babeuf was executed in 1797. Royalists were disgusted with the Directory and were working for the restoration of the Bourbons with the enthronement of Louis XVIII. A Second Coalition against the French had been formed by Great Britain, Austria, and Russia. To meet the threat the Directory had extended conscription to strengthen the army. France was in grave financial trouble, facing terrible inflation and bankruptcy. The Directory had declared partial bankruptcy, repudiating a part of the public debt and suspending interest payments on the rest of the public debt.

On his return from Egypt Napoleon began plotting with Abbé Sieyes, one of the Directors, for the overthrow of the Directory. On November 9-10, 1799, Napoleon surrounded the Assemblies with his jcs troops. The show of force led to the downfall of the government. Napoleon appointed himself supreme military commander. He issued a new constitution under which he became First Consul of the French Republic. The military dictatorship that Marat and Robespierre had feared had become a reality.

The new constitution was known as the Constitution of Year VIII. Napoleon tried to conceal the military dictatorship under the veil of popular forms. There would be three consuls with Napoleon as the First Consul. The First Consul would conduct the administration and foreign policies. He would have charge of the army and would propose all laws through a Council of State. The Senate would act as Supreme Court to decide constitutional questions. The Tribunate would discuss all laws without voting on them. The Legislative Body would vote on the laws without discussing them. The constitution was ratified by popular vote. France was facing war with the Second Coalition of Great Britain, Austria and Russia.
NAPOLEON'S CONSULATE (1799-1804)

Napoleon in June, 1800, defeated the Austrians in his Second Italian Campaign at Marengo. The Austrians signed the treaty of Lunéville in 1801. The treaty of Amiens brought peace with Great Britain in 1802.

While Napoleon was in Egypt, the Austrians had invaded Italy and taken the papal lands. They called a conclave to elect a new pope. Napoleon had returned before the new pope was chosen. The cardinals, fearing Napoleon would defeat Austria, chose a pro-French pope, Pius VII. Napoleon's victory at Marengo paved the way for the Concordat between Napoleon and Pius VII in 1801. Although Napoleon had no deep religious faith he recognized that the majority of Frenchmen were Roman Catholic. He saw in this an opportunity to use the church for his own advantage. The concordat with the pope would detach the pope from the Royalists who wanted to enthroned Louis XVIII. The conclave of Cardinals at Venice had addressed a letter to Louis as "King of France." Napoleon also hoped that the concordat would end the schism between the Constitutional Clergy and the non-jurors. Also the concordat would win him favor and support from Catholics all over Europe.

The Concordate of 1801 required the pope to give up all claims to confiscated lands no longer held by the government. The government was required to surrender to the church all confiscated lands still in the possession of the government. Bishops and archbishops would be appointed by the pope after being nominated by the state. The lower clergy would be appointed by the bishops but the state would have veto power. The clergy would be paid by the state. To end the schism the pope was to require all the bishops to resign. Napoleon nominated the new bishops and the pope appointed them. The French church was free to work with the pope.

When the concordat was published Napoleon had added to it what was called the "Organic Articles." These were administrative regulations that made it clear the treaty between pope and Napoleon was not a treaty between equals. The state was sovereign and could unilaterally revise the concordat. The Organic Articles provided that the four Gallican Articles were to be taught in all French seminaries. The church had to secure government permission for all church meetings. All papal letters, legates and decrees of ecumenical councils had to be approved by the government before they could be published in France. The Articles provided for appeal from church discipline to the civil government. The monastic orders were radically curtailed. Civil marriage was to be prior to the ecclesiastical marriage. Napoleon granted the Protestants and the Jews arrangements very similar to the terms of the Concordat--clergy approved by the state and supported by the state. The pope protested against the Articles but did not dare push the matter and so acquiesced.

The result of the Concordat of 1801 was the very opposite of what Napoleon intended. He planned to restore a Gallican church with a very minimum of papal power. The end result was
that the French episcopate increasingly turned to the papacy for support against the government. The Concordat led to an increase in Ultramontanism. Just after the Concordat Chateaubriand published his Génie du Christianisme, ou Beautés de la Religion Chrétienne (1802) that helped make Roman Catholicism intellectually respectable and emotionally attractive.

Napoleon developed a highly centralized administration for all of France, subordinating all local governments to himself. He instituted extensive financial, judicial, and educational reforms. He made the Bank of France one of the soundest financial institutions of the world. He overhauled the tax system. He instituted a large program of public works. He devoted great attention to beautifying Paris and gave liberal support to the arts. He made great plans for restoring the French colonial empire. He suppressed all domestic dissent. When plots to assassinate Napoleon were discovered he crushed the remnant of the Jacobins led by Moreau, whom he exiled to America. He took harsh vengeance on the Royalists—General Pichegru, their leader was found strangled in prison. A young Bourbon prince, the duc d'Enghien, was seized by military force on German soil and executed.

In 1802 by public plebiscite Napoleon was made Consul for life.

NAPOLEON AS EMPEROR

In 1804 the subservient Senate proposed to make Napoleon emperor for life. It was ratified overwhelmingly by popular vote. On December 2, 1804, imposing coronation ceremonies were held in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Pope Pius VII came from Rome to bless the event. Napoleon, however, placed the crown on his own head, declaring himself Napoleon I, emperor of France.

The ten years of Napoleon's empire (1804-1814) were years of continuous war. Great Britain took the lead in forming the Third Coalition against France. Napoleon's victories at Ulm and Austerlitz forced Austria to withdraw from the Coalition. The Prussians were defeated at Jena and Auerstadt. The Russians were defeated at Friedland in 1807. The Third Coalition was dissolved by the Treaty of Tilsit. In 1808 Napoleon was master of Europe and at the height of his power.

During the wars with the Third Coalition the pope refused Napoleon's demand that he close all the ports of the papal states to the British, the Swedes, and the Russians. Napoleon seized the port of Rome and annexed the papal states, bringing the temporal power of the pope to an end. The pope excommunicated Napoleon. Napoleon took the pope to France as a prisoner. The pope refused to perform any ecclesiastical acts. He refused to appoint the emperor's nominees to vacant episcopal offices. He would not grant annulments demanded by Napoleon. Napoleon forced the French clergy to grant annulments that had been refused by the pope. The pope remained a prisoner until the fall of Napoleon. The pope's imprisonment and his refusal to grant the demands of
the emperor made the pope the symbol of resistance to the tyrant. It transformed the papacy from mediocrity to new vitality and strength.

THE FALL OF NAPOLEON

From 1808 to 1814 Napoleon's empire declined. French nationalism which made Napoleon's victories possible awakened in the conquered peoples a nationalism of their own. Napoleon failed in his efforts to destroy Great Britain. The British supported national uprisings. Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia opened the way for the "Battle of the Nations." On March 31, 1814, Paris surrendered to the allies and Napoleon signed the treaty of Fontainebleau, abdicating the throne and renouncing all rights to France for himself and his family. He was exiled to Elba. Louis XVIII was declared "King of France."

Napoleon escaped from Elba and landed at Cannes on March 1, 1815. He entered Paris on March 20. Louis XVIII had fled to Belgium. Napoleon rallied France behind him but at Waterloo on June 18 suffered his final defeat. On June 22 he abasured a second time and was exiled to the lonely island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic where he died in 1821.

THE PAPACY AFTER NAPOLEON

The pope emerged from the struggle with Napoleon and the French Revolution as a hero. The papacy rose to new heights of strength and vitality. Catholicism was restored in France. The rising romanticism that was spreading over Europe awakened new admiration for the Middle Ages and for the Roman Catholic Church and its pope as the representatives of medieval culture. The restored Catholicism in France was more Ultramontanist than in earlier years. Chateaubriand's Genie du Christianisme contributed to the Catholic revival. The place of both pope and king was strengthened by three Frenchmen who came to be known as the "three prophets of traditionalism." Joseph Marie de Maistre (1754-1821), Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald (1754-1840) and Hugues Felixte Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854) exalted the papacy and the medieval church. The French Revolution left the papacy fearful of all revolutions. Pius VII brought back the Jesuits in August 1814. They rose rapidly to their old ascendancy in papal councils. They again became leaders in education, missions, and the revival of Catholic piety. They were foremost in the restoration of papal authority.

Pius VII was followed by Leo XII (1823-1829) who was even more reactionary than Pius had been. He strongly opposed the work of the Protestant Bible Societies. Gregory XVI (1831-1846) was a patron of traditional learning but reactionary toward all modern social and political ideals. The medieval outlook of Rome provoked strong anticlerical reaction both in and outside Catholicism. When Lamennais urged an Alliance of Catholicism and the rising liberalism in Europe, Gregory condemned and excommunicated him. The papacy became more and more reactionary toward the changes that were shaping the modern world of the
nineteenth century. This reactionary spirit of Rome would lead to the Syllabus of Errors of Pius IX (1846-1878) that repudiated the political philosophy that resulted in the modern states, the separation of church and state, non-sectarian schools, toleration of varieties in religion, and much that the liberals included in their watchword, Progress.