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Code of Canon Law

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Art. 1.

THE ROMAN PONTIFF

Can. 331 The bishop of the Roman Church, in whom continues the office given by the Lord uniquely to Peter, the first of the Apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, is the head of the college of bishops, the Vicar of Christ, and the pastor of the universal Church on earth. By virtue of his office he possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely.

Can. 332 §1. The Roman Pontiff obtains full and supreme power in the Church by his acceptance of legitimate election together with episcopal consecration. Therefore, a person elected to the supreme pontificate who is marked with episcopal character obtains this power from the moment of acceptance. If the person elected lacks episcopal character, however, he is to be ordained a bishop immediately.

§2. If it happens that the Roman Pontiff resigns his office, it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely and properly manifested but not that it is accepted by anyone.

Can. 333 §1. By virtue of his office, the Roman Pontiff not only possesses power over the universal Church but also obtains the primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches and groups of them. Moreover, this primacy strengthens and protects the proper, ordinary, and immediate power which bishops possess in the particular churches entrusted to their care.

§2. In fulfilling the office of supreme pastor of the Church, the Roman Pontiff is always joined in communion with the other bishops and with the universal Church. He nevertheless has the right, according to the needs of the Church, to determine the manner, whether personal or collegial, of exercising this office.

§3. No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.

Can. 334 Bishops assist the Roman Pontiff in exercising his office. They are able to render him cooperative assistance in various ways, among which is the synod of bishops. The cardinals also assist him, as do other persons and various institutes according to the needs of the times. In his name

and by his authority, all these persons and institutes fulfill the function entrusted to them for the good of all the churches, according to the norms defined by law.

Can. 335 When the Roman See is vacant or entirely impeded, nothing is to be altered in the governance of the universal Church; the special laws issued for these circumstances, however, are to be observed.

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