

Did Harold in 1066 seek Papal support

No, King Harold Godwinson **did not seek papal support** in 1066. While his rival, William of Normandy, conducted a sophisticated diplomatic campaign to win the Pope's favour, Harold largely ignored the Vatican.

The lack of communication between Harold and the Papacy was a critical strategic failure for the Anglo-Saxon side:

- **Failure to Represent His Case:** Harold did not send envoys to Rome to defend himself against William's accusations of perjury. William claimed Harold had sworn a sacred oath on holy relics to support the Norman claim, and Harold's silence allowed William's narrative to go unchallenged at the papal court.
- **Papal Endorsement of William:** Because the Pope only heard William's side, he formally blessed the Norman invasion as a "holy crusade". Pope Alexander II sent William a **papal banner** and a ring containing a relic of St. Peter, signalling divine approval of the conquest.
- **The [Stigand](#) Complication:** Harold's cause was further weakened by his association with **Stigand**, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Papacy considered Stigand's appointment uncanonical, and Harold's refusal to distance himself from him made it easier for the Pope to side with William.
- **English Perception of Sovereignty:** Some historians suggest Harold did not seek papal approval because he and the English *Witan* (the council of nobles) believed the selection of an English king was a domestic matter that had nothing to do with the Pope.

By failing to engage with the Papacy, Harold allowed William to frame the invasion as a righteous mission to reform a corrupt English church, which helped William recruit allies from across Europe.

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