

INFALLIBILITY

Website links-Primacy of Peter:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v1.htm#1>

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19981031_primato-successore-pietro_en.html

http://www.cuf.org/faithfacts/details_view.asp?ffID=149 (Catholics United for the Faith)

https://sites.google.com/site/thetaboriclight/official_relatio

The Catholic Church always believed in the Primacy of Peter, but the Council of Florence defined the Primacy of Peter.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith-*THE PRIMACY OF THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER IN THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH*-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect

II. The Exercise of the Primacy and Its Forms

7. The Roman Pontiff - like all the faithful - is subject to the Word of God, to the Catholic faith, and is the guarantor of the Church's obedience; in this sense he is *servus servorum Dei*. He does not make arbitrary decisions, but is spokesman for the will of the Lord, who speaks to man in the Scriptures lived and interpreted by Tradition; in other words, the *episkope* of the primacy has limits set by divine law and by the Church's divine, inviolable constitution found in Revelation.³³

9. The Bishops are witnesses of divine and Catholic truth when they teach **in communion with the Roman Pontiff.**

10. Since the power of the primacy is supreme, there is no other authority to which the Roman Pontiff must juridically answer for his exercise of the gift he has received: "*prima sedes a nemine iudicatur*".⁴² This does not mean, however, that the Pope has absolute power. Listening to what the Churches are saying is, in fact, an earmark of the ministry of unity, a consequence also of the unity of the Episcopal Body and of the *sensus fidei* of the entire People of God; and this bond seems to enjoy considerably greater power and certainty than the juridical authorities - an inadmissible hypothesis, moreover, because it is groundless - to which the Roman Pontiff would supposedly have to answer.

13. But, at the same time, it is clear that only the Pope (or the Pope with an Ecumenical Council) has, as the Successor of Peter, the authority and the competence to say the last word on the ways to exercise his pastoral ministry in the universal Church.

15. The Catholic Church maintains humbly and firmly "that the communion of the particular Churches with the Church of Rome, and of their Bishops with the Bishop of Rome, is -- in God's

plan -- **an essential requisite of full and visible communion'**. We are all invited to trust in the Holy Spirit, to trust in Christ, by trusting in Peter.

When There is Infallibility

- 1) **Infallibility**- is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he (Pope) defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. *Therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the church, irreformable.* Vatican I **SESSION 4 : 18 July 1870 - First dogmatic constitution on the church of Christ Chapter 4. On the infallible teaching authority of the Roman pontiff**
- 2) **Defintions**
 - a) Accent of faith-Belief, submission, and obedience without proof. This means that our faith in them rests directly on our faith either in the Word of God, or in the Holy Spirit's real & active assistance in the Magisterium. **This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation.**
 - b) Accent of intellect and will-Intellectually agree, submit and obey. This is less than the absolute assent of faith, but it still means that we must honestly strive to understand and **accept** these teachings. (As a practical matter, we should assume that the even Church's non-definitive teachings are correct. They are still made with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, although not to the degree that guarantees that they're free of error.)
 - i) "The teaching of the Magisterium therefore has an obligatory force resembling that of a law or precept. But the two are not the same. The ruling power calls for external obedience; the Magisterium calls for free, internal assent. The ruling power speaks first of all to the will; the Magisterium, to the intellect."- Cardinal Avery Dulles, Magisterium, Teacher and Guardian of the Faith
 - c) Accent of submission of mind-submit and obey. May never claim that the ordinary teachings of the Magisterium are such that any one such teaching or error would lead someone away from salvation.
 - d) **Extraordinary Magisterium** refers to a special exercise of their teaching office by either the Pope and bishops together, or the Pope alone, in which a definitive judgment is given. When a General Council pronounces a solemn definition, this is an exercise of the extraordinary Magisterium. So is an *ex cathedra* definition by the Pope: a decision definitively settling the question.- The extraordinary Magisterium is infallible. A definition given by a General Council or an *ex cathedra* definition by a Pope cannot be erroneous.
 - e) The term **ordinary universal Magisterium** means an exercise of the Church's teaching office where there is complete agreement, or **fairly close to complete agreement**, among

the Catholic Bishops of the world that a particular doctrine is certainly true, but without a solemn definition.- Likewise, the **ordinary universal Magisterium is infallible. The fact that the bishops are dispersed throughout the world' (in the words of Vatican II quoted above) does not make any difference.-This is taught infallibly. Any definitively proposed teaching enjoys the charism of infallibility, not simply those which are solemnly defined.**

- f) **Ordinary (authentic) Magisterium** refers to the exercise of the teaching office without a solemn definition being given. This is the case with the day-today teaching of Catholic bishops throughout the world, or the greater part-almost the entire part-of the Popes teaching. (Much in these categories, however, has already been defined infallibly.)- Infallible if the teaching references previously defined or previously and universally taught doctrine; otherwise it is not infallible.
- g) The Magisterium does not have the power to proclaim new revelations, still less to impose its own version of the truth. The popes and councils teach very clearly that the Magisterium is not an original source of revelation, but a witness to a revelation handed down from the past.

3) **Official Relatio of Bishop Vincent Ferrer Gasser delivered at the First Vatican Council
11 July 1870**

- a) **005. The argument is to be set forth in the following thesis: Christ the Lord granted to St. Peter the prerogative of infallibility in His Church at the same time as He granted him the primacy; this infallibility has passed on - indeed was meant to pass on - to all the successors of St. Peter and heirs of his primacy. Thus, the first part of the thesis is: Christ granted the prerogative of infallibility to St. Peter at the same time He gave him primacy in the universal Church. The places in Sacred Scripture which demonstrate this thesis are very well-known and have been excellently explained by many of the reverend fathers. Enough said on that point. The second part of the thesis is: this prerogative of infallibility has passed, together with the primacy, to the successors of St. Peter and heirs of his primacy. Since many of the reverend fathers have had different opinions on this point, let me offer my opinion briefly. The infallibility granted to St. Peter has passed to all the successors of Peter. The reason for this is the following: the prerogative of infallibility belonged ordinarily to Peter and was inseparably connected with his primacy; hence, it passed with the fullness, of his apostolic power into the Apostolic See, and to his successors in this See. The same conclusion follows from the famous words of Christ. For as the words of Christ, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:16), are not bounded by time but will have authority until the end of the world, so the foundation of the Church on Peter and his successors ought always remain unshaken against the proud gates of those who belong to the nether world, that is against heresies and the builders of heresy, as St. Epiphianius says.**

- b) **008.** This prerogative granted to St. Peter by the Lord Jesus Christ was supposed to pass to all Peter's successors because the chair of Peter is the center of unity in the Church. But if the Pontiff should fall into an error of faith, the Church would dissolve, deprived of the bond of unity. The bishop of Meaux speaks very well on this point, saying: "If this Roman See could fall and be no longer the See of truth but of error and pestilence, then the Catholic Church herself would not have the bond of a society and would be schismatic and scattered - which in fact is impossible."
- c) **009.** I reply: how would the Roman Pontiff be able to fulfill this office which was divinely and especially given to him if he did not have a special authority which all others - even the bishops whether dispersed throughout the world or gathered together - should recognize as unassailable?
- d) **010.** But I respond: as is true in the case of the center of unity in the heavenly bodies, so too the center of unity in the Church of Christ under the heavens should act with a continual and permanent unchallengeable authority. If the authority of the Pope were not unchallengeable in itself but only [when exercised] together with the bishops, then, by divine law, the Pope should have delegates of the entire episcopate to assist him – delegates who would represent that episcopate by divine law. But Christ instituted nothing of this sort; rather He placed Peter and his successor as an immobile bulwark of faith, as the heir of a confirmed faith and as the one who confirms his brothers, and, finally, is the pastor of the whole flock of the Lord, ruling it in such a way that it lacks nothing and leading it to good pastures. That the infallibility granted to Peter was to have passed to his successors is also proved - to use the words of Cardinal Cajetan - from the fact that when the Pope makes a judicial and definitive decision determining that something is heresy and that it must be held as such by the Church then it is clear that we are all bound to accept his decision and that whoever pertinaciously clings to the opposite view is considered a heretic. Thus Cajetan. [2] And Melchior Cano dares to add: "Whoever would deny that the power of binding and loosing which Christ is believed to have given to St. Peter is now present in the Bishop of Rome, such a person (i.e., one who would deny this power) is lawfully and rightly held to be a heretic. Whoever would deny to those who have succeeded Peter the strength of Peter for confirming his brothers must be judged to be heretical."
- e) **023.** (On papal infallibility), For the defense of this truth, if it were necessary, we ought to be ready to undergo martyrdom and even give our body to be exposed to death." - Pope Clement IV, "Cozza hist. polem de Graecor. schismate" tom. II, part. IV, cap. XXVIII, n. 1218.
- 4) **Criteria for Faithful Questioning**

The requirements for any questions to be faithful are as follows:

1. the teaching from which one questions must be a non-infallible teaching, which is not essential to the path of salvation (ordinary non-infallible teachings are protected by the Holy Spirit from errors that would lead one away from the path of salvation)
 2. the individual must be faithful to the infallible teachings of Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Magisterium, and also generally faithful to the non-infallible teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium.
 3. the basis for questions must be a teaching of greater authority within the teachings of the Magisterium, or within Sacred Tradition or Sacred Scripture.
- 5) **CCC 87** Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me", the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms.
 - 6) **CCC 157 157** Faith is *certain*. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but "the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives." "**Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.**"- **John Henry Cardinal Newman**
 - 7) <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=2697>
 - 8) **Infallibility in the Context of Three Contemporary Developments**
by [*Mark Lowery, Ph.D.*](#)
 - 9) An essential feature of the Catholic faith is that the authority of Christ is mediated through the apostolic succession interpreting Scripture and Tradition throughout time. The apostolic succession consists of human beings specially guided by the Holy Spirit, and when we turn to the Magisterium, we are turning to the apostolic succession living in our own time.¹
However, not everything said by Popes and bishops throughout the centuries is an infallible interpretation of Scripture and Tradition, How can we tell what does and does not belong in the category of infallible teaching?
The Various "Voices" Of The Magisterium
 - 10) **Vatican II was careful to point out exactly when and where the voice of the Magisterium speaks infallibly. The varying "voices" of the Magisterium are spelled out in *Lumen Gentium* 25. Let us begin with an explanatory outline of that important article, looking to those three places (indicated by asterisks) where the Magisterium speaks infallibly. This outline also serves to help understand Pope John Paul II's recent Apostolic Letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, which serves as a further refinement of *Lumen Gentium* 25.**
 - 11) **1. The Extraordinary Magisterium (as distinguished from the ordinary Magisterium in item II of the outline) "Extraordinary" and "ordinary" refer to the manner in which a truth is stated, whether that truth be infallible or not. An ecumenical council by its nature allows an extraordinary manner of teaching, as does an *ex cathedra* papal**

statement. Hence, the extraordinary Magisterium consists of a papal and an episcopal dimension:

- 12) *****A. The Extraordinary Papal Magisterium Here, the pope acts alone and speaks *ex cathedra* ("from the chair") in defining a dogma.**² According to a majority theological opinion, this has occurred two times: when the Immaculate Conception was defined in 1854 by Pius IX (*Ineffabilis Deus*); and when the Assumption was defined in 1950 by Pius XII *Munificentissimus Deus*.³ Regarding our three areas of concern: i) No matter regarding morality has been defined in this manner, ii) As regards the male priesthood, there are some who hold that the centerpoint of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* represents a third instance of an *ex cathedra* statement, but the more common opinion is that the ruling stopped just short of such a statement, as discussed below, iii) A recent request was made that the pope raise the teaching of Mary as Coredemptrix to the level of a definition. This has not occurred, nor is it likely to occur soon.
- 13) **B. The Extraordinary Episcopal Magisterium**
- 14) *****I. Bishops gathered in ecumenical councils can define dogmas. At the twenty-one ecumenical councils held throughout Christian history, certain items have been infallibly defined.** Consider Chalcedon's (451) definition of the two natures of Christ, or Trent's (1561) definition of the seven sacraments. One Marian dogma was defined in this manner: the Council of Ephesus, against the Nestorian position, defined Mary as Theotokos, Mother of God⁴ While the nature of the priesthood has been defined, nothing has been defined regarding the relationship of the priesthood and gender, or regarding morality. We owe an "assent of faith" to all matters infallibly defined. The teaching on Mary as Coredemptrix remains undefined.
- 15) **2. Proclaiming the Gospel and giving pastoral directions.** Many non-infallible items are also dealt with at councils.⁵ Some deal with matters of faith and morals, while others are of a disciplinary or prudential nature. While these might be related to infallible doctrines, they are not in themselves infallible. For instance, the majority of documents from Vatican II are of this nature. *Dignitatis Humanae* (The Decree on Religious Freedom), for example, rests upon the dogma that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, but goes on to speak of political matters, an area on which the Church's infallible authority does not come to bear.⁶ We owe a "religious submission" or a "reverent obedience" (*obsequium religiosum*) of mind and will to such matters.
- 16) **II. The Ordinary Magisterium**
- 17) **A. The ordinary papal Magisterium consists in Popes teaching "authentically," usually in documents such as encyclicals or apostolic exhortations. These documents may contain truths that are taught infallibly, but the documents as a whole are not infallible. Rather, they require the "assent of mind and will" of the faithful, an assent which is distinct in nature from the "assent of faith" required of items infallibly taught.** *Humanae Vitae*, for instance, is not an infallible document.⁷ It contains ideas which require respectful assent but which, while not being erroneous, may be incomplete or

partially flawed. However, in article 12 the pope touches upon a matter that, it can be argued, is infallibly taught: the inseparability of the unitive and procreative dimensions of each conjugal act.⁸ Hence, the evil of contraception can be said to be taught infallibly. Likewise, *Inter Insigniores* (On Reserving Priestly Orders to Men Alone) is not an infallible document. However, it may contain certain matters that, it can be argued, are infallibly taught. In sum, non-infallible documents can contain items that are infallibly taught or defined.

a) An example of how a Pope can definitively pronounce without an ex cathedra statement.

i) Ordinatio Sacerdotalis- The Pope states that the teaching regarding priestly ordination is "the constant and universal Tradition of the Church." He thus definitively identifies the teaching as magisterial. The Holy Father then definitively states that his pronouncement is a confirmation ("in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren"). Finally, affirming that he is acting to remove all doubt on the matter, the Pope adds that his "judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."

ii) Pope Pius XI encyclical Casti Connubii on contraception- Pius XI reaffirmed that this teaching belonged to "the uninterrupted Christian Tradition. Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which itself affirms that same "uninterrupted Christian Tradition."

iii) John Paul II's definitive pronouncements regarding abortion, murder, and euthanasia in his 1995 encyclical Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life).

b) Papal Encyclical *Humani Generis* Pius XII

19. but history teaches that many matters that formerly were open to discussion, no longer now admit of discussion.

20. Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in Encyclical Letters does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such Letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme power of their Teaching Authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary teaching authority, of which it is true to say: "He who heareth you, heareth me";[3] and generally what is expounded and inculcated in Encyclical Letters already for other reasons appertains to Catholic doctrine. But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the mind and will of the Pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians.

18) B. The Ordinary Episcopal Magisterium: Bishops teaching non-universally and universally. 1. Non-universally. Non-universal episcopal teaching occurs when bishops teach on items specific to their geographical location. They are not teaching on a matter which all bishops everywhere would necessarily recognize as true. This can occur either alone, such as when a single bishop appeals to a state official to not use the death penalty, or in episcopal conferences, such as when the U.S. bishops promulgated their

pastoral letters on War and Peace, and on the Economy. Again, they might refer to items that are infallibly taught or defined, but their teaching as a whole is not infallible.

19) ***2. Universally. This is the most delicate category, which the next section of the paper treats. When the bishops gathered throughout the world have at some time agreed on a matter of divine revelation, dealing with faith or morals, to be held definitively, such agreement constitutes infallible teaching and is irreversible. Various contemporary issues, such as the three discussed here, have given theologians an opportunity to further refine the exact meaning of this category.⁹

In sum, there are a variety of levels on which the Magisterium speaks.

20) The Extraordinary Papal Magisterium Here, the pope acts alone and speaks *ex cathedra* ("from the chair") in defining a dogma.

a) Lumen Gentium 25, 4 But when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of Bishops together with him defines a judgment, they pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the Revelation which as written or orally handed down is transmitted in its entirety through the legitimate succession of bishops and especially in care of the Roman Pontiff himself, and which under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church.

21) The Extraordinary Episcopal Magisterium-Bishops gathered in ecumenical councils can define dogmas. At the twenty-one ecumenical councils held throughout Christian history, certain items have been infallibly defined.

a) Lumen Gentium 25, 2 Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed through the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter, and authentically teaching matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as definitively to be held.(40*) This is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an ecumenical council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, whose definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith.(41*)

22) The Ordinary-Universal Episcopal Magisterium- When the bishops gathered throughout the world (with the Pope) have at some time agreed on a matter of divine revelation, dealing with faith or morals, to be held definitively, such agreement constitutes infallible teaching and is irreversible.

a) When a) all bishops throughout the world (Including and with the Pope), at any particular time in history, have b) concurred on some matter of faith and morals, and c) teach it definitively, then that matter is considered to be infallibly taught. Note that it is not defined infallibly, as would be the case if there were an exercise of the *extraordinary* Magisterium as indicated in the outline. Whether taught infallibly or defined infallibly, the matter is just as infallible.¹¹

- b) The Church both *defines* certain matters infallibly in an extraordinary way and teaches other matters infallibly in an ordinary way.
- c) **Matters that are *defined* infallibly usually were taught infallibly prior to the extraordinary definition. Often what causes a matter to be raised to the level of an infallible definition is some type of crisis requiring a more official definition.** It is always a question of prudence as to whether or not to define a matter that is already infallibly taught by the ordinary universal episcopal Magisterium.¹²

23) **(and possibly dogmatic teaching if held definitively)**

24) **The ordinary papal Magisterium consists in Popes teaching "authentically," usually in documents such as encyclicals or apostolic exhortations. These documents may contain truths that are taught infallibly, but the documents as a whole are not infallible. Rather, they require the "assent of mind and will" of the faithful, an assent which is distinct in nature from the "assent of faith" required of items infallibly taught.**

25) **Canon 749 says that no doctrine is understood to have been defined infallibly unless this fact is clearly established.**

26) **In his recent letter, *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, Pope John Paul II made it clear—and fixed it more firmly in Canon Law—that Catholic theologians must align themselves with the Magisterium on all matters of faith and morals. Many theologians had erroneously held that only the most fundamental dogmas, or only those formally defined by the extraordinary Magisterium, required assent. *Ad Tuendam Fidem* lends further refinement to *Lumen Gentium* 25, noting that of all the matters that are taught or defined infallibly, a further distinction can be made between the primary and secondary objects of infallibility. Doctrines placed under the primary object of infallibility, technically called dogmas, are those which are formally revealed, that is, are part of the deposit of faith as found in the Word of God. The assent of faith given to these dogmas is based on the Word of God itself. Doctrines placed under the secondary object of infallibility are those necessary for understanding and expanding that deposit of faith. The assent of faith given to these doctrines is based on confidence in the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Magisterium.**¹⁰

27) **891** "The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. . . . The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed," and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions "must be adhered to with the obedience of faith." **This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.**

28) **892 Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome,**

pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a "definitive manner," they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful "are to adhere to it with religious assent" which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

- 29) 890 The mission of the Magisterium is linked to the definitive nature of the covenant established by God with his people in Christ. It is this Magisterium's task to preserve God's people from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error. Thus, the pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates. **To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals.** The exercise of this charism takes several forms:
- 30) 1814 Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God **and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief,** because he is truth itself. By faith "man freely commits his entire self to God." For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will. "The righteous shall live by faith." Living faith "work[s] through charity."
- 31) 2035 The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of *infallibility*. **This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation;** it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed.
- 32) Baltimore Catechism 2 **125 When does the Church teach infallibly?**
a) A. The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the bishops, united in general council, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.
- 33) Can. 749 §1. By virtue of his office, the Supreme Pontiff possesses infallibility in teaching when as the supreme pastor and teacher of all the Christian faithful, who strengthens his brothers and sisters in the faith, he proclaims by definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held.
§2. The college of bishops also possesses infallibility in teaching when the bishops gathered together in an ecumenical council exercise the magisterium as teachers and judges of faith and morals who declare for the universal Church that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held definitively; or when dispersed throughout the world but preserving the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter and teaching authentically together with the Roman Pontiff matters of faith or morals, they agree that a particular proposition is to be held definitively.
§3. No doctrine is understood as defined infallibly unless this is manifestly evident.
- 34) Can. 750 §1. **A person must believe with divine and Catholic faith all those things contained in the word of God, written or handed on, that is, in the one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn magisterium of the Church or by its ordinary and universal magisterium**

which is manifested by the common adherence of the Christian faithful under the leadership of the sacred magisterium; therefore all are bound to avoid any doctrines whatsoever contrary to them.

- 35) Can. §2. **Each and every thing which is proposed definitively by the magisterium of the Church concerning the doctrine of faith and morals, that is, each and every thing which is required to safeguard reverently and to expound faithfully the same deposit of faith, is also to be firmly embraced and retained; therefore, one who rejects those propositions which are to be held definitively is opposed to the doctrine of the Catholic Church.**
- 36) Can. 752 **Although not an assent of faith, a religious submission of the intellect and will must be given to a doctrine which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops declares concerning faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it by definitive act; therefore, the Christian faithful are to take care to avoid those things which do not agree with it.**
- 37) Can. 754 **All the Christian faithful are obliged to observe the constitutions and decrees which the legitimate authority of the Church issues in order to propose doctrine and to proscribe erroneous opinions, particularly those which the Roman Pontiff or the college of bishops puts forth.**
- 38) **750 To believe that the Church is "holy" and "catholic," and that she is "one" and "apostolic"** (as the Nicene Creed adds), is inseparable from belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the Apostles' Creed we profess "one Holy Church" (*Credo . . . Ecclesiam*), and not to believe *in* the Church, so as not to confuse God with his works and to attribute clearly to God's goodness *all* the gifts he has bestowed on his Church.
- 39) **VATICAN II-DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH *LUMEN GENTIUM* SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964**
- http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

- a) 22. **But the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head.** A council is never ecumenical unless it is confirmed or at least accepted as such by the successor of Peter; and it is prerogative of the Roman Pontiff to convoke these councils, to preside over them and to confirm them.(29*) This same collegiate power can be exercised together with the pope by the bishops living in all parts of the world, provided that the head of the college calls them to collegiate action, or at least approves of or freely accepts the united action of the scattered bishops, so that it is thereby made a collegiate act. The pope's power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful, remains whole and intact. In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he is always free to exercise this power. The order of bishops, which succeeds to the college of apostles and gives this apostolic body continued existence, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head.(27*) This power can be exercised only with the consent of the Roman Pontiff.

- b) 25. Bishops, **teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff**, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. **This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will.** His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking. Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, **they nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed through the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter, and authentically teaching matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as definitively to be held.**(40*) This is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an ecumenical council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, whose definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith.(41*)
- And this infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed in defining doctrine of faith and morals, extends as far as the deposit of Revelation extends, which must be religiously guarded and faithfully expounded. And this is the infallibility which the Roman Pontiff, the head of the college of bishops, enjoys in virtue of his office, when, as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith,(166) by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith or morals.(42*) And therefore his definitions, of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, are justly styled irreformable, since they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised to him in blessed Peter, and therefore they need no approval of others, nor do they allow an appeal to any other judgment. For then the Roman Pontiff is not pronouncing judgment as a private person, but as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the charism of infallibility of the Church itself is individually present, he is expounding or defending a doctrine of Catholic faith.(43*) The infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of Bishops, when that body exercises the supreme magisterium with the successor of Peter. To these definitions the assent of the Church can never be wanting, on account of the activity of that same Holy Spirit, by which the whole flock of Christ is preserved and progresses in unity of faith.(44*) But when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of Bishops together with him defines a judgment, they pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the Revelation which as written or orally handed down is transmitted in its entirety through the legitimate succession of bishops and especially in care of the Roman Pontiff himself, and which under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church.(45*) The Roman Pontiff and the bishops, in view of their office and the importance of the matter, by fitting means diligently strive to inquire properly into that revelation and to give apt expression to its contents;(46*) but a new public revelation they do not accept as pertaining to the divine deposit of faith.(47*)
- c) 27. The pastoral office or the habitual and daily care of their sheep is entrusted to them completely; **nor are they to be regarded as vicars of the Roman Pontiffs**, for they

exercise an authority that is proper to them, and are quite correctly called "prelates," heads of the people whom they govern.

This power, which they personally exercise in Christ's name, is proper, ordinary and immediate, **although its exercise is ultimately regulated by the supreme authority of the Church, and can be circumscribed by certain limits**, for the advantage of the Church or of the faithful.

40) **APPENDIX From the Acts of the Council***

***'NOTIFICATIONES' GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE COUNCIL AT THE 123rd GENERAL CONGREGATION,
NOVEMBER 16, 1964***

3. The College, which does not exist without the head, is said "to exist also as **the subject of supreme and full power in the universal Church.**" This must be admitted of necessity so that the fullness of power belonging to the Roman Pontiff is not called into question. It acts as a college in the strict sense only from time to time and only with the consent of its head. **It is clear throughout that it is a question of the bishops acting in conjunction with their head, never of the bishops acting independently of the Pope. In the latter instance, without the action of the head, the bishops are not able to act as a College: this is clear from the concept of "College."**

41) **JOHN PAUL II Apostolic Letter Motu Proprio *AD TUENDAM FIDEM*, by which certain norms are inserted into the *Code of Canon Law* and into the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches***

- a) **TO PROTECT THE FAITH** of the Catholic Church against errors arising from certain members of the Christian faithful, especially from among those dedicated to the various disciplines of sacred theology, we, whose principal duty is to confirm the brethren in the faith (*Lk 22:32*), consider it absolutely necessary to add to the existing texts of the *Code of Canon Law* and the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, new norms which expressly impose the obligation of upholding truths proposed in a definitive way by the Magisterium of the Church, and which also establish related canonical sanctions.
- b) 2. The *Profession of faith*, which appropriately begins with the *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*, contains three propositions or paragraphs intended to describe the truths of the Catholic faith, which the Church, in the course of time and under the guidance of the **Holy Spirit "who will teach the whole truth" (*Jn 16:13*)**, has ever more deeply explored and will continue to explore.(3)
- c) The first paragraph states: "With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed."(4) This paragraph appropriately confirms and is provided for in the Church's universal legislation, in canon 750 of the *Code of Canon Law*(5) and canon 598 of the *Code of the Canons of the Eastern Churches*.(6)
- d) The third paragraph states: "Moreover I adhere with submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act."(7) This paragraph has its corresponding legislative

expression in canon 752 of the *Code of Canon Law*(8) and canon 599 of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*.(9)

- e) 3. The second paragraph, however, which states “*I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals,*”(10) has no corresponding canon in the Codes of the Catholic Church. This second paragraph of the *Profession of faith* is of utmost importance since it refers to truths that are necessarily connected to divine revelation. These truths, in the investigation of Catholic doctrine, illustrate the Divine Spirit’s particular inspiration for the Church’s deeper understanding of a truth concerning faith and morals, with which they are connected either for historical reasons or by a logical relationship.
- f) A) Canon 750 of the *Code of Canon Law* will now consist of two paragraphs; the first will present the text of the existing canon; the second will contain a new text. Thus, canon 750, in its complete form, will read:
- g) **Canon 750** – § 1. Those things are to be believed by divine and catholic faith which are contained in the word of God as it has been written or handed down by tradition, that is, in the single deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and which are at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn Magisterium of the Church, or by its ordinary and universal Magisterium, which in fact is manifested by the common adherence of Christ’s faithful under the guidance of the sacred Magisterium. All are therefore bound to avoid any contrary doctrines.
- h) § 2. Furthermore, each and everything set forth definitively by the Magisterium of the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals must be firmly accepted and held; namely, those things required for the holy keeping and faithful exposition of the deposit of faith; therefore, anyone who rejects propositions which are to be held definitively sets himself against the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- i) Canon 1371, n. 1 of the *Code of Canon Law*, consequently, will receive an appropriate reference to canon 750 § 2, so that it will now read:
- j) **Canon 1371** – The following are to be punished with a just penalty:
- k) 1° a person who, apart from the case mentioned in canon 1364 § 1, teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff, or by an Ecumenical Council, or obstinately rejects the teachings mentioned in canon 750 § 2 or in canon 752 and, when warned by the Apostolic See or by the Ordinary, does not retract;
- l) 2° a person who in any other way does not obey the lawful command or prohibition of the Apostolic See or the Ordinary or Superior and, after being warned, persists in disobedience.
- m) B) Canon 598 of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* will now have two paragraphs: the first will present the text of the existing canon and the second will contain a new text. Thus canon 598, in its complete form, will read as follows:
- n) **Canon 598** – § 1. Those things are to be believed by divine and catholic faith which are contained in the word of God as it has been written or handed down by tradition, that is, in the single deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and which are at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn Magisterium of the Church, or by its ordinary and universal Magisterium, which in fact is manifested by the common adherence of Christ’s faithful under the guidance of the sacred Magisterium. All Christian faithful are therefore bound to avoid any contrary doctrines.

- o) § 2. Furthermore, each and everything set forth definitively by the Magisterium of the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals must be firmly accepted and held; namely, those things required for the holy keeping and faithful exposition of the deposit of faith; therefore, anyone who rejects propositions which are to be held definitively sets himself against the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- p) Canon 1436 § 2 of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, consequently, will receive an appropriate reference to canon 598 § 2, so that it will now read:
- q) **Canon 1436** – § 1. Whoever denies a truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or who calls into doubt, or who totally repudiates the Christian faith, and does not retract after having been legitimately warned, is to be punished as a heretic or an apostate with a major excommunication; a cleric moreover can be punished with other penalties, not excluding deposition.
- r) § 2. In addition to these cases, whoever obstinately rejects a teaching that the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops, exercising the authentic Magisterium, have set forth to be held definitively, or who affirms what they have condemned as erroneous, and does not retract after having been legitimately warned, is to be punished with an appropriate penalty.
- s) 5. We order that everything decreed by us in this Apostolic Letter, given *motu proprio*, be established and ratified, and we prescribe that the insertions listed above be introduced into the universal legislation of the Catholic Church, that is, into the *Code of Canon Law* and into the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, all things to the contrary notwithstanding. *Given in Rome, at St Peter's, on 18 May, in the year 1998, the twentieth of our Pontificate. JOHN PAUL II*

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19930317en.html

42) THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER (POPE JOHN PAUL II) TEACHES INFALLIBLY

General Audience "â€" March 17, 1993

The magisterial function of bishops, then, is strictly tied to that of the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, the conciliar text goes on aptly to say:

"This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme Magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking" (LG 25).

This supreme authority of the papal Magisterium, to which the term apostolic has been traditionally reserved, even in its ordinary exercise derives from the institutional fact that the Roman Pontiff is the Successor of Peter in the mission of teaching, strengthening his brothers, and guaranteeing that the Church's preaching conforms to the "deposit of faith" of the apostles and of Christ's teaching. However, it also stems from the conviction, developed in Christian tradition, that the Bishop of Rome is also the heir to Peter in the charism of special assistance that Jesus promised him when he said: "I have prayed for you" (Lk 22:32). This signifies the Holy Spirit's continual help in the whole exercise of the teaching mission, meant to explain revealed truth and its consequences in human life.

For this reason the Second Vatican Council states that all the Pope's teaching should be listened to and accepted, even when it is not given ex cathedra but is proposed in the ordinary exercise of his Magisterium with the manifest intention of declaring, recalling and confirming the doctrine of faith. It is a consequence of the institutional fact and spiritual inheritance that completes the dimensions of the succession to Peter.

As you know there are cases in which the papal Magisterium is exercised solemnly regarding particular points of doctrine belonging to the deposit of revelation or closely connected with it. This is the case with ex cathedra definitions, such as those of Mary's Immaculate Conception, made by Pius IX in 1854, and of her Assumption into heaven, made by Pius XII in 1950. As we know, these definitions have provided all Catholics with certainty in affirming these truths and in excluding all doubt in the matter.

The reason for ex cathedra definitions is almost always to give this certification to the truths that are to be believed as belonging to the "deposit of faith" and to exclude all doubt, or even to condemn an error about their authenticity and meaning. This is the greatest and also the formal concentration of the doctrinal mission conferred by Jesus on the apostles and, in their person, on their successors.

Given the extraordinary greatness and importance that this Magisterium has for the faith, Christian tradition has recognized in the Successor of Peter, who exercises it personally or in communion with the bishops gathered in council, a charism of assistance from the Holy Spirit that is customarily called "infallibility."

Here is what Vatican I said on the matter:

"When the Roman Pontiff speaks ex cathedra, that is, when in exercising his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians he defines with his supreme apostolic authority that a doctrine on faith and morals is to be held by the whole Church, through the divine assistance promised him in the person of St. Peter, he enjoys that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer wished to endow his Church in **defining a doctrine on faith and morals**. Therefore, these definitions of the Roman Pontiff are unreformable per se, and not because of the Church's consent" (DS 3074).

This doctrine was taken up again, confirmed and further explained by Vatican II, which states:

"And this is the infallibility which the Roman Pontiff, the head of the college of bishops, enjoys in virtue of his office, when, as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith (cf. Lk 22:32), by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith or morals. And therefore his definitions, of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, are justly styled irreformable, since they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised to him in blessed Peter, and therefore they need no approval of others, nor do they allow an appeal to any other judgment. For then the Roman Pontiff is not pronouncing judgment as a private person, but, as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the charism of infallibility of the Church itself is individually present, he is expounding or defending a doctrine of Catholic faith" (LG 25).

It should be noted that the Second Vatican Council also calls attention to the Magisterium of the bishops in union with the Roman Pontiff, stressing that they too enjoy the Holy Spirit's assistance when they define a point of faith **in conjunction with the Successor of Peter**:

"The infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of Bishops, when that body exercises the supreme Magisterium **with the Successor of Peter...** But when either the Roman Pontiff or the body of bishops together with him defines a judgment, **they pronounce it in accordance with revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the revelation which as written or orally handed down** is transmitted in its entirety through the legitimate succession of bishops...which under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church" (LG 25).

The Council also says:

"Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed through the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the Successor of Peter, and authentically teaching matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as definitively to be held. This is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an ecumenical council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, **whose definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith.** And this infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed in defining doctrine of faith and morals, **extends as far as the deposit of revelation extends**" (LG 25).

These conciliar texts codify as it were the awareness which the apostles already had when they assembled in Jerusalem: "It is the decision of the Holy Spirit, and ours too..." (Acts 15:28). This awareness confirmed Jesus' promise to send the Spirit of truth to the apostles and the Church once he had returned to the Father after offering the sacrifice of the cross: "He will teach you everything and remind you of all I told you" (Jn 14:26). That promise was fulfilled at Pentecost and the apostles continued to feel its life. The Church inherited that awareness and memory from them.

43) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19930310en.htm
1

The Roman Pontiff Is the Supreme Teacher General Audience "â€” March 10, 1993-John Paul II

- a) The Second Council of Lyons (1274) asserted this about the Bishop of Rome's primacy and fullness of power, when it stressed: "He has the duty to defend the truth of the faith, **and it is his responsibility to resolve all disputed matters in the area of faith**" (DS 861).
- b) This is the service to the truth that has been primarily entrusted to Peter's Successor, **who in the ordinary exercise of his Magisterium is already acting not as a private person, but as the supreme teacher of the universal Church**, according to the precise statement of Vatican II regarding definitions ex cathedra (cf. LG 25). In carrying out this task, the Successor of Peter expresses in a personal way, **but with institutional authority, the "rule of faith" which the members of the universal Church (the ordinary faithful, catechists, religion teachers, theologians) must adhere to in investigating the meaning of the permanent content of the Christian faith. This is true also in relation to the discussions arising within and outside the ecclesial community on various points or on the whole of doctrine.**

- c) Up to all the documents issued directly--and here the encyclicals, **which formally have the value of universal teaching**, should be mentioned first--or those issued indirectly by the departments of the Roman Curia which operate under his mandate.
 - d) **This relationship to Christ definitively explains the difficulties and opposition that the Church's Magisterium has always encountered from Peter's day to our own. For all the bishops and pastors of the Church, and especially for the Successor of Peter, Jesus' words are valid: "No disciple is above his teacher" (Mt 10:24; Lk 6:40).**
 - e) **"Woe to him if he should be frightened by criticism and misunderstanding."**
- 44) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19930324en.html
- a) **First of all the councils assert that the infallibility attributed to the Roman Pontiff is personal, in the sense that it falls to him by virtue of his personal succession to Peter in the Roman Church. This means, in other words, that the Roman Pontiff does not enjoy merely an infallibility that really belongs to the Roman See.**
 - b) **It is clear, however, that infallibility was not given to the Roman Pontiff as a private person, but inasmuch as he carries out the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians.**
 - c) **According to the conciliar texts, the infallible Magisterium is exercised in "doctrine concerning faith and morals." This refers to the matter of explicitly or implicitly revealed truths that require an assent of faith, which the Church guards in the deposit entrusted to her by Christ and handed on by the apostles. She would not guard them properly if she did not defend their purity and integrity. These are truths about God in himself and in his creative and redeeming work; the human person and the world in their creaturely status and destiny according to the design of Providence; eternal life and earthly life itself in its basic demands regarding truth and goodness. It is a question, therefore, of "truths for life" and of applying them in human conduct. The area of truths that the Magisterium can definitively teach includes those principles of reason that are not contained in the truths of faith but are closely related to them.**
 - d) **In the new formula of the profession of faith recently approved (cf. AAS 81 [1989]: 105, 1169), a distinction was made between divinely revealed truths and truths definitively taught but not as divinely revealed, which therefore require a definitive assent that nevertheless is not an assent of faith.**
 - e) **In the new formula of the profession of faith recently approved (cf. AAS 81 [1989]: 105, 1169), a distinction was made between divinely revealed truths and truths definitively taught but not as divinely revealed, which therefore require a definitive assent that nevertheless is not an assent of faith.**
 - f) **With these conditions one can speak of the extraordinary papal Magisterium, whose definitions are unreformable per se, and not "from the consent of the Church" (ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae). This means that these definitions do not need the consent of the bishops in order to be valid, neither an antecedent consent, nor a consequent consent, "since they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised to him in blessed Peter, and therefore they need no approval of others, nor do they allow an appeal to any other judgment" (LG 25).**
 - g) **Alongside this infallibility of ex cathedra definitions, there is the charism of the Holy Spirit's assistance, granted to Peter and his successors so that they would not err in matters of faith and morals, but rather shed great light on the Christian people.**

This charism is not limited to exceptional cases, but embraces in varying degrees the whole exercise of the Magisterium.

h) The conciliar texts also point out how serious is the Roman Pontiff's responsibility in exercising both his extraordinary and ordinary Magisterium. He thus feels the need, one could say even the duty, to explore the sensus ecclesiae before defining a truth of faith, in the clear awareness that his definition "expounds or defends the teaching of the Catholic faith" (LG 25).

45) Pius IX in *tuus Libenter* (1863), who said that the response of faith must be given to "those things which are handed on by the ordinary magisterium of the whole church dispersed throughout the world as divinely revealed, and therefore are held by the universal and constant consensus of Catholic theologians to pertain to the faith."

46) http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH-DONUM VERITATIS

a) 16. By its nature, the task of religiously guarding and loyally expounding the deposit of divine Revelation (in all its integrity and purity), implies that the Magisterium can make a pronouncement "in a definitive way" (14) on propositions which, even if not contained among the truths of faith, are nonetheless intimately connected with them, in such a way, that the definitive character of such affirmations derives in the final analysis from revelation itself.(15). Revelation also contains moral teachings which *per se* could be known by natural reason. Access to them, however, is made difficult by man's sinful condition. It is a doctrine of faith that these moral norms can be infallibly taught by the Magisterium (17).

b) 17. Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and in a particular way, to the Roman Pontiff as Pastor of the whole Church, when exercising their ordinary Magisterium, even should this not issue in an infallible definition or in a "definitive" pronouncement but in the proposal of some teaching which leads to a better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals and to moral directives derived from such teaching.

c) 19. Within the particular Churches, it is the bishop's responsibility to guard and interpret the Word of God and to make authoritative judgments as to what is or is not in conformity with it. The teaching of each bishop, taken individually, **is exercised in communion with the Roman Pontiff**, Pastor of the universal Church, and with the other bishops dispersed throughout the world or gathered in an ecumenical council. **Such communion is a condition for its authenticity.**

d) 23. When the Magisterium of the Church makes an infallible pronouncement and solemnly declares that a teaching is found in Revelation, the assent called for is that of theological faith. This kind of adherence is to be given even to the teaching of the ordinary and universal Magisterium when it proposes for belief a teaching of faith as divinely revealed. When the Magisterium proposes "in a definitive way" truths concerning faith and morals, which, even if not divinely revealed, are nevertheless strictly and intimately connected with Revelation, these must be firmly accepted and held. When the Magisterium, not intending to act "definitively", teaches a doctrine to aid

a better understanding of Revelation and make explicit its contents, or to recall how some teaching is in conformity with the truths of faith, or finally to guard against ideas that are incompatible with these truths, the response called for is that of the religious submission of will and intellect.(23) This kind of response cannot be simply exterior or disciplinary but must be understood within the logic of faith and under the impulse of obedience to the faith.

- e) 26. In the dialogue, a two-fold rule should prevail. When there is a question of the communion of faith, the principle of the "unity of truth" (*unitas veritatis*) applies. When it is a question of differences which do not jeopardize this communion, the "unity of charity" (*unitas caritatis*) should be safeguarded.
- f) 27. Even if the doctrine of the faith is not in question, the theologian will not present his own opinions or divergent hypotheses as though they were non-arguable conclusions. Respect for the truth as well as for the People of God requires this discretion (cf. *Rom* 14:1-15; *1 Cor* 8; 10: 23-33). For the same reasons, the theologian will refrain from giving untimely public expression to them.
- g) 28. The preceding considerations have a particular application to the case of the theologian who might have serious difficulties, for reasons which appear to him wellfounded, in accepting a non-irreformable magisterial teaching.

Such a disagreement could not be justified if it were based solely upon the fact that the validity of the given teaching is not evident or upon the opinion that the opposite position would be the more probable. Nor, furthermore, would the judgment of the subjective conscience of the theologian justify it because conscience does not constitute an autonomous and exclusive authority for deciding the truth of a doctrine.

- h) 29. In any case there should never be a diminishment of that fundamental openness loyally to accept the teaching of the Magisterium as is fitting for every believer by reason of the obedience of faith.
- i) 38. Finally, argumentation appealing to the obligation to follow one's own conscience cannot legitimate dissent. This is true, first of all, because conscience illumines the practical judgment about a decision to make, while here we are concerned with the truth of a doctrinal pronouncement. This is furthermore the case because while the theologian, like every believer, must follow his conscience, he is also obliged to form it. Conscience is not an independent and infallible faculty. It is an act of moral judgement regarding a responsible choice. A right conscience is one duly illumined by faith and by the objective moral law and it presupposes, as well, the uprightness of the will in the pursuit of the true good. The right conscience of the Catholic theologian presumes not only faith in the Word of God whose riches he must explore, but also love for the Church from whom he receives his mission, and respect for her divinely assisted Magisterium. Setting up a supreme magisterium of conscience in opposition to the magisterium of the Church means adopting a principle of free examination incompatible with the economy of Revelation and its transmission in the Church and thus also with a correct understanding of theology and the role of the theologian. The propositions of faith are not the product of mere individual research and free criticism of the Word of God but constitute an ecclesial heritage. If there occur a separation from the Bishops who watch over and keep the apostolic tradition alive, it is the bond with Christ which is irreparably

compromised(38). *This Instruction was adopted at an Plenary Meeting of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and was approved at an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect by the Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, who ordered its publication.* Given at Rome, at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on May 24, 1990, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. **JOSEPH CARD. RATZINGER** *Prefect*

47) **DOCTRINAL COMMENTARY ON THE CONCLUDING FORMULA OF THE PROFESSIO FIDEI** Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [*This commentary was issued coincident with the promulgation of "Ad tuendam fidem" by Pope John Paul II] Rome, from the offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, June 29, 1998, the Solemnity of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. + Joseph Card. Ratzinger Prefect*

5. The first paragraph states: "With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed." The object taught in this paragraph is constituted by all those doctrines of divine and catholic faith which the Church proposes as divinely and formally revealed and, as such, as irreformable.¹¹

These doctrines are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and defined with a solemn judgment as divinely revealed truths either by the Roman Pontiff when he speaks 'ex cathedra,' or by the College of Bishops gathered in council, or infallibly proposed for belief by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.

These doctrines require *the assent of theological faith* by all members of the faithful. Thus, whoever obstinately places them in doubt or denies them falls under the censure of heresy, as indicated by the respective canons of the Codes of Canon Law.¹²

6. The second proposition of the *Professio fidei* states: "I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals." The object taught by this formula includes *all those teachings belonging to the dogmatic or moral area,*¹³ *which are necessary for faithfully keeping and expounding the deposit of faith, even if they have not been proposed by the Magisterium of the Church as formally revealed. Such doctrines can be defined solemnly by the Roman Pontiff when he speaks 'ex cathedra' or by the College of Bishops gathered in council, or they can be taught infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Church as a "sententia definitiva tenenda".*¹⁴

Every believer, therefore, is required to give *firm and definitive assent* to these truths, based on faith in the Holy Spirit's assistance to the Church's Magisterium, and on the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Magisterium in these matters.¹⁵ Whoever denies these truths would be in a position of *rejecting a truth of Catholic doctrine*¹⁶ *and would therefore no longer be in full communion with the Catholic Church.*

8. With regard to the nature of the assent owed to the truths set forth by the Church as divinely revealed (those of the first paragraph) or to be held definitively (those of the second paragraph), it is important to emphasize that there is no difference with respect to the full and irrevocable character of the assent which is owed to these teachings. The difference concerns the supernatural virtue of faith: in the case of truths of the first paragraph, the assent is based directly on faith in the authority of the Word of God (doctrines de fide credenda); in the case of the truths of the second paragraph, the assent

is based on faith in the Holy Spirit's assistance to the Magisterium and on the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Magisterium (doctrines *de fide tenenda*).

9. The Magisterium of the Church, however, teaches a doctrine to be *believed as divinely revealed* (first paragraph) or to be *held definitively* (second paragraph) with an act which is either *defining* or *non-defining*. In the case of a *defining* act, a truth is solemnly defined by an "ex cathedra" pronouncement by the Roman Pontiff or by the action of an ecumenical council. In the case of a *non-defining* act, a doctrine is taught *infallibly* by the ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Bishops dispersed throughout the world who are in communion with the Successor of Peter. *Such a doctrine can be confirmed or reaffirmed by the Roman Pontiff, even without recourse to a solemn definition, by declaring explicitly that it belongs to the teaching of the ordinary and universal Magisterium as a truth that is divinely revealed* (first paragraph) or as a truth of Catholic doctrine (second paragraph). Consequently, when there has not been a judgment on a doctrine in the solemn form of a definition, but this doctrine, belonging to the inheritance of the *depositum fidei*, is taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, which necessarily includes the Pope, such a doctrine is to be understood as having been set forth infallibly.¹⁷ The declaration of *confirmation* or *reaffirmation* by the Roman Pontiff in this case is not a new dogmatic definition, but a formal attestation of a truth already possessed and infallibly transmitted by the Church.

10. The third proposition of the *Professio fidei* states: "Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act." To this paragraph belong *all those teachings on faith and morals - presented as true or at least as sure, even if they have not been defined with a solemn judgment or proposed as definitive by the ordinary and universal Magisterium*. Such teachings are, however, an authentic expression of the ordinary Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff or of the College of Bishops and therefore require *religious submission of will and intellect*.¹⁸ They are set forth in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of revelation, or to recall the conformity of a teaching with the truths of faith, or lastly to warn against ideas incompatible with these truths or against dangerous opinions that can lead to error.¹⁹

A proposition contrary to these doctrines can be qualified as *erroneous* or, in the case of teachings of the prudential order, as *rash* or *dangerous* and therefore "tuto doceri non potest".²⁰

11. Examples. Without any intention of completeness or exhaustiveness, some examples of doctrines relative to the three paragraphs described above can be recalled. To the truths of the first paragraph belong the articles of faith of the Creed, the various Christological dogmas²¹ and Marian dogmas;²² the doctrine of the institution of the sacraments by Christ and their efficacy with regard to grace;²³ the doctrine of the real

and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist²⁴ and the sacrificial nature of the eucharistic celebration;²⁵ the foundation of the Church by the will of Christ;²⁶ the doctrine on the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff;²⁷ the doctrine on the existence of original sin;²⁸ the doctrine on the immortality of the spiritual soul and on the immediate recompense after death;²⁹ the absence of error in the inspired sacred texts;³⁰ the doctrine on the grave immorality of direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being.³¹

With respect to *the truths of the second paragraph*, with reference to those connected with revelation by a logical necessity, one can consider, for example, the development in the understanding of the doctrine connected with the definition of papal infallibility, prior to the dogmatic definition of the First Vatican Council. The primacy of the Successor of Peter was always believed as a revealed fact, although until Vatican I the discussion remained open as to whether the conceptual elaboration of what is understood by the terms 'jurisdiction' and 'infallibility' was to be considered an intrinsic part of revelation or only a logical consequence. On the other hand, although its character as a divinely revealed truth was defined in the First Vatican Council, the doctrine on the infallibility and primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff was already recognized as definitive in the period before the council. History clearly shows, therefore, that what was accepted into the consciousness of the Church was considered a true doctrine from the beginning, and was subsequently held to be definitive; however, only in the final stage - the definition of Vatican I - was it also accepted as a divinely revealed truth.

A similar process can be observed in the more recent teaching regarding the doctrine that priestly ordination is reserved only to men. The Supreme Pontiff, while not wishing to proceed to a dogmatic definition, intended to reaffirm that this doctrine is to be held definitively,³² since, founded on the written Word of God, constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.³³ As the prior example illustrates, this does not foreclose the possibility that, in the future, the consciousness of the Church might progress to the point where this teaching could be defined as a doctrine to be believed as divinely revealed.

The doctrine on the illicitness of euthanasia, taught in the Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, can also be recalled. Confirming that euthanasia is "a grave violation of the law of God," the Pope declares that "this doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium".³⁴ It could seem that there is only a logical element in the doctrine on euthanasia, since Scripture does not seem to be aware of the concept. In this case, however, the interrelationship between the orders of faith and reason becomes apparent: Scripture, in fact, clearly excludes every form of the kind of

self-determination of human existence that is presupposed in the theory and practice of euthanasia.

Other examples of moral doctrines which are taught as definitive by the universal and ordinary Magisterium of the Church are: the teaching on the illicitness of prostitution³⁵ and of fornication.³⁶

With regard to those truths connected to revelation by historical necessity and which are to be held definitively, but are not able to be declared as divinely revealed, the following examples can be given: the legitimacy of the election of the Supreme Pontiff or of the celebration of an ecumenical council, the canonizations of saints (*dogmatic facts*), the declaration of Pope Leo XIII in the Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae Curae* on the invalidity of Anglican ordinations ..

No content is abrogated with the passage of time; instead, all of it becomes an irreplaceable inheritance through which the faith of all time, of all believers, and lived out in every place, contemplates the constant action of the Spirit of the risen Christ, the Spirit who accompanies and gives life to his Church and leads her into the fullness of the truth.

48) http://www.cuf.org/faithfacts/details_view.asp?ffID=149 (Catholics United for Faith)

a) Despite the Church's teaching on faith and assent, some Catholics think that they only have to assent to "ex cathedra" and other "solemnly defined" teachings, maintaining that only these are guaranteed to be infallible by the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Church has three basic types of teaching, all of which require the assent of the faithful. The first consists of "divinely revealed" teachings, those which God has imparted to His Church through Scripture and Tradition and which are thus part of the "deposit of faith" (Catechism, nos. 84; 2033). These teachings require the assent of faith, based on the authority of God's Word. One is guilty of heresy if he denies such teachings (cf. Catechism, no. 2089). The second category consists of those teachings on which the Church has definitively pronounced. These teachings require an assent of faith, but it is based on faith in the Holy Spirit's assistance to the Magisterium and on the related doctrine of infallibility, which the Catechism's glossary defines thus: "the gift of the Holy Spirit whereby the pastors of the Church, the pope and the bishops in union with him, can definitively proclaim a doctrine of faith or morals for the belief of the faithful. . . "(emphasis added). As the Code of Canon Law provides, "anyone who rejects propositions which are to be held definitively sets himself against the teaching of the Catholic Church" (Canon 750 §2). While not part of the deposit of faith, these teachings are "required for the holy keeping and faithful exposition of the deposit of faith" (Canon 750 §2). Teachings in these first two categories require full and irrevocable assent. As the Catechism explains, they are taught infallibly:

The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of infallibility. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals,

without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed (no. 2035, original emphasis).

Thus, these two categories of teachings, infallibly proposed, are equal in scope to ("is coextensive with") the deposit of revelation. There is a third category of teachings that "leads to a better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals" (Catechism, no. 892). These teachings illuminate understanding, helping revelation to bear fruit.

While not definitively proposed, they are presented as true or sure. **The Magisterium receives divine assistance in proposing these teachings, to which the faithful "'are to adhere to it with religious assent' which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it"** (Catechism, no. 892, footnote omitted). An example would be the Church's recent teaching that the death penalty should not be administered unless "this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor" (Catechism, no. 2267).

- b) Thus, there are three types of teachings that require our assent, two of which are proposed infallibly. How does the Magisterium propose teaching infallibly? There are two ways: through the extraordinary Magisterium and through the ordinary and universal Magisterium.

The "extraordinary Magisterium" is so named because it issues solemn or formal pronouncements on relatively rare occasions. The extraordinary Magisterium pronounces infallibly through two types of solemn definitions. The first type of definition is by a Pope alone when he speaks "ex cathedra"- "from the chair" of Peter-that is, when "acting in the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine concerning faith and morals to be held by the universal Church." Examples include the dogmatic definitions regarding Mary's Immaculate Conception (Pope Pius IX, 1854) and Assumption into heaven (Pope Pius XII, 1950).

- c) The second type of definition occurs when the Pope and the bishops in union with him solemnly define a teaching at an "ecumenical" or "general" council-a council whose teachings are binding on the whole Church (cf. canon 750 §2). Examples include the various solemn definitions made at the Council of Trent, including on the Mass, the sacraments, justification, and indulgences.
- d) **Some Catholics mistakenly try to limit infallibility to only those teachings that are solemnly defined.** They cite a section of canon law, "no doctrine is understood to be infallibly defined unless this is manifestly demonstrated" (canon 749 § 2). **This section, however, does not limit infallibility to solemn definitions. Instead, it prohibits placing a doctrine on the level of a solemn definition unless it can be shown to be so. A doctrine itself, however, may be infallible on another level. As Vatican II, the Catechism, and the Code of Canon Law all affirm, any definitively proposed teaching enjoys the charism of infallibility, not simply those which are solemnly defined.**
- e) The ordinary and universal Magisterium is the normal or usual means by which the Pope and the bishops in union with him infallibly propose teachings to the whole Church. It is exercised when the Pope and bishops agree that a particular doctrine is to be held definitively, and is typically carried out when the bishops are dispersed throughout the world in their respective dioceses. **The ordinary and universal Magisterium also teaches infallibly when, without issuing a solemn definition, it definitively confirms**

or reaffirms the Church's teachings at an ecumenical council, e.g., through a dogmatic constitution.

- f) **If a teaching is taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, it is necessarily definitive and therefore infallible.** However, controversies sometimes arise as to whether a particular doctrine is in fact a teaching of the ordinary and universal Magisterium. **On such occasions, the Pope can definitively confirm or reaffirm that a particular doctrine is indeed infallibly taught by that Magisterium. In such cases, the Pope does not make an ex cathedra pronouncement. Rather, he infallibly and definitively pronounces that a doctrine "has been constantly maintained and held by Tradition and transmitted by the ordinary, universal Magisterium."**
- g) **The definitive character of such papal pronouncements is rooted in the very Tradition they confirm. Thus, the infallibility of these reaffirmations follows in part from the infallibility of previous teachings they affirm. As Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, the secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has explained, "a papal pronouncement of confirmation enjoys the same infallibility as the teaching of the ordinary, universal Magisterium. . . ." These definitive pronouncements provide a more concrete way of knowing that a doctrine has been proposed infallibly.**
- 49) **We believe all that is contained in the word of God written or handed down, and that the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed, whether by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal magisterium.** -Pope Paul VI *The Credo of the People of God Proclaimed by His Holiness on June 30, 1968*
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/p6credo.htm>
- 50) **Papal canonizations of saints are infallible. In the course of performing a canonization, the pope states "we declare and define that Blessed N., is a saint" (example). This triggers the Church's gift of infallibility, which Vatican I teaches "the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals" (source). Consequently, the verb "define" has come to be used as a trigger word for infallible papal statements. If you see a pope say "we define" or "I define," it is a signal that he is making a definition and thus exercising the Church's gift of infallibility. (This is not the only way in which he can do this, but it is the standard way.)**
- a) In Quodlib. IX, a. 16, St. Thomas says: "Since the honour we pay the saints is in a certain sense a profession of faith, i.e., a belief in the glory of the Saints [*quâ sanctorum gloriam credimus*] we must piously believe that in this matter also the judgment of the Church is not liable to error."
- b) The language used in declaring a saint—"we solemnly decide and define".
- c) "In honour of . . . we **decree and define** that Blessed N. is a Saint, and we inscribe his name in the catalogue of saints, and order that his memory by devoutly and piously celebrated yearly on the . . . day of . . . his feast."