

MT. ST. MICHAEL

Tuesday Evening Doctrine Classes – 6:30-7:30 p.m.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE PAPACY (many points will be taken from 1911 *Catholic Encyclopedia*)

All audio recordings of classes & study sheets will be posted at the following link. You may listen online or download to your own computer.

<https://tinyurl.com/Papacyclasses>

December 11, 2018

THE OBJECT OF THE CHURCH'S INFALLIBILITY

...the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
(I Timothy 3:15)

1. By her very nature, the Church is necessarily infallible in her teaching. Otherwise, she could not be a sure guide to salvation. If she could err and thereby lead the faithful astray, it would mean that Satan has triumphed over Christ!
2. The infallibility of the Church has two objects, one primary, the other secondary:
 - a. Primary – each and every religious truth contained in Scripture or Tradition
 - b. Secondary – all those matters closely connected with revealed doctrine about which we must have certainty
 - i. Theological conclusions
 - ii. Dogmatic facts
 - iii. Laws of the Church
 - iv. Approval of religious orders
 - v. Canonization of saints
3. **Primary object: the religious truths (doctrines) found in Scripture or Tradition**
 - a. The doctrines contained in the Old Testament were revealed by God through the writers of its various books. Jesus Christ taught the Apostles all the truths they needed to know to get to heaven. The Apostles and Evangelists in turn communicated those truths to us.
 - b. This primary object also contains the following
 - i. **The Church's decisions on which books of the Old or New Testament are authentic (this was already done many centuries ago)**
 - ii. **The Church's explanation of the doctrines in Old & New Testament**
 - iii. **The Church's dogmatic terminology in explaining said doctrines**
4. **Secondary object:** the religious truths closely connected to Scripture or Tradition, although they are not formally contained within them
 - a. **Theological conclusions** – whatever the Church deduces from Scripture or Tradition
 - e.g. Killing a human being is gravely sinful.
Abortion is the killing of a human being.
Therefore, abortion is gravely sinful.
 - b. **Dogmatic facts** – not contained in Revelation, but form the basis of the Church's teaching authority (“a fact in which a doctrine is expressed”)
 - e.g. Was Vatican Council I a legitimate Ecumenical Council?
Was Pius XII legitimately elected the Bishop of Rome?
Was St. Jerome's Vulgate translation of the Bible into Latin from the original Hebrew and Greek an accurate one?

- c. **Laws of the Church**, i.e. Code of Canon Law, Liturgical laws of the Church
 - i. If the Church could lead souls to hell by issuing evil laws, then it would be failing in its very mission. Therefore, one can (and must) follow her laws as a sure doctrinal guide (*"Lex orandi, lex credenda"*), e.g. Canon 1239 #1 – Persons who die without Baptism are not to be admitted to ecclesiastical burial, Canon 1239 #2 – Catechumens who through no fault of their own die without Baptism are to be considered as baptized.
 - ii. This is one of the most obvious ways to prove the Novus Ordo religion to be false: the evil changes in the Mass and Sacraments are something that the true Church *could never have done*.
- d. **Approval of Religious Orders** – the Orders and Congregations officially approved by the Church are guaranteed to be a sure path in the acquiring of Christian perfection.
- e. **Canonization of Saints** – the Church guarantees that not only is a person in heaven, but is to be venerated as one who lived a life of heroic virtue. Words used by the Popes in canonizing: "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare that N. has been admitted to heaven, and we *decree and define* that he is to be venerated in public and in private as a saint."
 - i. If canonization could not be a guarantee of a saint worthy of veneration in heaven, the very real possibility of venerating souls who were damned would exist...
 - ii. Many steps need to be taken before a person is canonized, among them the determination that the person practiced virtue to a *heroic degree*. But remember, it's not the process that guarantees the infallible declaration, but rather the infallible decree of the Pope that does. The steps are the result of the Holy Ghost guiding the Church and the Church's wisdom in establishing them to make use of the human means possible for determining the facts.
 - iii. Besides these steps, two first-class miracles are required for beatification.
 - iv. Two additional first-class miracles are required for canonization.