

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 18, 2018

THE PERSONAL INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE

*This rock will never crumble, nor flake, given that its solidity is guaranteed in the text of Matthew until the end of time. The rock remains and no one will scratch it, implicated as she [the Church] is in a divine undertaking. But on occasion some men may take from others the vision of the rock. Other things may be made to seem like the rock, other things that may appear to all as such. The distinction is a profound one – even if the errors of these men are capable of veiling the reality, they cannot destroy it. The question, easy for all, that presents itself is one of the visibility of the rock. If then situations should occur that take from certain men the visibility of the rock in the Church, the consequences would be grave. (Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, “La Roccia”, *Renovatio*, vol. 2, no. 2 [1967], pp. 183-184; [Novusordowatch.org translation]; underlining added. Reprinted in Giuseppe Siri, *Il Dovero dell’Ortodossia* [Pisa: Giardini Editori, 1987], p. 6*

*The prophecies of the Apocalypse show that Satan will imitate the Church of Christ to deceive mankind; he will set up a church of Satan in opposition to the Church of Christ. Antichrist will assume the role of Messiah; his prophet will act the part of Pope, and there will be imitations of the Sacraments of the Church. There will also be lying wonders in imitation of the miracles wrought in the Church. (Fr. Sylvester Berry, *The Church of Christ*, p. 119)*

There seems to be no reason why a false Church might not become universal, even more universal than the true one, at least for a time. (ibid., p. 155)

1. In our last two classes we demonstrated the infallibility of the Church. Since the Pope is the Chief Teacher and Ruler of the Church, we have thereby proved his infallibility as well. Since the Church cannot err, the Pope cannot err, either.

2. Key passages from Vatican Council I on the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, Session 4, July 18, 1870, Chapter 4

So the fathers of the fourth council of Constantinople, following the footsteps of their predecessors, published this solemn profession of faith: The first condition of salvation is to maintain the rule of the true faith. And since that saying of our lord Jesus Christ, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church” (Matthew 16:18), cannot fail of its effect, the words spoken are confirmed by their consequences. For in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been preserved unblemished, and sacred doctrine been held in honor...

It was for this reason that the bishops of the whole world, sometimes individually, sometimes gathered in synods, according to the long established custom of the churches and the pattern of ancient usage referred to this apostolic see those dangers especially which arose in matters concerning the faith. This was to ensure that any damage suffered by the faith should be repaired in that place above all where the Faith can know no failing (letter of St. Bernard to Pope Innocent II, Epistola 191).

The Roman pontiffs, too, as the circumstances of the time or the state of affairs suggested, sometimes by summoning ecumenical councils or consulting the opinion of the churches scattered throughout the world, sometimes by special synods, sometimes by taking advantage of other useful

means afforded by divine providence, defined as doctrines to be held those things which, by God's help, they knew to be in keeping with Sacred Scripture and the apostolic traditions.

For the Holy Ghost was promised to the successors of Peter not so that they might, by His revelation, make known some new doctrine, but that, by His assistance, they might religiously guard and faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith transmitted by the apostles. Indeed, their apostolic teaching was embraced by all the venerable fathers and revered and followed by all the holy orthodox doctors, for they knew very well that this See of St. Peter always remains unblemished by any error, in accordance with the divine promise of our Lord and Savior to the prince of His disciples: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22:32).

This gift of truth and never-failing faith was therefore divinely conferred on Peter and his successors in this See so that they might discharge their exalted office for the salvation of all, and so that the whole flock of Christ might be kept away by them from the poisonous food of error and be nourished with the sustenance of heavenly doctrine. Thus the tendency to schism is removed and the whole church is preserved in unity, and, resting on its foundation, can stand firm against the gates of hell...

Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God Our Savior, for the exaltation of the catholic religion and for the salvation of the Christian people, with the approval of the sacred council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks *EX CATHEDRA*, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he 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.

So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema.

3. False Notions regarding Papal infallibility

- a. The Pope always uses the full extent of his infallible teaching power.
- b. Everything the Pope does is infallible.
- c. The Pope is impeccable.
- d. The Pope teaches infallibly only when he is teaching solemnly.
- e. Infallibility makes the pope's will the ultimate standard of truth or goodness.
- f. The Pope is omniscient.
- g. When the Pope is teaching infallibly, he is being directly inspired by God.
- h. The Pope need not take any human means of inquiry, research, or discussion before making an infallible pronouncement.
- i. Gallicanism says that individual popes CAN err, but God will prevent error from taking deep root. In other words, errors of one pope can be "fixed" by a subsequent one.
- j. One can appeal a papal pronouncement to a General Council.
- k. All of the Vatican Congregations and Tribunals (departments of Church government) are infallible (cf. case of Galileo) – not true, for only the Pope is personally infallible.

4. The Pope is infallible only when he teaches "ex cathedra"

- a. He must be teaching (not necessarily *addressing*) the entire Church.
- b. He must be using the full extent of his teaching power.

5. Examples of non-infallible Papal teaching (but they are still reverently accepted because of the respect and reverence due to the Papal office)

- a. Something praised or recommended by the Pope
- b. Encyclicals are not necessarily infallible, but they most certainly can be, and sometimes have been such (the Pope settled the matter on some theological point)
- c. The Pope's opinion on something
- d. The Pope's wishes