

throughout the ages and by the judgment of very many of the Church's bishops and doctors". Indeed, in this Catechism, composed at the command of Clement VIII, the illustrious holy theologian expounded for the use of the Christian people and especially of children, the Catholic truth in a plain style, so brilliantly, exactly and orderly that for nearly three centuries in many regions of Europe and the world, it most fruitfully provided the fodder of Christian doctrine to the faithful. In his book expounding the Psalms he conjoined knowledge with piety. (Acts of the Holy See, *Providentissimus Deus*, AAS 23 (Sept. 17, 1931) 433-438, in which Pope Pius XI declared him Doctor of the Church)

6. The Five Opinions which St. Robert examines:

- a. In Book II, Chapter 30 of his voluminous work *De Romano Pontifice* he examined five theories on the deposing of a heretical Pope, were such to happen. He calls them "opinions," but this is for the sake of theological argumentation and analysis. He concludes that the 5th Opinion is the true one, which would thereby make it *no longer an opinion but a conclusion*. As we see above, we have *certitude* about conclusions. They are far stronger than *opinions*.
- b. The Five Opinions
 - i. The Pope cannot be a heretic.
 - ii. Falling into heresy even merely internal, the Pope *ipso facto* loses the papacy.
 - iii. Even though he falls into heresy, the Pope does not lose his office.
 - iv. The Pope heretic is not deposed *ipso facto* but must be deposed by the Church.
 - v. The Pope heretic is *ipso facto* deposed in the moment in which his heresy becomes manifest.

7. Heresy

- a. Important to remember that this is one of the greatest of sins, and automatically severs one from the Church. "For not every sin, however grave it may be, is such as of its own nature to sever a man from the Body of the Church, as does schism or heresy or apostasy. (Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 1943)
 - i. True, the legal declaration of heresy usually happens later, but the person is not cut off from the Church by the legal declaration; rather, he cut himself off by his own action. The legal declaration confirms to everyone that in fact this is what happened.
- b. The sin of Heresy, by definition, is a *pertinacious* rejection of a doctrine that is of divine and Catholic faith.
 - i. "Divine and Catholic faith" denotes anything taught by Jesus Christ and proposed as such by the Catholic Church.
- c. **St. Robert Bellarmine (1610):** "A pope who is a manifest heretic automatically (*per se*) ceases to be pope and head, just as he ceases automatically to be a Christian and a member of the Church. Wherefore, he can be judged and punished by the Church. This is the teaching of all the ancient Fathers who teach that manifest heretics immediately lose all jurisdiction." *De Romano Pontifice*. II.30.

NEXT CLASS: detailed study of St. Robert's own wording in the "Five Opinions."