

# The Three Charisms of the Sacred Magisterium

I believe that the teaching of the holy Catholic Church  
is God's teaching, without exception.

## **The Three Charisms of the Sacred Magisterium**

Revised version, completed February 25, 2003.

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This booklet is a shield against heresy, for whosoever believes firmly in the infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium of the holy Roman Catholic Church has true faith in God and a great protection against the sin of heresy.

This booklet is a sword against heresy, for no matter which truth of the Faith is denied or distorted by any heresy that man could invent, the infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium is an effective argument against that heresy.

# The Three Charisms of the Sacred Magisterium

## Trinity

God is infallible. All other infallibility proceeds from God. There is no infallibility apart from God. The Most Holy Trinity is entirely infallible without exception. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each and all entirely perfect and entirely infallible. The Father-Son-Spirit is one infallible being.

The Trinity is without flaw, omission, or imperfection. To have a flaw is to have something that one ought not to have. An omission is something lacking that ought to be present. An imperfection is when something that ought to be present is present, but in a lesser form and not entirely as it ought to be. The Most Holy Trinity is three times perfect and entirely perfect, without flaw, omission, or imperfection.<sup>1</sup>

## Jesus Christ

Jesus is infallible because Jesus is the Son of God. Everything that Jesus ever said and did is infallible because Jesus is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

Jesus became Incarnate, taking upon Himself a human nature to bind irrevocably to His Divine Nature, within Time and for all Eternity. Even though most human persons are sinners and are very fallible, Jesus is, always has been, and always will be, infallible, even in His human nature.

Jesus, even in His human nature, was entirely perfect: he never sinned; he never said anything false, even by mistake; he never did anything morally wrong, even by mistake; he never did or said anything unwise or harmful to others, even by mistake; he never mistakenly thought or said anything false. Jesus could not be mistaken in what He knew, thought, said, and did. Jesus never made any mistakes at all, because Jesus is God. Jesus was entirely infallible, even in His human nature, because His human nature is forever intimately united to His Divine Nature.

Even in His human nature, Jesus is God. At the Incarnation, the Holy Trinity created a human nature united with the Divine Nature of the Second Person of the Trinity as one Divine Person. Thus the human nature of Jesus Christ is a part of God. Jesus is infallible in both His human and Divine natures because both natures are united in one Divine Infallible Person.

## Sacred Tradition

Sacred Tradition is part of infallible Divine Revelation. Sacred Tradition is “the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation.”<sup>2</sup> Since these deeds were wrought by God, the deeds and their meaning are infallible. The “history of salvation” obviously includes the deeds wrought by God during Old Testament times as well as New Testament times. Therefore, Sacred Tradition is divided into two parts, just as Sacred Scripture is divided into two parts, Old Testament and New Testament.

Christ is God, therefore Sacred Tradition is also the deeds wrought by Christ in the history of salvation. Sacred Tradition is Christ's Way of faith, love, hope, mercy, prayer, self-sacrifice, and more, as He put it into practice in the events of His life, His death on the Cross, His Resurrection, and the “final sending of the Spirit of truth”<sup>3</sup> at Pentecost. Sacred Tradition is not these ideas themselves (of faith, love, hope, mercy, prayer, self-sacrifice, and more), but rather their embodiment in the deeds of God in salvation history, in the life and works of Christ, and in the Church Christ established.

Sacred Tradition is found in Christ's Life. Sacred Tradition is found in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, as established by Christ. Sacred Tradition is transmitted by the lives of ordinary Christians, in so far as they imitate the Life of Christ and follow the Way of Christ. Sacred Tradition is transmitted from one generation to the next by the words and deeds of all faithful Christians, in so far as they imitate Christ, and by the communal spiritual life of the Body of Christ, enlivened and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Sacred Tradition is infallible because it proceeds from Christ, and Christ is infallible. Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are together called the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Sacred Deposit of Faith is infallible because it proceeds from God.

## Sacred Scripture

The Bible is God's Sacred Infallible Scripture. Sacred Scripture is infallible because it was written by God. Even though Sacred Scripture was written by means of many sinful and fallible human persons, God is the One True Author of Sacred Scripture and so Sacred Scripture is infallible.

Sacred Scripture is entirely without flaw, omission, or imperfection, because Sacred Scripture was entirely written by the Most Holy Trinity. Sacred Scripture contains all those things and only those things that God wills.<sup>4</sup> The infallibility of Sacred Scripture proceeds from God.

## Sacred Magisterium

The Sacred Magisterium is the infallible teaching authority of the Church. The Sacred Magisterium can only teach from the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Sacred Magisterium cannot add to, take away from, nor change, the teaching found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Sacred Magisterium can teach anything found, implicitly or explicitly, within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Even if a doctrine has never before been taught explicitly by the Church, the Sacred Magisterium can teach that doctrine infallibly and require its belief by all the faithful, as long as it is found, at least implicitly, within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Truths outside of the Sacred Deposit of Faith cannot be taught by the infallible teaching authority of the Church.

The teaching of the Church consists of nothing other than the Sacred Deposit of Faith. All the infallible teachings of the Sacred Magisterium merely reaffirm, clarify, or expound upon the teachings already present within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. All the Bishops in the world, together with the Pope, cannot teach something infallibly unless it is found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, nor can they contradict or change a teaching found therein.

The Pope and the Bishops are fallible human persons. They are able to interpret the Sacred Deposit of Faith infallibly for two reasons. First, the Sacred Deposit of Faith, which they are interpreting and which is the source of all their teaching, is itself infallible. Second, when the Pope and the Bishops exercise their gift of infallible teaching authority, it is the Holy Spirit who teaches through them. The Sacred Magisterium is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the whole Church, but it resides solely in the Bishops of the Church, including, in a special way, the Pope. When the Pope and the Bishops teach infallibly, it is the Holy Spirit who teaches infallibly. The Holy Spirit of Truth is infallible, therefore the Sacred Magisterium is infallible.

The sinful and fallible writers of Sacred Scripture were able to write the infallible books of the Holy Bible because the Holy Spirit was working in and through them. Similarly, the Pope and the Bishops can interpret and teach infallibly from the Sacred Deposit of Faith because their teaching is the infallible work of the Holy Spirit. The infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium is a gift and a work of the Holy Spirit, who dwells and acts continually in the living Body of Christ, the Church.

The gift of Papal Infallibility proceeds from the Holy Spirit. When the Pope teaches under Papal Infallibility, it is the Holy Spirit who is teaching. The Holy Spirit is infallible, even when the Holy Spirit expresses Himself through a sinful and fallible Pope. When the Pope consecrates the Eucharist, it is Christ who consecrates the Eucharist. When the Pope teaches infallibly, it is Christ who teaches infallibly. Christ continues to teach infallibly, just as He did during His Ministry, through the Holy Spirit of Truth whom Christ sent upon the Church at Pentecost.

## Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium

Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium is a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity. Tradition is greater than Scripture, just as the Father is greater than the Son. Scripture proceeds from Tradition, just as the Son proceeds from the Father. Scripture is a written work, which arises out of Tradition. The Son is the Word of God, Who arises out of the Father. If there were no Father, there would be no Son. If there were no Tradition, there would be no Scripture. The Magisterium proceeds from Tradition and Scripture, just as the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son. The Magisterium is enlivened by the Spirit. The Magisterium proceeds primarily from Tradition and secondarily from Scripture, just as the Spirit proceeds primarily from the Father and secondarily

from the Son. The Magisterium teaches primarily from Tradition and secondarily from Scripture, just as the Spirit teaches primarily from the Father and secondarily from the Son. The Spirit teaches secondarily from the Son, because the Son only knows what the Father teaches Him and only has what the Father gives Him. The Son is secondary to the Father, therefore, the Spirit proceeds primarily from the Father and secondarily from the Son. Scripture is secondary to Tradition, therefore, the Magisterium teaches primarily from Tradition and secondarily from Scripture. Tradition-Scripture-Magisterium is one holy gift with three aspects, just as the Father-Son-Spirit is one holy God of Three Persons. It cannot be otherwise. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Rev 2:7).

### The Three Charisms and the Trinity

The Sacred Magisterium consists solely in three charisms and is a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity. The first charism is a reflection of the Father, the second charism is a reflection of the Son, the third charism is a reflection of the Spirit. The three charisms constitute one Sacred Magisterium, just as the Three Persons are One Sacred God.

### The Third Charism of the Sacred Magisterium <sup>5</sup>

Each and every Bishop within the Church possesses one and the same charism (divinely-inspired ability) under the Sacred Magisterium of the Church, given to him as a gift of the Holy Spirit at his Episcopal Ordination. Each Bishop has the charism to be able to participate in the infallible teaching authority of the Church, by means of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, given to each and every Bishop, including the Pope, has two forms by which it is expressed. The first form of the third charism is exercised when the Bishops, in union with the Pope, give daily witness to the teaching of Christ through their words and actions. An individual Bishop, other than the Pope, cannot teach infallibly by his sole authority, but the Bishops “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.”<sup>6</sup> This first form of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium occurs daily among the Bishops who are dispersed through the world, yet who remain in communion with one another and with the Roman Pontiff.

The first form of the third charism requires both that the Pope not have contradicted the “one position as definitively to be held” and that the Pope have given some type of definitive witness to the truth of such a position or teaching. However, this witness could be in the form of past Papal documents or statements. Thus, the first form of the third charism can continue, even when one Pope has died and the next has not yet been chosen. However, no new infallible definitions can proceed from the Sacred Magisterium during that difficult time when the Church is without a Pope. (See “When the Church is Without a Pope” below).

If any teaching of a Bishop or a group of Bishops contracts the teaching of the Pope, then that particular teaching of those Bishops is not in communion with the Pope and cannot possibly fall under the first form of the third charism. Furthermore, if a group of Bishops, no matter how numerous, is in agreement on a particular teaching, they still require some witness or statement by the Pope supporting that teaching as definitively to be held. If the Pope is undecided, or is silent, or simply has not yet indicated that the teaching is definitive truth, then their teaching cannot be said to be in communion with the Roman Pontiff and so does not fall under the first form of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium.

The second form of the third charism occurs when the Bishops meet in an Ecumenical Council, or in another gathering of Bishops representative of the universal Church, under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, to decide on questions of faith and morals. This second form of the third charism differs from the first form in that the Bishops express the “one position as definitively to be held” in a single document, promulgated with the explicit approval of the Pope. (Of course, more than one theological position can be expressed by the same Council or by the same document.) By contrast, the first form of the third charism does not involve the promulgation of a specific document, but rather varying statements and actions

of the Bishops and the Pope, which all nonetheless witness to one and the same definitive position on faith and morals.

The second form of the third charism does not require the Bishops to meet in one geographic location for an Ecumenical Council or other gathering of Bishops. It is possible for the second form of the third charism to occur without an Ecumenical Council and/or without a geographic gathering of the Bishops. The Bishops could “meet” or “gather” by having a worldwide communication with one another and with the Pope, over a period of time, on questions of faith or morals whose answers are found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Such a communication-gathering of the Bishops and the Pope could arrive at “one position as definitively to be held” on questions of faith and morals, and could promulgate such a definitive position, with the approval of the Pope, in an official document. A definitive position on faith or morals arrived at in this way would still be the infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium and would have the same force as if issued by a geographic gathering of Bishops in an Ecumenical Council. (For an example, see “Infallibility in *Evangelium Vitae*” below.)

The explicit approval of the Pope is required for a definitive position, arrived at by any use of the second form of the third charism, to become the infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium. Thus, the second form of the third charism cannot be exercised in the absence of a ruling Pope. The Bishops can still meet and communicate in order to seek and to express the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, but they cannot issue a new statement of definitive judgment on matters of faith or morals, at least not one with the force of the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

From time to time, some few Bishops, who have gone astray from the true teaching of Christ, have abandoned this third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, that is, they have refused to exercise it and have rejected the teaching authority of the Church and the Pope. Yet even these few heretical and schismatic Bishops still possess that third charism, though they refuse to make use of it within themselves and do not acknowledge its action within the other Bishops and the Pope. Similarly, every human person has a conscience, but some refuse to make use of their conscience. They act as if they did not have something which is constantly with them.

The Cardinals of the Church, who are Bishops, each possess and can exercise the charism of participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church, the same as any other Bishop. Cardinals do not have any additional teaching authority or charisms within the Sacred Magisterium, other than that given to each and every Bishop as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Ordination as Bishop confers this charism upon the Bishop; installation as Cardinal adds nothing to that Bishop’s participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church. However, installation as Pope does convey upon a Bishop additional charisms under the Sacred Magisterium.

### The Three Charisms and the Pope

The Sacred Magisterium consists of three charisms given to the Church as a gift of the Holy Spirit of Truth. The Sacred Magisterium consists of nothing other than these three charisms. Only the Pope possesses all three charisms within the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the Church through the Holy Spirit. The other Bishops of the Church possess only the third charism.

Third Charism: The Pope is both a Bishop and the leader of the Bishops. As one of many Bishops, the Pope can exercise the same ability as any other Bishop, to participate in the infallible teaching authority of the Church. The Pope possesses the charism of participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church, by means of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as does each and every Bishop. The Pope can participate in the infallible teaching authority of the Church, just as any Bishop can, in either of the two forms of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium.

However, as the one leader of all the Bishops of the Church, the Pope possesses two specific additional charisms under the gift of the infallible teaching authority given to the Church. Only the Pope possesses these two additional charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

Second Charism: The Pope also has the infallible charism to authoritatively guide and govern the Bishops in their participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church. This special charism is a part of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the Church, but it resides solely in the Pope, not in any other individual Bishop, and not in any group of other Bishops, no matter how numerous. Thus, the Pope can summon a gathering of Bishops, such as an Ecumenical Council, and require them to decide upon questions of faith and morals. Only the Pope has the authority to summon a gathering of Bishops to decide upon teachings found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Pope has the authority and power of the Holy Spirit working within him, to guide and govern the other Bishops in their search for Truth within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, with infallible results. Only the Pope can give final approval to the teachings decided upon by any group of Bishops whatsoever. The Pope possesses the sole ability and the sole authority, under the second charism within the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, to approve of, to decline to approve of, or even to decidedly reject, some or all of the teachings as are decided upon by any group of Bishops.

The second charism is exercised when the Pope authoritatively guides and governs the other Bishops as they daily teach the teaching of Christ in union with one another (under the first form of the third charism). The Bishops can only exercise their participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church, which is the third charism, under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, which is the second charism. And the Pope only exercises the second charism in order to authoritatively guide and govern the other Bishops in their use of the third charism. Therefore, the second and third charisms function together and are inextricably joined, just as the Bishops and the Pope function together and are inextricably joined.

This second charism also applies to discrete gatherings of Bishops convened by the Pope and to on-going discussions among the Bishops, including the Pope, on questions of faith and morals (the second form of the third charism). If there is a question of faith or morals, the Bishops, led and governed authoritatively by the Pope, may discuss the matter, either at a geographical meeting of Bishops (such as an Ecumenical Council), or over a period of time and through various means of communication (a communication-gathering), until they arrive at a decision approved of by the Pope.<sup>7</sup> Such a decision of the Bishops and the Pope is an example of the second and third charisms of the Sacred Magisterium working together. Under the third charism, the Bishops, including the Pope, who is the Bishop of Rome, seek the truth about faith and morals. Under the second charism, the Pope authoritatively guides and governs the other Bishops as they seek to understand and express the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, and the Pope approves of some or all of their decisions on those truths. Once approved of by the Pope, such decisions are infallible, irrefutable, and irrevocable.

Under the third charism, the Bishops have the ability and authority to participate in the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The Pope has the ability and authority to guide and govern the other Bishops in all things, including in their participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium. What is fallible cannot have authority over what is infallible. Therefore, the Pope possesses and exercises a distinct infallible charism, the second charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium, when he authoritatively guides and governs the other Bishops in their use of the third charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

First Charism: The Pope possesses the divinely-given ability to exercise the gift of the Sacred Magisterium by his sole authority, even without the consent and participation of the other Bishops. No other Bishop can do so alone. The Pope has the charism from the Holy Spirit to be able to teach infallibly from the Sacred Deposit of Faith by his sole authority. This special charism is also a part of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the Church, and it too resides solely in the Pope, not in any other individual Bishop, and not in any group of other Bishops, no matter how numerous.

Each and every Pope has the ability to define any teaching found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, by his sole authority, even if that teaching is found only implicitly in the Sacred Deposit of Faith and has never before been taught or understood by the other Bishops of the Church or by the faithful. The Pope has the ability and the authority, within this infallible charism under the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, to define such a teaching infallibly.

Stated simply, this first charism is the Pope's ability and authority, as chief teacher and chief priest in the Church, to point to something, which is already in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, and say, "This too is the

teaching of Christ.” The Pope can define, clarify, and expound upon that teaching, but it must be something already present in Sacred Scripture or Sacred Tradition, at least implicitly.

### Papal Infallibility and the Sacred Magisterium

Papal Infallibility is the three charisms possessed by the Pope within the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the Church through the Holy Spirit. Papal infallibility is an integral part of the infallible teaching authority of the Church, the Sacred Magisterium. Papal Infallibility is not separate from, nor different than, the Sacred Magisterium. Papal infallibility is nothing other than the Sacred Magisterium, as it resides in, and is exercised by, the Pope. The Sacred Magisterium resides solely in the Bishops of the Church, but the Sacred Magisterium resides in unique way and to a greater degree in the Pope. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of the Sacred Magisterium to the Bishops and to the Pope, not merely once, at the time of a Bishop’s ordination or at the time that a man becomes Pope, but continually, as a living gift of the Spirit of Truth dwelling in intimate union with the Bishops and the Pope for the benefit of all the faithful, (and for the benefit of those who do not yet believe).

The Sacred Magisterium consists entirely in the three charisms of the infallible teaching authority of the Church. The first and second charisms reside solely in the Pope. The third charism resides in all the Bishops of the Church, including the Pope. These three charisms are the one gift of the infallible teaching authority of the Church, the Sacred Magisterium. The three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium are distinct from one another, but not separate from one another, much like the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. They are one indivisible whole, yet each retains its distinctions within the overall unity. Therefore, no one charism can ever be truly separated from the other charisms.

The three charisms of the infallible Sacred Magisterium are a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity. The first charism is a reflection of the Father, Whose authority is such that even the Son and Spirit are obedient to Him. The second charism is a reflection of the Son, Who governs all that the Father gives to Him with the authority of the Father. The third charism is a reflection of the Spirit, Who binds the many members of the Church together within the one Body of Christ.

The second charism proceeds solely from the first charism, just as the Second Person of the Trinity proceeds solely from the First Person of the Trinity. The third charism proceeds primarily from the first charism and secondarily from the second charism, just as the Third Person of the Trinity proceeds primarily from the First Person of the Trinity and secondarily from the Second Person of the Trinity.

It is true that the first charism consists in the Pope’s ability to teach from the Sacred Deposit of Faith by his sole authority—but, by this singular ability and authority, he teaches the other Bishops, as well as the rest of the Church. The Bishops then accept this teaching and in turn teach it anew to the faithful. Thus, when the Pope exercises the first charism, defining a teaching by his sole ability and authority, he also exercises the second charism by authoritatively guiding and governing the other Bishops as they accept and themselves teach what the Pope has defined. Then the Bishops as a body, including the Pope, exercise the third charism by teaching this newly defined doctrine to the whole world, as brethren who together believe and teach what Christ taught, and who worship God side by side.

The three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium are a unified whole. Papal Infallibility is the name given to the three charisms as they reside in, and are exercised by, the Pope. The same third charism, found within Papal Infallibility, also resides in, and is exercised by, all the Bishops. Yet the Bishops can only exercise this third charism in union with the Pope, who alone possesses all three charisms together. In other words, the third charism can never truly be separated from, nor function apart from, the other two charisms, which are found only in the Pope. Similarly, the Spirit can never truly be separated from, nor function apart from, the Father and the Son.

There is no infallible Sacred Magisterium apart from the Roman Pontiff. If every Bishop in the world is in agreement on one position to be definitively held, but without the agreement of the Pope, then the teaching does not fall under the infallible Sacred Magisterium. If the Roman Pontiff has never taught it, it is not the teaching of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The individual Bishops of the universal Church can only

exercise the infallible Sacred Magisterium with the participation of the Roman Pontiff. Without the Pope, there is no Sacred Magisterium.

Each and every Bishop possesses the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, but that infallible charism is communal in nature. An individual Bishop exercises the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium only by participating with the other Bishops and the Pope in teaching from the Sacred Deposit of Faith. When the Bishops, together with the Pope, seek the truths hidden in the mysteries of Christ and interpret these truths for the faithful throughout the world, they together exercise the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium.<sup>8</sup> The Bishops must always exercise their charism of the Sacred Magisterium under the guidance, governance, and final authority of the Pope. In no other way can any Bishop, except the Pope, exercise the charism given to him as a gift of the Holy Spirit within the Sacred Magisterium of the Church. Any Bishop who departs from communion with his brother Bishops, or who leaves behind the guidance, governance, and authority of the Pope, is not exercising any charism under the Sacred Magisterium.

Ecumenical Councils cannot teach infallibly, under the second form of the third charism, without the Pope's authoritative leadership and approval, under the second charism. Even the use of the first form of the third charism, through the daily witness and teaching of the Bishops dispersed through the world, requires that such witness and teaching be in harmony with the witness and teaching of the Pope. Since any exercise of the first charism, by the Bishops as a body, of necessity requires the use of the second charism by the Pope, there can be no infallibility under any of the three charisms which is entirely separate from the Pope. All use of the infallible Sacred Magisterium requires communion with, and the participation of, the Roman Pontiff. There is no infallible Sacred Magisterium in isolation from the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, no statement or teaching truly proceeds from the infallible Sacred Magisterium, if it is in contradiction to, or in absence from, the teaching of the Pope. (See "When the Church is Without a Pope" below).

### Terminology

In the past, when the faithful, the clergy, and the theologians of the Church discussed Papal Infallibility, they generally were referring to the first charism of Papal Infallibility. This was termed "papal infallibility," even though it represents only one of the three charisms under the gift of the Sacred Magisterium as it resides in the Pope. Nevertheless, what the Church has taught in the past on papal infallibility is entirely true.

The first two charisms of Papal Infallibility have also been taught by the Church in the past, but they were not numbered and were not generally referred to as charisms of Papal Infallibility. Even so, the Church has already clearly taught these three uses of infallibility by the Pope and the use of the third infallible charism by the Bishops (as a body in union with the Pope). The Church's explicit teaching on Papal Infallibility was first formally defined by the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) further expounded upon this teaching, referring in one way or another to all three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

In my terminology, the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium can also be called the first charism of Papal Infallibility, because the Pope possesses all three charisms of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The second charism of the Sacred Magisterium can likewise be called the second charism of Papal Infallibility, for the same reason. However, the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium can only be referred to as the third charism of Papal Infallibility when it is exercised by the Pope. When the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium is exercised by the other Bishops, it cannot be referred to as the third charism of Papal Infallibility, but only as the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium.

### Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council's teaching on Papal Infallibility is both true and insightful, providing the Church with a depth of understanding on this teaching of faith not previously found in the explicit teaching of the Church. The Sacred Deposit of Faith does not change, but the Church's understanding of that one Ocean of Truth continually increases in depth and breadth. The Second Vatican Council clearly taught all three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

The Second Vatican Council clearly reaffirmed the First Vatican Council's teaching on Papal Infallibility. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, teaches that the Pope can teach infallibly, even without the participation of the other Bishops: "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."<sup>9</sup> This teaching refers to the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium.

The Pope possesses and can exercise the charism of the infallible teaching authority of the Church by his sole authority. "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."<sup>10</sup>

The second charism of Papal Infallibility is also taught by *Lumen Gentium*. The Pope can teach infallibly by his sole authority (under the first charism), but he can also (under the second charism) authoritatively lead and govern the other Bishops when they participate in the Sacred Magisterium (under the third charism): "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..."<sup>11</sup> Here the Second Vatican Council teaches that the Pope does not have to teach alone in order to teach infallibly. He can also join with the Bishops as a body, for the Pope is the head of the body of Christ on earth. Thus, the Pope can exercise the gift of the infallible teaching authority of the Church, not only alone, but also as authoritative leader of the other Bishops, as they seek to understand and express the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith with ever increasing clarity and depth.

The third charism of the Sacred Magisterium was also taught by the Second Vatican Council. The Pope's use of the second charism occurs in conjunction with the Bishops' use of the third charism. Thus, the Pope authoritatively leads and guides the other Bishops in their search for, belief in, and expression of, the truths found in Divine Revelation. Since the Bishops can participate in the infallible Sacred Magisterium in such a manner, they certainly each possess a charism of the Holy Spirit under the Sacred Magisterium.

Both forms of the third charism are referred to by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. *Lumen Gentium* explicitly refers to the first form of the third charism, possessed by each and every Bishop, but exercised only communally, not individually.

"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."<sup>12</sup>

Here the Second Vatican Council clearly distinguishes between the Bishops' participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium, as a body with the Pope as their head, and the individual charisms of infallibility, which belong solely to the Pope. Individual Bishops, other than the Pope, cannot exercise infallibility alone, but, as a body led by the Pope, they can exercise the infallible Sacred Magisterium by teaching from the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Certainly, this ability to "proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly," even though it is communal in nature and is limited to the Bishops as a body led by the Pope, is nevertheless a charism under the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. Just as certain is the truth that the Pope, as one of many Bishops, can also exercise this same charism within the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The Pope often exercises this third charism of infallibility by teaching, alongside his brother Bishops, what the Church has always taught and continues to teach—the mysteries of Christ found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

The above quote refers to the first form of the third charism, when the Bishops and the Pope daily witness to the universal teaching of the Church. But *Lumen Gentium* also refers to the second form of the third charism, when the Bishops gather together, led by the Pope, to decide on questions of faith and morals. "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..."<sup>13</sup> Thus, the second form of the third charism occurs when the Bishops gather together with the Roman Pontiff to define judgments on the truths of Divine Revelation.

Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium is itself infallible under this second form of the third charism, (exercised by means of an Ecumenical Council). At the Second Vatican Council, the Bishops of the Church, led by the Pope, decided upon this expression of the infallible teaching found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

#### Further Insights

The teaching of the Sacred Magisterium is authentically and infallibly the teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Therefore, all the faithful must believe such teaching in its entirety and without exception, because the Sacred Deposit of Faith is the infallible teaching of God. Clearly and repeatedly, *Lumen Gentium* teaches that the Pope, in exercising the Sacred Magisterium with or without the other Bishops, can only teach from the Sacred Deposit 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, which must be religiously guarded and faithfully expounded."<sup>14</sup>

The Sacred Magisterium is a gift given to the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit. This gift resides in the Bishops of the Church and most especially in the Pope. "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."<sup>15</sup> Individual Bishops cannot, by their own ability or authority, exercise the infallible teaching authority of the Church. Individual Bishops can only participate in the Sacred Magisterium, in communion with the other Bishops, authoritatively led and governed by the Pope. The Pope and the Bishops exercise this gift of the infallible Sacred Magisterium to teach, correct and guide the faithful as they follow the Way of Christ, and to increase the Church's understanding of the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

The teaching that the Pope has three charisms under the Sacred Magisterium is obviously true. The Pope is a Bishop, and therefore he has all of the powers and abilities of a Bishop, and more besides. The Pope must therefore possess the same charism of participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church as any other Bishop. The third charism, which is given to each and every Bishop, is described with the phrase, 'participation in,' because no individual Bishop, other than the Pope, can exercise the gift of the Sacred Magisterium by his sole authority.

The Pope is the authoritative leader of the Bishops, and therefore he is also the authoritative leader of the Bishops when they participate in the gift of the Sacred Magisterium. Without doubt, this ability and authority constitutes a unique additional charism given only to the Pope, as part of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium. This ability and authority of the Pope must be a charism under the Sacred Magisterium, because it includes authority over the other Bishops specifically within their participation in the infallible teaching authority of the Church.

The first charism given to the Pope within the gift of the Sacred Magisterium is that which has been so often discussed in the Church, and which was explicitly taught by the First and Second Vatican Councils. This first charism has been called, "papal infallibility," even though it constitutes only one of the three charisms of infallibility given to the Roman Pontiff.

#### Papal Infallibility in Sacred Scripture

A precursor to Papal Infallibility is found in Sacred Scripture. This example is not Papal Infallibility itself, but a foreshadowing of Papal Infallibility, found within the Jewish faith of ancient times. The Jewish faith was intended by God to prepare for the arrival of the Messiah. Numerous elements within the Jewish faith prepared for, or were symbolic of, elements of the Christian faith.

"But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.' He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." (Jn 11:49-52).

In the above passage, the Gospel of John tells us that Caiaphas' words were a true prophecy from God. But how could a man who was trying to kill the Messiah make such a true prophecy from God? He was able to teach the truth about Christ, despite his own sins and failings, by virtue of his position as high priest of the Jewish faith. Notice the distinction made in this passage—the man spoke as high priest and not of his own accord.

The same distinction is made in the Catholic faith concerning the Sacred Magisterium. The Pope must be speaking as chief priest and chief teacher of the Church, not merely expressing his own opinion, for his teaching to fall under the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium. When the Pope teaches in his role as leader of the Bishops and of the Church, his teaching is called *ex cathedra* (“from the chair” of Saint Peter). In the above example from Sacred Scripture, the Jewish high priest teaches the truth about Christ in a way which is analogous to *ex cathedra*. He teaches by virtue of his role as high priest.

The Gospel of John states that the Jewish high priest “prophesied,” meaning that it was God who was teaching the truth through him. In the Catholic faith, when the Pope teaches, with or without the participation of the other Bishops, under the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, it is the truth from God. The Pope and the Bishops are able to teach the truth about Christ by virtue of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, which resides in them through the work of the Holy Spirit. They are not teaching of their own accord, and their sins and failings do not prevent the Truth from being taught through them.

Notice also that the Jewish high priest taught the truth about Christ without being aware of the full depth and breadth of his teaching. He taught that it was better for Jesus to die for the nation, but the Gospel adds, “and not for the nation only....” (Jn 11:52). The high priest did not understand the full truth implicit within his own words, that Jesus would die for the salvation of all. There was more to the truth of his teaching than he himself understood; yet as much as he did understand was true also.

When the Pope and the Bishops teach under the Sacred Magisterium, they teach and understand the truth. But sometimes the truth they teach is not fully understood, even by the Pope and the Bishops. One reason is that the teaching of the Catholic faith includes many mysteries of God which no mere human person can fully comprehend. An example of this is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The Church teaches the truth about the Holy Trinity, but the fullness of that truth is beyond what even the teachers and leaders of the Church can understand or express.

Another reason is that sometimes the truth which the Pope and Bishops themselves are teaching will be more fully understood as time passes and as the faithful meditate devoutly on the mysteries of God. Certainly, the teaching of the Church is not anything other than, nor anything in contradiction to, what the Pope and the Bishops understand and intend within their teaching. However, their teaching sometimes has a greater depth and breadth than even they themselves fully comprehend. An example of this is the Church's teaching on the role of the Virgin Mary in our salvation. The Church has always taught of the importance of Mary within Christ's work of salvation. But the Church's understanding of the Virgin Mary and her role in our salvation has continually increased as the centuries have passed, and there is much more to understand, yet the Sacred Deposit of Faith is unchanging and without error.

### Examples of the Three Charisms

All the Popes throughout history have exercised Papal Infallibility through one or more of the three charisms which comprise the gift of the Sacred Magisterium. Whenever the Pope exercises any of the three charisms of the infallible Sacred Magisterium, this is correctly referred to as Papal Infallibility.

Under the third charism, each Pope teaches the teaching of Christ, in union with the other Bishops. Also under the third charism, the Pope participates with the Bishops in discussions seeking a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Christ. The Pope, under the second charism, authoritatively guides and governs the Bishops during such discussions, and can rule definitively on the results of such discussions. However, the Pope can, under the third charism, also participate in such discussions with the other Bishops merely as a fellow Bishop seeking a deeper understanding of the Sacred Deposit of Faith. In so far as the Pope chooses to participate in such inquiries alongside his brother Bishops, he is exercising the third charism under the Sacred Magisterium, as are the other Bishops. Nevertheless, when the Pope participates in the exercise of the third charism with the other Bishops, the Pope must also exercise the second charism, by presiding over the use of the third charism

by the other Bishops, in order for a new definition, or a deeper understanding of a previous teaching, to fall under the infallible Sacred Magisterium. Without a contemporary use of the second charism, the third charism can only continue to teach and reaffirm prior teachings of the infallible Sacred Magisterium, teachings which were previously confirmed by the Roman Pontiff.

When the Bishops of the world, at the Second Vatican Council, discussed and decided upon questions of faith and morals, under the guidance, governance, and final authority of the Pope, they were exercising the third charism under the Sacred Magisterium, but the Pope was exercising both the second and third charisms. The Pope was exercising the third charism by participating in the Second Vatican Council as a fellow Bishop, and he exercised the second charism by authoritatively guiding and governing the Council and by giving his official approval to its decisions.

When Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council, he was exercising the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium by summoning the Bishops and requiring them to decide on questions of faith and morals. Thus, it was truly the Holy Spirit who, through the charism given to the Pope under the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, summoned the Bishops to the Second Vatican Council. Pope John XXIII even stated plainly that he called the Second Vatican Council in response to the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

When Pope Paul VI gave his official approval to the documents and teachings of the Second Vatican Council, he was exercising the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium. He used his ability and authority, under the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium, which is given solely to the Pope by the Holy Spirit, to authoritatively guide and govern the Bishops at the Second Vatican Council, and to choose whether or not to approve of some or all of the decisions on faith and morals found in the documents of that Council.

Of course, not every paragraph of the documents of the Council teaches from the Sacred Deposit of Faith on faith and morals, so not every paragraph contains infallible doctrine taught by the Sacred Magisterium. Some portions of the documents of Vatican II contain decisions on practical matters of organization and procedure.

Some commentators say that there are no infallible teachings in the documents of Vatican II. Previous Councils often specified infallible teachings by calling them “Canons,” and by attaching an excommunication, (“anathema sit”) to those who believe to the contrary. But this method of specifying an infallible teaching is not essential to the criteria for the infallible teaching of an Ecumenical Council. For example, Second Vatican Council taught infallibly on the doctrine of Papal Infallibility.<sup>17</sup>

The Pope also exercises the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium, whenever he authoritatively guides and governs the other Bishops, dispersed through the world, as they together teach the universal Church the teachings of faith and morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Thus, whenever the Bishops exercise the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, the Pope can exercise the second charism by authoritatively guiding and governing the other Bishops in their exercise of the third charism.

When Pope Pius IX defined Church doctrine on the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, he was exercising the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium.<sup>18</sup> When Pope Pius XII defined Church doctrine on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, he was exercising the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium.<sup>19</sup> There are other examples of the Pope’s use of the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium (see below).

### Infallible Versus Fallible

When the Pope and the Bishops seek a new, deeper understanding of the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, the result is infallible, but the process is fallible. As the Pope and the Bishops discuss what the correct understanding of doctrine should be, they individually (including the Pope) might express opinions which are in error, but their final decision on doctrine found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith is infallible. Even if it were ever to occur that most of the Bishops, or even the Pope himself, personally held an incorrect theological opinion, yet when they reach their final decision on Church doctrine, they will certainly decide correctly. The Pope and the Bishops have the gift of the Holy Spirit to decide upon the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith with infallible results. But the process leading up to an infallible decision on Church doctrine can involve some missteps and some incorrect opinions.

Similarly, when Sacred Scripture was being written, the process was fallible, but the result was infallible. The fallible and sinful writers of the Gospels may have gone through a number of fallible rough drafts, and may have drawn upon fallible source material (written and oral). Yet, by the infallible action of the Holy Spirit, the result of such a process was the infallible Gospels of Sacred Scripture. The same is true for all the books of both the Old and New Testaments.

A word of caution is called for on this point of theology. When the Pope and the Bishops together, or the Pope by his sole authority, issues a final decision on Church doctrine, such decision is not part of the fallible process, but rather a part of the infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium. No one can correctly claim that a decision of the Sacred Magisterium on Church doctrine is part of a fallible process that will one day result in the opposite teaching, or in a substantially different teaching, being decided upon and taught by the Church.

A final decision of the Sacred Magisterium, on doctrine found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, is itself infallible (see criteria below). However, not every word or sentence within a document, which expresses an infallible teaching, is infallible. Documents of the Church which teach infallibly from the Sacred Deposit of Faith differ significantly from the infallible Deposit of Faith itself. The Sacred Deposit of Faith is completely infallible, without exception, and is the perfect expression of the Will of God, containing all those things and only those things that God wills.<sup>20</sup> However, those documents of the Church, which contain the infallible decisions of the Sacred Magisterium on the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, are only infallible in their decisions on doctrine; these documents are not entirely infallible in every word and sentence, nor are they infallible in every remark or example used to support, or to lead up to, the infallible decision of the Sacred Magisterium on Church doctrine.

The decision of the Sacred Magisterium, on the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, is infallible. However, the process leading up to that decision is fallible, and any statements which support or accompany such a decision, but which are not a part of the decision on doctrine itself, are also fallible. On the other hand, the portions of such documents which are fallible are not necessarily in error. The vast majority of the fallible portions of such documents are entirely correct, but, since they do not contain final decisions of the Sacred Magisterium on doctrine found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, they are not, strictly speaking, infallible.

An example of such a fallible and incorrect statement is found in the Papal Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, (Mother of the Redeemer): “In fact, even though it is not possible to establish an exact *chronological point* for identifying the date of Mary’s birth...”<sup>21</sup> That statement from *Redemptoris Mater* is false. The date of Mary’s birth is known and several chronological points have been clearly established which allow us to identify the date of Mary’s birth. Mary was born August 5 in 30 B.C. The chronological points which allow us to determine that date include the date of the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, the date of the Immaculate Virgin Conception, the date of the Birth of Christ, and the dates for the Ministry of Christ. See my book, *Important Dates in the Lives of Jesus and Mary*, for details on this chronology.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, the second half of that same sentence is a completely true statement: “...the Church has constantly been aware that *Mary appeared* on the horizon of *salvation history before Christ*.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, that one sentence from a Papal Encyclical contains first a false statement followed by a true statement. But the initial false statement is not on the subject of faith or morals, rather it is a false statement about chronology, and does not refer to any teaching found implicitly or explicitly in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. On the other hand, the subsequent true statement is on the subject of Faith, specifically, on Church teaching about the Virgin Mary’s role in our salvation by Christ, which clearly is found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

#### Criteria for the First Charism of Papal Infallibility

The First Vatican Council explicitly taught and clearly defined the charism of infallibility given to the Pope. “This charism of truth and of a faith that never fails was, therefore, conferred by God on Peter and his successors in this chair; so that they may administer their high office for the salvation of all...”<sup>24</sup> The term *ex cathedra*, (literally, “from the chair”) refers to the Pope’s official role as the successor to Saint Peter, the leader of the Apostles and the Rock on which Christ founded His Church (Mt 16:18-19).

“And so, adhering faithfully to the tradition known since the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our Savior, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and for the salvation of Christian

peoples, 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 discharge of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, and by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines that a doctrine concerning faith or morals must be held by the whole Church, he possesses through the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed in defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals; and that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, not from the consent of the Church.”<sup>25</sup>

The teaching of the First Vatican Council on Papal Infallibility can be conveniently summed up with a list of criteria that a teaching must meet in order to obtain “that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed....”<sup>26</sup>

1. “the Roman Pontiff”
2. “speaks *ex cathedra*” (“that is, when in the discharge of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, and by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority....”)
3. “he defines”
4. “that a doctrine concerning faith or morals”
5. “must be held by the whole Church”<sup>27</sup>

Note that the First Vatican Council uses the phrase *ex cathedra* in such a way as to include criteria 2 – 5 under that one phrase. After the term *ex cathedra*, an explanation of the term, beginning with “that is...,” lists the four criteria (2 – 5 above) which constitute the term. More recent use of the term *ex cathedra* has narrowed its meaning to criterion 2 only, that is, when the Pope speaks in his official role as successor to the Apostle Peter. The other criteria, formerly included under the meaning of *ex cathedra*, are then listed separately. This narrowing of the term *ex cathedra* does not detract from the infallible definition of Papal Infallibility given by the First Vatican Council, since all of the criteria are still included in the definition. The Second Vatican Council’s description of Papal Infallibility omits the phrase *ex cathedra*, (although that phrase is used earlier in the same document). The Second Vatican Council’s description of Papal Infallibility instead lists each of the criteria, which formerly were included under the one term *ex cathedra*, separately.<sup>28</sup>

The Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, reaffirmed and clarified the teaching of the First Vatican Council. The wording used is slightly different, but the meaning is the same:

“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, 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.”<sup>29</sup>

This wording of the same doctrine can also be written out as a list of criteria:

1. “the Roman Pontiff”
2. “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),”
3. “by a definitive act, he proclaims”
4. “a doctrine of faith or morals” (“And this infallibility...in defining doctrine of faith and morals, extends as far as the deposit of revelation extends”)
5. “in accordance with revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with”<sup>30</sup>

Most commentators have numbered four criteria, but, for their first criterion, they have that the Roman Pontiff must be speaking *ex cathedra* (in the narrower sense). This criterion is really two separate criteria. The first criterion tells us *who* (the Roman Pontiff), and the second criterion tells us *what* he is doing, (speaking *ex cathedra*). This distinction becomes necessary when examining the criteria for the third charism. The third charism involves the Bishops as well as the Pope, not the Pope alone, as in the first charism. Thus, it is necessary to list *who* as a separate criterion.

The meaning of the five criteria of the first charism is clear. First, only the Pope can, by his sole ability and authority, issue an infallible statement under the Sacred Magisterium. No other Bishop, nor any Cardinal or Prelate or Prefect or Patriarch or other Church leader of any rank whatsoever, can teach infallibly under the Sacred Magisterium by his sole authority. No group of Bishops, no matter how numerous, can teach infallibly under the Sacred Magisterium by their sole authority without the Roman Pontiff. Even the teachings of Ecumenical Councils, under the second form of the third charism, must necessarily be approved by the Roman Pontiff. And teachings of the Bishops under the first form of the third charism must be taught, not only in union with the other Bishops, but also in agreement with the teaching of the Pope. The Congregations, Commissions, and various other departments within the Holy See cannot teach infallibly under the Sacred Magisterium, even though they function in service to, and under the authority of, the Pope.

Second, the Pope must be speaking *ex cathedra*, that is, he must be acting in his official role as chief priest and chief teacher of the universal Church. Therefore, we need not look for infallible statements in the Pope’s personal correspondence, even if he is writing to an individual spiritual or temporal leader. We will not find such infallible statements in the Pope’s memoirs, or his autobiography, or even his personal writings on topics of faith and morals; the Pope does not act by virtue of his responsibility and authority as Pope when he writes such things. Ordinarily, a statement under Papal Infallibility would be found in an official document issued by the Pope, such as a Papal Bull, or Apostolic Letter, or Encyclical Letter, or Apostolic Constitution, or other official Papal document. As a sheer possibility, a Pope could define a doctrine under Papal Infallibility without issuing a written document; he could do so in an official speech addressed to the universal Church. Recall that Christ Himself did not write down His own teachings; Christ taught verbally and infallibly. Usually, though, the Pope’s speeches and sermons are for select groups of persons, are not addressed to the universal Church, and so would not meet the criteria for Papal Infallibility.

Third, the Pope must be issuing a final decision, that is, a definitive statement (often termed a “definition”), meant to clarify, define, or announce a truth without doubt. The language used must in some way indicate this definitiveness. For example, *Ineffabilis Deus*, which defined Church teaching on the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception, uses the phrase: “We declare, pronounce, and define...” This particular phrase is not necessary; any phrasing indicating a definitive or final decision on doctrine would suffice.

Many official statements made by the Pope are not meant to be definitive proclamations of truth. Such statements, even though they might be given in his official role, are not infallible. The Popes, in official papal documents, such as encyclicals, often discuss or comment on theological ideas, comment on the state of society and of the Church, or mention a theological concept in passing or as an introduction to a particular point of teaching. For example, in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, as he leads up to the infallible definition of the Virgin Mary’s Assumption to Heaven, Pope Pius XII repeatedly mentions the Virgin

Mary's death (Dormition) and Resurrection. Yet only the definition of her Assumption falls under Papal Infallibility. These other statements, about the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Resurrection, fall either under the Ordinary Magisterium or under the second and third charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

Fourth, the statement must be "a doctrine of faith or morals." This same phrase was used by both the First and Second Vatican Councils. Vatican II expounded on this point by saying that such doctrine "extends as far as the deposit of revelation extends." In other words, any teaching of faith or morals, found either explicitly or implicitly in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, can be taught by the Sacred Magisterium. Of course, the whole moral law is found either implicitly or explicitly in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. For in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, we find the words and example of Christ, who was perfect and unerring in following the moral law in all things. Therefore, concerning morality, the Sacred Deposit of Faith extends as far as the whole moral law. Consequently, the Pope has the ability and authority to teach infallibly on any and all points of morality without exception.

Concerning matters of faith, rather than morals, the Sacred Deposit of Faith does not contain every possible truth about God. For example, the mystery of the Holy Trinity far exceeds the ability of the Sacred Deposit of Faith to completely express or contain this infinite truth. Neither can such answers be found completely by means of human reason, for the mysteries of God exceed the capabilities of all human minds put together. Certainly, the Sacred Deposit of Faith contains clear and true teachings of faith on many mysteries of God and faith. However, the whole truth is beyond what can be offered by the Sacred Deposit of Faith or understood by the Body of Christ on earth. Therefore, the Pope can only teach on a matter of faith, if the teaching is found, explicitly or implicitly, within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. But there may be questions of faith which can only be answered in Heaven, or only upon the Return of Christ, or whose answers are beyond our understanding.

The fourth criterion means that any teaching of the Sacred Magisterium must be a teaching which is already present, implicitly or explicitly, within the infallible Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Pope can define, clarify, and expound upon that teaching, but it must be something already present in Sacred Scripture or Sacred Tradition, at least implicitly.

Fifth, a doctrine taught under the first charism of Papal Infallibility is one which "must be held by the whole Church."<sup>31</sup> This criterion is an integral part of the other criteria. When a teaching is taught by the Pope, in his official role as teacher of the Church, and is a final decision on truths of faith or morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, the faithful must necessarily believe the teaching. The faithful must believe all that is found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Thus, the fifth criterion can be met, even if it is only implied by the Pope's statement. The fifth criterion need not be explicitly stated by the Pope. So, for example, the Pope may explicitly say that all the faithful are required to believe the teaching, but all that is required to meet the fifth criterion is the clear and necessary implication that all must believe.

An expression of this principle is seen in the wording of the infallible definition of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, found in *Ineffabilis Deus*: "...is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."<sup>32</sup> Here Pope Pius IX makes an explicit statement under the fifth criterion, that all the faithful must believe the doctrine. But he also makes it clear that this requirement to believe proceeds naturally from any definition of a doctrine revealed by God. He states that this doctrine was revealed by God and, for that reason, all must believe. The wording of the Second Vatican Council teaching makes the same point: "in accordance with revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with."<sup>33</sup> For an example of a statement under the first charism of Papal Infallibility, which meets the fifth criterion implicitly, see "Papal Infallibility in *Unam Sanctam*" below. Even so, the fifth criterion is indispensable, and must be met either implicitly or explicitly, so that the faithful know what they must believe.

#### Things Which Are Not Criteria

The only criteria for a statement to fall under Papal Infallibility are the criteria taught by the First Vatican Council and reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council. These criteria are both necessary and sufficient. No other criteria whatsoever are in any way necessary or sufficient for such an infallible definition.

“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.”<sup>34</sup>

Vatican II clearly taught that a teaching under Papal Infallibility cannot be reformed or revoked by any authority whatsoever, not even by an Ecumenical Council or a Pope. Also, an infallible papal teaching remains the infallible teaching of the Holy Spirit, regardless of how much or how little acceptance it finds among the faithful and the other Bishops. Even a subsequent Pope cannot reform or revoke a teaching under Papal Infallibility given by one of his predecessors. Even the particular Pope who issues a particular infallible papal teaching cannot later reform or revoke that teaching.

An infallible papal teaching does not even need to be confirmed as infallible by subsequent words or actions of the Pope himself, for such a requirement would add to the criteria established by Vatican I and reaffirmed by Vatican II. For the same reason, an infallible papal teaching does not need to use a particular phrasing, nor be worded all in one sentence, nor refer explicitly to Papal Infallibility in its wording. No other criteria that anyone might invent can be added to the criteria established by the First Vatican Council, no matter how reasonable or practical it may seem.

The Pope may choose to consult with other Bishops before defining a teaching under Papal Infallibility. The Pope may choose to wait until there is some degree of understanding among the faithful (“sensus fidelium”) about a teaching. The Pope may choose to wait until a teaching has been developed further by the prayerful meditation of Bishops, priests, deacons, religious, theologians, and the faithful in general. But the Pope is not required, and does not need, to do any of these things, for these things are not part of the criteria.

#### Who Decides If Criteria Are Met?

If the criteria for infallibility are met, then the statement is infallible. If the criteria for infallibility are met, then the statement is the infallible teaching of the Most Holy Trinity. If the criteria for infallibility are met, no other consideration matters at all.

If the criteria for infallibility, under any of the three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium, are not met, the statement may still be entirely true and correct. Fallible statements are not necessarily false, they merely do not have the absolute guarantee of inerrancy that infallible statements possess.

In cases where some people say that the criteria are met and some say it was not met, who decides? The statement is infallible if it meets the criteria, regardless of all other factors. If a statement or teaching meets the criteria for infallibility, then no one has the ability or authority to declare that the statement is not infallible, not an Ecumenical Council, nor even the Pope who issued the statement.

Any of the three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium can be used at a later date to reaffirm a previous infallible pronouncement. For example, Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the infallible teaching of First Vatican Council on Papal Infallibility. If a teaching under the first charism of Papal Infallibility is not widely accepted at first, it may reach wider acceptance over time, as the Pope and the Bishops continue to teach and witness to the truth. A later Ecumenical Council, in union with the Pope, could reaffirm the prior infallible teaching. A later Pope could repeat the infallible definition under the first charism. Note well, however, that each and every infallible definition under the first charism, which meets the criteria established by the First Vatican Council, is infallible in and of itself, and does not require in the least any further affirmations or actions by any authority whatsoever. Furthermore, no authority whatsoever, in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, can reform or revoke an infallible papal pronouncement.

In the case where some persons understand that a papal statement falls under the first charism, and some do not understand, the truth will eventually become clear to all. A statement either meets, or does not meet, the five criteria; it either falls under, or does not fall under, the first charism of Papal Infallibility. The three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium can be used to reaffirm a previous infallible papal pronouncement, but this is not required. A subsequent Pope, or the same Pope at a later time, or an Ecumenical Council, can reaffirm a previous infallible papal pronouncement, but such a subsequent reaffirmation is not necessary. Any statement which meets the criteria is infallible, irreformable, and irrevocable. Any statement, which meets the criteria for infallibility, needs no further affirmation or approval from anyone, not even from the same Pope who issued

the statement. Neither the Pope who issued the infallible statement, nor a subsequent Ecumenical Council, has the authority to change or withdraw an infallible papal pronouncement.

If every Bishop on earth, except the Pope, held one and the same position on a question of faith or morals, and if the Pope taught a different position using the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium, then the Pope's teaching would prevail. Such a situation is unlikely to ever occur, because the Holy Spirit is present throughout the Church. But, let the Church understand, the Pope's exercise of the teaching authority of the Church can prevail over the opinions of every other Bishop on earth. The gift of Sacred Magisterium as it is given to the Pope is distinct from the participation in the gift of the Sacred Magisterium given to the other Bishops. The Pope has the fullness of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, in that he alone possesses all three charisms. The other Bishops possess only the third charism, which can only be exercised communally, not individually, and which cannot be exercised, even communally, in isolation from the Roman Pontiff.

### Criteria for the Third Charism

The criteria for the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium are basically the same as for the first charism. The main difference is in the first criterion. The third charism involves the Bishops as a body, as well as the Pope, not the Pope alone as in the first charism. The criteria for the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium were described by the Second Vatican Council:

“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.”<sup>35</sup>

This first form of the third charism applies to the Bishops as a body as they daily teach the teaching of Christ in union with one another, and in union with, and under the authority of, the Pope. But the third charism also applies to the Bishops as they participate in an Ecumenical Council, with and under the authority of the Pope. This second form of the third charism was also taught by the Second Vatican Council:

“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.”<sup>36</sup>

Taking into account both of the above forms of the third charism, the criteria for the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium can be listed as follows:

1. the bishops and the Pope, either “dispersed though the world” or “gathered together,” in communion with one another and under the authority of the Pope
2. exercise their ministry to “authentically” teach and “proclaim Christ's doctrine” (i.e. their office as “teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church”), including the Pope's ministry as leader of the universal Church
3. “are in agreement on one position” (a definitive position or “definition,” in agreement also with the Pope)
4. “matters of faith and morals” (“extends as far as the deposit of revelation extends”)
5. “definitively to be held” by the universal Church “with the submission of faith”

These five criteria are basically the same criteria as for the first charism. One difference, though, is that the first criterion of the third charism refers, not to the Pope alone, but to the Bishops as a body, with and under the authority of the Pope. Notice that the third charism must be exercised while “maintaining the bond of communion...with the Successor of Peter.”<sup>37</sup> The Bishops authentically exercise the third charism only under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, which is the second charism. This is true for Ecumenical Councils as well as the daily witness and teaching of the Bishops dispersed through the world.

The judgment of an Ecumenical Council only falls under the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, if and when the Pope gives his official approval. The worldwide witness of the Bishops, when they teach on faith and morals, only falls under the third charism when their “agreement on one position as definitively to be held” is also in agreement with the official position of the Roman Pontiff.

Another difference between the first and third charisms is that the third criterion of the third charism can refer either to one specific statement or document by an Ecumenical Council, or to the continual daily witness and teaching of the Bishops dispersed though the world. An Ecumenical Council, under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, can issue a statement or document defining a judgment on faith or morals, using the third charism. The Pope can issue a statement or document defining a judgment on faith or morals, using the first charism. In both cases, the use of infallibility results in a statement or document describing a definitive position on a matter of faith or morals. But the third charism can also be expressed by the daily witness of the Bishops dispersed though the world, as long as they are in agreement with the Pope on the same matter. When the third charism is expressed in this way, there might not be one specific statement or document to which one can refer.

### Criteria for the Second Charism

The second charism of the Sacred Magisterium was described by the Second Vatican Council.

“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.”<sup>38</sup>

“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...”<sup>39</sup>

The first statement teaches that the body of Bishops can never exercise the third charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium without the Pope. The second statement refers to both the use of the infallible Sacred Magisterium by the Pope alone and its use by the body of Bishops with the Pope. In no case whatsoever, can the body of Bishops exercise the gift of the Sacred Magisterium apart from the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope. Since the Bishops cannot define a teaching infallibly apart from the Pope, the Pope must have a special charism, different from the first and third charisms, to authoritatively guide and govern the body of Bishops in their exercise of the third charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

The criteria for the Pope’s use of the second charism can be listed as follows:

1. “the Roman Pontiff”
2. exercising his office as “Successor of Peter” (i.e. “the head of the college of bishops”<sup>40</sup>)
3. “the body of bishops together with him defines a judgment” (i.e. the Pope authoritatively guides and governs the body of bishops as they seek, discover, and together with him define a judgment. This role is clearly authoritative, and is neither merely advisory nor merely participatory, since it proceeds from the Roman Pontiff’s role as the “Successor of Peter” and “the head of the college of bishops”)
4. “in accordance with revelation itself”
5. “which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with”

The criteria for the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium are basically the same as for the first charism. The main difference is in the third criterion. The second charism belongs solely to, and is exercised solely by, the Roman Pontiff. Thus, the first criterion is the same in the first and second charisms. However, under the third criterion of the second charism, the Pope authoritatively guides and governs the body of Bishops when they search for and proclaim the truths of faith and morals found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Thus, the second charism involves the relationship between the body of Bishops and the Pope, within their use of the Sacred Magisterium. Nevertheless, when the Pope exercises this second charism, the body of Bishops are merely exercising the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium. The Pope can exercise this second charism

whenever the body of Bishops are exercising the third charism, either in a gathering of Bishops, (such as an Ecumenical Council), or in the daily witness and teaching of the Bishops dispersed through the world. In fact, the use of the third charism by the body of Bishops is only valid in so far as they exercise the third charism under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, that is, under the Pope's use of the second charism.

#### Papal Infallibility in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*

Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, "On Reserving Priestly Ordination To Men Alone," affirms the teaching of Christ that the Church has no authority to ordain women to the priesthood. Does this affirmation fall under Papal Infallibility? One of the last statements in the Letter reads as follows:

"Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."<sup>41</sup>

Does this statement meet all five criteria of the first charism, as defined by the First and Second Vatican Councils? The first criterion is that the statement come from the Roman Pontiff himself, not from any other Bishop or group of Bishops, and not from any of the other offices or congregations within the Holy See. The above statement was issued by Pope John Paul II in an Apostolic Letter, so the first criterion is met.

The second criterion is that the Pope be speaking *ex cathedra*, or, as the Second Vatican Council termed it: "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)..."<sup>42</sup> In *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, Pope John Paul II specifically states that he is speaking "in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32)." The wording he chooses is nearly a quote from the Second Vatican Council definition of Papal Infallibility and he cites the same Scripture passage. The Pope is clearly saying that he is speaking by virtue of his role as Shepherd of the Church. Therefore, the second criterion, that the Pope be speaking *ex cathedra*, is met.

The third criterion requires that the Pope be expressing a final decision or a definitive teaching: "he defines" (Vatican I), or, "by a definitive act, he proclaims" (Vatican II). The wording used by Pope John Paul II clearly indicates such an authoritative definition: "Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed..." Removing all doubt is certainly definitive. In addition, the Pope uses the phrase, "I declare," which gives the statement the form of a proclamation or a definitive assertion, and he even uses the word, "definitively," which together nearly mirrors the Vatican II phrasing: "by a definitive act, he proclaims." The third criterion is met by this document.

The fourth criterion is that the teaching of the Pope must be on the subject of faith or morals found, implicitly or explicitly, within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. In the statement quoted above, the Pope states that the subject is "a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself." The divine constitution of the Church is certainly a matter of Faith. Furthermore, earlier in the same Letter, the Pope specifically states that this teaching is based on Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. First, in quoting Pope Paul VI, he cites both Sacred Scripture and "the constant practice of the Church," and he uses the phrase "Apostolic Tradition."<sup>43</sup> He reviews examples from the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles which contain this teaching.<sup>44</sup> And he again refers to Tradition near the end of the Letter: "the teaching that priestly ordination is to be reserved to men alone has been preserved by the constant and universal Tradition of the Church..."<sup>45</sup> Clearly, the Pope is teaching on a subject of Faith found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, so the fourth criterion is met.<sup>46</sup>

The fifth criterion is that the Pope must be defining a teaching, which "must be held by the universal Church,"<sup>47</sup> in other words, that he is requiring all the faithful to believe a teaching because it is, "in accordance with revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with."<sup>48</sup> The Pope's Apostolic Letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, explicitly requires belief by all the faithful: "...I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."<sup>49</sup> Since this statement clearly does require belief by all the faithful, the fifth and final criterion is met.

All five criteria for Papal Infallibility are met by the declaration on priestly ordination found in the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. Therefore, the declaration falls under Papal Infallibility and is, without doubt, the Infallible Teaching of Christ. This teaching on priestly ordination is an example of the use of the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium.

### Priestly Ordination

The wording of the infallible papal statement in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* is somewhat surprising: “the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women....”<sup>50</sup> This statement does not say that women can never be ordained, nor does it say that women can never be ordained to the priesthood. Rather, the statement teaches that the Church does not have the authority to ordain women to the priesthood. Women cannot be validly or licitly ordained as priests, because Christ did not give the Church the authority to ordain women to the priesthood. Therefore, between Christ’s Ascension and Christ’s Return, women cannot be ordained as priests. However, it is an open question as to whether or not women could be ordained, in some capacity, (perhaps as ordained deacons,) after the Return of Christ.<sup>51</sup>

The Church does not have the authority to ordain women to the priesthood. Ordination to the Episcopate is a higher level of ordination than ordination to the priesthood. Therefore, the Church does not have the authority to ordain women to the Episcopate. The Church cannot ordain women as priests or Bishops.

Each and every Cardinal should be a Bishop of the Church. Cardinals are charged with the task of choosing the next Pope, and this role benefits greatly from the gift of the Holy Spirit given at Episcopal ordination. Also, the role of Cardinal generally includes some degree of authority over Bishops. A priest or layperson should not be given authority over a Bishop. Therefore, Cardinals should always be ordained to the Episcopate. In the past, some priests or laymen have occasionally been appointed as Cardinals, but these persons did not have the role of overseeing Bishops. The role of Cardinal should not be an honorary title, but a functional role in the Church. That role requires that Cardinals be given Episcopal ordination. Since the Church cannot ordain women as Bishops, a woman should not have the role of Cardinal in the Church.

The Pope is the Bishop of Rome. The Pope is both a Bishop and the leader of the Bishops. Ordination to the Episcopate is a necessary condition for a valid election of a Pope. Since the Church cannot ordain women as Bishops, a woman cannot be Pope.<sup>52</sup>

If anyone would ever claim to have ordained a woman as priest or bishop, such an ‘ordination’ would be both invalid and illicit. It is invalid, meaning that the woman is not ordained in any sense of the word, neither in God’s eyes, nor in the eyes of the Church, nor would she in truth have any of the priestly faculties, such as the ability to consecrate the Eucharist or to forgive sins. It is also illicit, meaning that it is a sin for anyone to attempt to ordain a woman to the priesthood or to the Episcopate, and a sin for any woman to claim that she has been ordained as priest or as Bishop.

The Anglican Church is, in many ways, close to the Catholic Church in belief and in practice. However, the ordination of women as priests and bishops in the Anglican Church must be viewed by the Catholic Church as completely invalid and illicit. Since the ordination of women as bishops is invalid, a woman cannot confer ordination on anyone, man or woman. Any man claiming to have been ordained by a woman bishop is neither validly nor licitly ordained. Women cannot confer ordination on anyone, nor can they consecrate the Eucharist, nor can they forgive sins in Confession, nor can they take any other action or role which is reserved solely to priests or to Bishops (cf. Rev 2:20-22).

### Reply To Ratzinger

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, stated, in a public letter dated October 28, 1995, that the teaching of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* is from the Sacred Deposit of Faith: “founded on the written Word of God, and constantly held and applied in the Tradition of the Church.”<sup>53</sup> He also states that this teaching is “explicitly addressed to the entire Catholic Church,” and that “all members of the faithful are required to give their assent to the teaching stated therein.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, the Prefect agrees that *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* meets those two criteria (numbered 4 and 5 above) for a teaching under Papal Infallibility. The first criterion, that the infallible statement be issued only by the Roman Pontiff, is also obviously met.

However, in the same letter, Cardinal Ratzinger states his opinion that *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* does not fall under Papal Infallibility: “In this case, an act of the ordinary Papal Magisterium, in itself not infallible, witnesses to the infallibility of the teaching of a doctrine already possessed by the Church.”<sup>55</sup> The “Responsum ad Dubium” to which the Prefect’s letter refers, was approved and authorized by the Pope. But the Responsum only reaffirms that the teaching of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* belongs to the Sacred Deposit of Faith; it does not state explicitly whether or not the teaching falls under Papal Infallibility.

Interestingly, the Prefect, in his commentary after the “Responsum ad Dubium,” affirms the remaining two criteria for a teaching to fall under Papal Infallibility. Ratzinger refers to the *ex cathedra* requirement: “the Roman Pontiff, exercising his proper office of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32)...”<sup>56</sup> This wording mirrors that found in the Vatican II teaching on the *ex cathedra* requirement for Papal Infallibility, including citing the same Scripture passage.<sup>57</sup> Ratzinger also calls the teaching in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, “a formal declaration, explicitly stating what is to be held always, everywhere, and by all...”<sup>58</sup> The Prefect’s statement has the same basic meaning as the Vatican II wording: “by a definitive act, he proclaims...”<sup>59</sup> Thus, the third criterion for a statement under Papal Infallibility is also met.

Yet, in his letter following the “Responsum ad Dubium,” the Prefect maintains that the teaching does not fall under Papal Infallibility. He is clearly mistaken, since, in the Responsum and in the letter that accompanied it, his own words point out each of the criteria needed for a declaration under Papal Infallibility. His misunderstanding seems to come from the fact that the Pope was reaffirming a prior teaching of the Church. But all teachings of the Sacred Magisterium, including those given under the first charism of Papal Infallibility, are simply restatements or clarifications of prior teaching always present within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The fact that a teaching has been previously taught by the Church does not prevent that teaching from being taught and reaffirmed under Papal Infallibility.

#### All Three Charisms Used in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*

In the document *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the Pope exercises all three charisms of infallibility under the Sacred Magisterium. When the Pope joins with the other Bishops to teach the teaching of Christ on faith and morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, he exercises the same participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium as any Bishop, which is the third charism of the infallible teaching authority of the Church, explicitly taught by Second Vatican Council.<sup>60</sup> In *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the Pope “witnesses to the infallibility of the teaching of a doctrine already possessed by the Church.”<sup>61</sup> This quote from Cardinal Ratzinger is a succinct description of the third charism.

Second, the *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* is addressed to, “The Bishops of the Catholic Church,” and opens with the words, “Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate.” Therefore, in this Apostolic Letter, the Pope also exercises the second charism of Papal Infallibility, namely, to authoritatively guide and govern the other Bishops in their belief, understanding, and teaching of the truths found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith within their participation in the Sacred Magisterium.

Third, one of the final statements in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* clearly meets all the criteria for the first charism of Papal Infallibility. Therefore, the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* is not an act of the Ordinary Magisterium, but rather an example of the Pope’s use of all three charisms of infallibility given to him by the Holy Spirit within the gift to the Church of the Sacred Magisterium.

#### Knowledge and Intent in Papal Infallibility

In the “Address of the Holy Father to the German Bishops on the Occasion of Their *Ad Limina* Visit” (November 20, 1999), Pope John Paul II stated that his declaration in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* falls under that character of infallibility whereby the Bishops dispersed through the world witness to the same truth on a matter of faith or morals.

“Precisely for this reason, some time ago, by virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren, I recalled ‘that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful’ (*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4).

As the authentic Pastors of your Dioceses, you have the duty to reject contrary opinions put forward by individuals or organizations and to encourage that open and clear dialogue in truth and love which Mother Church must foster regarding the future of her daughters. Do not hesitate, then, to emphasize that the Magisterium of the Church has taken this decision not as an act of her own power, but in the knowledge of her duty to obey the will of the Lord of the Church herself.

Therefore, the doctrine that the priesthood is reserved to men possesses, by virtue of the Church's ordinary and universal Magisterium, that character of infallibility which *Lumen Gentium* speaks of and to which I gave juridical form in the Motu Proprio *Ad tuendam fidem*: When the individual Bishops, 'even though dispersed throughout the world but preserving among themselves and with Peter's Successor the bond of communion, agree in their authoritative teaching on matters of faith and morals that a particular teaching is to be held definitively and absolutely, they infallibly proclaim the doctrine of Christ' (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 25; cf. *Ad tuendam fidem*, n. 3).<sup>62</sup>

Of course, I agree that this doctrine has been taught by the Church under the third charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium (see above, "All Three Charisms Used in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*"). And clearly, the Pope has also used the second charism, by authoritatively guiding and governing the other Bishops in their use of the third charism, as they continue their witness and teaching of the truth that the Church has no authority to ordain women to the priesthood.

Pope John Paul II did not seem to know, however, that he was also using the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium, commonly called "papal infallibility," to define this doctrine. Nevertheless, since the statement in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* clearly meets all 5 criteria, that statement was infallibly defined. The 5 criteria for an infallible papal teaching, established by the First Vatican Council and reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, do not include that the Pope must know or intend to exercise the power of Papal Infallibility. Therefore, the Pope can declare a teaching under the first charism of Papal Infallibility, even if he does not know or intend that the teaching proceed from Papal Infallibility.

The First Vatican Council explicitly taught that this charism of Papal Infallibility began with Saint Peter the Apostle. "This charism of truth and of a faith that never fails was, therefore, conferred by God on Peter and his successors in this chair; so that they may administer their high office for the salvation of all...."<sup>63</sup> Yet Vatican I was the first time that this doctrine of Papal Infallibility was formally defined. In other words, it was the first time that the requirements (the 5 criteria) were explicitly written out, and the first time (as far as I know) that the faithful were explicitly ordered to believe the doctrine.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, all the Popes, from Saint Peter on, have possessed and could exercise Papal Infallibility. Therefore, the Popes from Saint Peter to Pius IX (i.e. those prior to Vatican I) each had the ability to use Papal Infallibility, even though they would not have been able to explicitly know or intend the use of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Since they could exercise this ability without explicit knowledge or intention, such knowledge and intention are not essential criteria for a teaching to be defined under Papal Infallibility. Of course, the Popes since Vatican I also had the power of Papal Infallibility, and they could each exercise that power with or without the explicit realization that they were acting under the doctrine of Papal Infallibility.

On the other hand, any Pope who exercises the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium, must know and intend each of the criteria, even if he does not realize that each is a criterion of Papal Infallibility and that these criteria together constitute a definition under Papal Infallibility. Again, knowledge and intent for each criterion is necessary, all other considerations outside of the criteria established by Vatican I are irrelevant. Whether or not Pope John Paul II knew or intended that his statement in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* would fall under Papal Infallibility is irrelevant because that particular knowledge and intention is not one of the criteria defined by Vatican I.

Pope John Paul II certainly knew and intended to speak *ex cathedra* (in the narrower sense), since he issued the statement within an Apostolic Letter and used nearly the same phrasing as used in *Lumen Gentium* to refer to an *ex cathedra* teaching: "in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32)."<sup>65</sup> He certainly knew and intended that his statement be a final decision ("by a definitive act, he proclaims"),<sup>66</sup> since he used the words: "in order that all doubt may be removed...I declare...."<sup>67</sup> He certainly also knew and intended to speak about a matter of faith which must be believed by the universal Church: "...regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself...and that this judgment is to be

definitively held by all the Church's faithful."<sup>68</sup> Therefore, he did know and intend each of the individual criteria and so this statement does constitute a use of the first charism of Papal Infallibility.

Pope John Paul II apparently did not realize that this statement constituted a use of the first charism of Papal Infallibility, (i.e. the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium), because the same teaching was already infallibly defined under the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium. However, there is nothing to prevent a doctrine, infallibly defined under one charism, from being infallibly defined under another charism.

The Pope does not have to know and intend that his statement be infallible by reason of the first charism of the infallible teaching authority given to the Pope. However, the Pope must know and intend that the teaching in his statement be the infallible teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith, and this requirement is, of course, part of the criteria established by Vatican I and II. (The fourth criterion is that the teaching be on the subject of faith or morals found within the infallible Deposit of Faith.) The wording of *Lumen Gentium* makes this clear: "by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith or morals..."<sup>69</sup> In order for the Pope to proclaim such a doctrine definitively, he must certainly know and intend that his teaching be a part of the infallible teaching of Christ found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. On the other hand, he does not need to know and intend that his teaching specifically fall under the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, (i.e. the first charism), or under one charism rather than another, or under any of the three charisms.

Thus, all that has ever been needed, for any Pope to exercise this first charism of Papal Infallibility, is for the Pope to know and intend each of the five criteria. Before Vatican I, a Pope could exercise this first charism of the Sacred Magisterium simply by knowing and intending each of the criteria, later defined explicitly by the First Vatican Council. After Vatican I, if any Pope ever makes a statement which meets the five criteria for the first charism, even if he himself does not realize that it meets all those criteria and does not intend to make a statement under Papal Infallibility, the statement is nevertheless infallible, irreformable, and irrevocable. The only criteria for a teaching to be the infallible teaching of Christ given to the Church through the Holy Spirit under the gift of the first charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium are those criteria declared by the First Vatican Council and reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council. Neither of those two great Councils has ever said a word to indicate that the Pope must know he is teaching infallibly or that he must intend to teach infallibly. The complete definition of the first charism of Papal Infallibility, given in its entirety by each of those Councils, does not include a requirement for the Pope to know or intend that he be teaching under Papal Infallibility. The Pope must know and intend that the teaching come from the infallible Sacred Deposit of Faith, but he does not have to know or intend that he be exercising the gift of infallibility given to him under the Sacred Magisterium.

The writers of Sacred Scripture did not know or intend that their writings be infallible, and yet they are. However, they did know and intend to write the truth about Christ, and so they did. They were able to write the truth infallibly because their work was truly a work of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, even if Pope John Paul II did not know or intend to teach infallibly in his statement within *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the statement meets the criteria for Papal Infallibility, and so, by the power and gift of the unsearchable Holy Spirit of God, that statement is nevertheless infallible, irreformable, and irrevocable.

#### Papal Infallibility in *Unam Sanctam*

Pope Boniface VIII issued a Papal Bull, in A.D. 1302, called *Unam Sanctam*. This document defends the spiritual authority of the Church. The last statement in the document is an example of the use of Papal Infallibility prior to its formal definition at Vatican I:

"Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff."<sup>70</sup>

This statement was issued by the Pope himself, so it meets the first criterion for a statement under the first charism of Papal Infallibility. The statement is contained in a Papal Bull and uses the expression "we declare, we proclaim, we define," which is very similar to the "We declare, pronounce, and define..." of *Ineffabilis Deus*. This type of expression indicates that the Pope is speaking *ex cathedra*, and so the second criterion is met. The third criterion is met by the same expression. In particular, the "we define" part of the expression

indicates a final decision on doctrine. The fourth criterion is met because anything “absolutely necessary for salvation” must necessarily be part of the Sacred Deposit of Faith, whose aim is to effect our salvation. The Sacred Deposit of Faith cannot lack anything which is “absolutely necessary for salvation.” Therefore, this papal statement certainly presents a teaching on the subject of faith or morals.

The fifth criterion is met implicitly. The Pope does not explicitly state that all must believe. However, since this teaching is a doctrine of faith concerning what is “absolutely necessary for salvation,” there is a clear and necessary implication that all must believe.

Since all five criteria are met, this teaching is an infallible teaching of the Holy Catholic Church. Therefore, it is the infallible teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith that the role of the Roman Pontiff is an essential part of God's plan for the salvation for all. In other words, the Church, and the human race as a whole, cannot do just as well without a Pope. The Pope's role is necessary and essential to God's plan for our salvation.

This infallible teaching does **not** say that only those who believe in the authority of the Pope can be saved. The statement does **not** use the phrase ‘belief in...is absolutely necessary for salvation.’ The teaching does **not** say that only those individuals who are willingly subject to the authority of the Roman Pontiff will be saved. Therefore, non-Catholics can be saved, including persons who adhere to other religions or to no religion. The Pope was **not** saying that non-Catholics cannot be saved.

Similarly, we could say that Baptism and the Eucharist and Confession are a necessary part of God's plan for our salvation. Some persons get into Heaven without these things, but these things are essential nonetheless. Again, some people are saved even though they do not believe in God. But belief in God is certainly a necessary part of God's plan for salvation.

#### Infalibility in *Evangelium Vitae*

The Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, contains an example of the use of the second and third charisms of the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

“Therefore, by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral. This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.”<sup>71</sup>

The above statement meets the criteria for the second form of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, yet without an Ecumenical Council. The second form of the third charism can be exercised by any gathering of Bishops, which is both representative of the universal Church and under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope. Earlier in *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II describes the participation of the Bishops in arriving at this particular expression of doctrine.

“The Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals held in Rome on 4-7 April 1991 was devoted to the problem of the threats to human life in our day. After a thorough and detailed discussion of the problem and of the challenges it poses to the entire human family and in particular to the Christian community, the Cardinals unanimously asked me to reaffirm with the authority of the Successor of Peter the value of human life and its inviolability, in the light of present circumstances and attacks threatening it today.”<sup>72</sup>

The Cardinals affirmed this teaching and asked the Pope to affirm this teaching authoritatively. In response, the Pope then consulted with the other Bishops.

“In response to this request, at Pentecost in 1991 I wrote a personal letter to each of my Brother Bishops asking them, in the spirit of episcopal collegiality, to offer me their cooperation in drawing up a specific document. I am deeply grateful to all the Bishops who replied and provided me with valuable facts, suggestions and proposals. In so doing they bore witness to their unanimous desire to share in the doctrinal and pastoral mission of the Church with regard to the Gospel of life.”<sup>73</sup>

In this way, by means of a geographic gathering of Bishops at the Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals and also by means of a worldwide communication-gathering of the Bishops dispersed through the world, the Pope and the Bishops arrived at this infallible statement that “the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral.”<sup>74</sup>

The Pope refers to this Encyclical as “the fruit of the cooperation of the Episcopate of every country of the world....”<sup>75</sup> He also states that this teaching is issued “by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church....”<sup>76</sup> Thus, this teaching falls under the second and third charisms of the Sacred Magisterium. The Pope authoritatively guided and governed the Cardinals at the Extraordinary Consistory, when they discussed this teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith, and the other Bishops, when they communicated though dispersed through the world. This teaching is an infallible teaching under the second and third charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

All five criteria for a teaching under the second form of the third charism are met by this Encyclical. First, the statement quoted above was issued by the Pope “in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church.”<sup>77</sup> Pope John Paul II not only met with a group of Bishops representative of the universal Church (at the Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals), but also communicated with the other Bishops around the world, in order to arrive at this statement of doctrine.

Second, the Pope and the Bishops issued this teaching as part of their ministry of leading and teaching the Church: “Therefore, by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church....”<sup>78</sup> The Pope also plainly states that the Bishops were exercising their official role as leaders and teachers of the Church: “In doing so they bore witness to their unanimous desire to share in the doctrinal and pastoral mission of the Church with regard to the Gospel of life.”<sup>79</sup> Third, the statement indicates it is a definitive teaching by invoking the Pope’s authority as the Successor of Peter and the authority of the moral law, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the universal Magisterium.

Fourth, the statement clearly teaches on the subject of morals, since it teaches about the immorality of the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being. The fifth criterion proceeds from a clear and necessary implication that all must believe, since this doctrine is “based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.”<sup>80</sup> This teaching comes from divine revelation, “which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with....”<sup>81</sup> All five criteria are met, therefore this teaching is the infallible teaching of the Most Holy Trinity.

This infallible teaching does not fall under the first charism. The teaching was issued by the Pope in an Encyclical Letter, which would seem to place it under the first charism. However, the Pope specifically states in the Encyclical that this teaching and its particular expression proceeded from “a thorough and detailed discussion” with the Cardinals and from the cooperation of the Bishops “in drawing up a specific document.”<sup>82</sup> Since the teaching was arrived at by the Bishops and the Pope, as they together sought to understand and express the truths of faith and morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, this infallible teaching falls under the second and third charisms, not the first.

This process for arriving at a definitive expression of doctrine found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith is essentially the same process as is used by an Ecumenical Council. Thus, an Ecumenical Council is not the only way for the Bishops and the Pope to arrive at a definitive and infallible expression of doctrine. The second form of the third charism can be exercised without an Ecumenical Council, either by means of another type of gathering of Bishops representative of the universal Church, or by means of a communication-gathering of the Bishops dispersed through the world, or both.

#### Infallibility in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council

Previous Ecumenical Councils often used certain wording to indicate an infallible decision on doctrine. They labeled particular teachings with the word “Canon,” or issued an anathema against those who refuse to believe particular teachings, or they stated that one teaching is false because it contradicts Scripture, whereas

another teaching is found in Scripture. The Council of Trent used the phrase “let him be anathema,” to condemn certain false teachings on faith or morals. But this phrase is not essential to an infallible teaching of an Ecumenical Council. The criteria for infallibility do not include using a particular wording. The Council of Orange indicated infallible teachings using wording such as: “If anyone denies...he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture...” and “If anyone asserts...he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle...” and “If anyone says that...he contradicts the prophet Isaiah, or the Apostle who says the same thing...” and “If anyone maintains that...he resists the Holy Spirit himself...” and also “If anyone says that...it is proof that he is opposed to the teaching of the Apostles...”

From these examples, we can see that a variety of different wordings have been used by past Ecumenical Councils to indicate an infallible teaching. Sometimes those teachings are listed as numbered Canons. Sometimes an anathema is attached to the teaching. But, in some of the infallible teachings, there is no anathema and no particular formula for the wording. For example, the Council of Orange issued several Canons on grace and freewill by directly stating true teachings, rather than by condemning the opposite false teachings. For example, Canon 12: “Of what sort we are whom God loves. God loves us for what we shall be by his gift, and not by our own deserving.”

Some persons have claimed that the Second Vatican Council did not make any infallible decisions on doctrine. The Second Vatican Council did not attach anathemas to its teachings, did not give us a numbered list of Canons, and did not use a particular formula or wording to indicate which teachings are infallible. However, none of those things are part of the criteria for a teaching to be infallible.

There are some infallible teachings within the documents issued by the Second Vatican Council with the approval of the Roman Pontiff. I will present some clear examples, but I will not attempt an exhaustive list.

The Second Vatican Council document, *Lumen Gentium*, taught infallibly that the body of Bishops led by the Pope teach infallibly when certain criteria are met. In addition to reaffirming the infallible teaching of the First Vatican Council on Papal Infallibility, the Second Vatican Council also taught about the infallibility of the body of Bishops led by the Pope. This doctrine meets all of the criteria for an infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium (under the second form of the third charism).

1. The teaching was issued by an Ecumenical Council with the approval of the Roman Pontiff.
2. The teaching is a major theological point within an official document of an Ecumenical Council,<sup>83</sup> therefore, the Council and the Pope were exercising their official role as shepherds and teachers of the faith.
3. The teaching is a definitive decision, as is clear, not so much from any particular phrase or sentence, but from the whole of the teaching. It is presented without any equivocation or room for differing views. It is not a theological comment made in passing, nor a remark made in order to lead up to some other point of teaching. This teaching plainly states the criteria under which the Bishops led by the Pope can teach infallibly. Since the subject matter is that of infallibility, such a clear and unequivocal teaching must itself be considered definitive. Also, the Council could not be saying that they are less than certain about something infallible, for any lack of definitive judgment on a teaching about infallibility would nullify that teaching. This type of definitive decision on doctrine is like numerous Canons issued by the Council of Orange: plain and definitive statements which proclaim the truth on a particular subject.
4. The subject of the teaching is the infallibility of the body of Bishops led by the Pope, when they exercise the Sacred Magisterium. This subject is clearly a matter of faith and morals.
5. The criterion that whole Church must adhere to this teaching is referred to within the wording of the teaching itself: “...they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, whose definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith.” The criterion that the Church must believe is also met implicitly. There is a clear and necessary implication that all must believe, because this teaching is on the subject of the infallibility of Church teaching.

All five criteria for an infallible teaching by an Ecumenical Council are met by this teaching. Therefore, this teaching is an example of infallibility within the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Another clear example of an infallible teaching by the Second Vatican Council is found in *Dei Verbum*, the Constitution on Divine Revelation.

Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted.

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation. Therefore “all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind” (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text).<sup>84</sup>

The above teaching of Second Vatican Council meets all five criteria for an infallible teaching, (under the second form of the third charism).

1. The teaching was issued by an Ecumenical Council with the approval of the Roman Pontiff.
2. The teaching is a major theological point within an official document of an Ecumenical Council;<sup>85</sup> therefore, the Council and the Pope were exercising their official role as shepherds and teachers of the faith.
3. This teaching uses a form similar to some of the Council of Orange Canons, where the authority of Sacred Scripture is cited in order to present a teaching as a definitive judgment. Also, phrases such as: “holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that...” and “it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged...” show a definitive judgment on the infallibility of Sacred Scripture. As is the case with the teaching on the infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium, the Council could not be saying that they are less than certain about something infallible (Sacred Scripture), for any lack of definitive judgment on a teaching about infallibility would nullify that teaching. The teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the infallibility of Sacred Scripture is presented with plain and definitive statements which proclaim the truth on that subject.
4. The subject of the teaching is the infallibility of the Sacred Scripture. This subject is clearly a matter of faith and morals.
5. The criterion that the whole Church must adhere to this teaching is indicated by phrases such as: “holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds...” and “since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as....”

The above two examples of infallible teachings found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council should be sufficient to prove that Vatican II did issue infallible judgments on doctrine. The Second Vatican Council not only taught under the fallible Ordinary Magisterium and exercised the temporal authority of the Church, they also taught under the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

## Future Ecumenical Councils

The number of Bishops in the universal Church has increased significantly since the Second Vatican Council. This increase in numbers presents a logistical challenge for the next Ecumenical Council. The above example from *Evangelium Vitae* is one possible solution to the difficulties in convening a geographic-gathering of Bishops for an Ecumenical Council. A geographic-gathering of Cardinals, (those who are also Bishops,) would constitute a gathering of Bishops representative of the universal Church. A subsequent communication-gathering of any and all Bishops would allow the participation of “the Episcopate of every country of the world.”<sup>86</sup> A series of geographic-gatherings of Cardinals, coupled with communication-gatherings of all Bishops, would meet the requirements for an Ecumenical Council. The Pope would authoritatively guide and govern both the geographic-gatherings of Cardinals and the communication-gatherings of all Bishops.

In this way, all the Bishops would be able to exercise their divine gift of participation in the Sacred Magisterium, unimpeded by the logistical problems of their increased numbers. The Cardinals would have the dual role of participating in the Council as Bishops, and assisting the Pope in leading the other Bishops. The Cardinals would disperse after their geographic-gathering to help coordinate the subsequent communication-gathering in their assigned countries. Any Bishop, of whatever rank or age, would be free to communicate with the Pope directly, and with the Cardinals and other Bishops, concerning the Council and its proposed documents. Care should be taken to prevent persons other than ordained Bishops from attempting to exercise a participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The Most Holy Trinity gives the gift of participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium only to the Bishops led by the Pope.

## Papal Infallibility in Other Papal Documents

Some commentators have attempted a list of Papal documents containing uses of the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium. There are probably other examples of the use of Papal Infallibility beyond those examples cited in this chapter. However, I will not attempt to make a complete list, lest I err by leaving something important out of the list.

Some commentators have claimed that Papal Infallibility has only ever been used twice, in the documents *Ineffabilis Deus* (the Immaculate Conception) and *Munificentissimus Deus* (Mary’s Assumption). The examples cited above prove that Papal Infallibility has been used in other documents as well as in those two documents. Those who are weak in faith often attempt to decrease the number of things that they must believe. Those who follow Christ in all things have faith in all things.

## Ordinary Magisterium

In order to be able to teach the faith effectively, the individual Bishops of the Church must often answer questions on faith and morals, without obtaining a definitive and infallible answer from the Bishops as a body and the Pope. There are questions of faith and morals, which arise from time to time and on which the Church has not yet ruled definitively using the infallible Sacred Magisterium. Such questions are answered by the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church. The Ordinary Magisterium can be exercised by any Bishop, including the Pope. The Ordinary Magisterium teaches and guides the faithful on matters of faith and morals. This teaching and guidance must be based on the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Ordinary Magisterium is considered fallible, but, for the most part, its teachings and judgments are correct, since these are based firmly on Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

An example of the use of the Ordinary Magisterium, would be a judgment about a new technology in science or medicine. The Church would not have ruled previously on such an issue, at least not specifically, since the technology is new. The Church’s judgment would be based on principles of faith and morals found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, but the application of those principles by the Ordinary Magisterium would be fallible, and subject to revision or even, rarely, reversal. On the other hand, the Sacred Magisterium can, at any time, rule definitively and infallibly, on any truth of faith or morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, even on moral questions related to a new technology.

Some Church documents use the expression “the ordinary and universal Magisterium” of the Church. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger uses this expression in his commentary on the Responsum ad Dubium (Oct. 28, 1995; On *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*).

“This teaching requires definitive assent, since, founded on the written Word of God, and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium (cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* 25, 2).”<sup>87</sup>

Notice, however, that he specifically references the second paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* 25, not the first. The first paragraph refers to the Ordinary Magisterium proper, which teaches from the Sacred Deposit of Faith, but not infallibly. The second paragraph refers to the third charism of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. Thus, the expression “ordinary and universal Magisterium” refers to the Sacred Magisterium, not to the Ordinary Magisterium proper. The expression “universal Magisterium” is used to refer to the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, because that charism requires the participation of the Bishops dispersed throughout the universal Church. This third charism is the most common use of the infallible Sacred Magisterium, thus it is sometimes called the “ordinary and universal Magisterium.” Cardinal Ratzinger explicitly states that he is referring to the infallible Sacred Magisterium: “it has been set forth infallibly.”

#### Criteria of the Ordinary Magisterium

Any truth taught by the Ordinary Magisterium can be judged, defined, and proclaimed infallibly by the Sacred Magisterium. Therefore, the criteria for the Ordinary Magisterium must be similar to the criteria for the Sacred Magisterium.

The first criterion of the Ordinary Magisterium is that the teaching come from a Bishop or a group of Bishops. This is similar to the first criterion for the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, except that, in the case of the Ordinary Magisterium, even an individual Bishop can teach under the Ordinary Magisterium.

Priests, deacons, religious, and theologians cannot teach under the Ordinary Magisterium; their teaching is much the same as that of a layperson. Persons who have not received the full Sacrament of Ordination, that is, Ordination to the Episcopate, do not have the ability and authority to teach under the Ordinary Magisterium, because they do not have the gift of participation in the Sacred Magisterium. Only Bishops can teach under the Ordinary Magisterium, because only Bishops have the gift of participation in the Sacred Magisterium. The gift of the ability and authority to teach under the Ordinary Magisterium is given by the Holy Spirit to each and every Bishop along with the gift of participation in the Sacred Magisterium. The Ordinary Magisterium is the handmaid of the Sacred Magisterium. Since only Bishops can participate in the Sacred Magisterium, only Bishops can teach under the Ordinary Magisterium.

The ability to teach under the Ordinary Magisterium is necessary to the practical functioning of the Sacred Magisterium. In teaching a doctrine which has been explicitly defined by the Sacred Magisterium, a Bishop needs to refer to numerous related theological ideas, not all of which have been infallibly defined by the Sacred Magisterium. If a Bishop could only teach those doctrines which have been explicitly and infallibly defined by the Sacred Magisterium, a Bishop’s ability to teach the faithful the Way of Christ would be severely impeded.

The second criterion is similar to the *ex cathedra* criterion of the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium. However, the term *ex cathedra* (“from the chair”) refers to the chair, or the role, of Saint Peter. In a similar way, though, a Bishop must be speaking in his official role as a Bishop for his teaching to fall under even the Ordinary Magisterium.

The third criterion is the main distinction between the Ordinary Magisterium and Sacred Magisterium. Infallible teachings of the Sacred Magisterium are definitive pronouncements about what is, and what is not, the teaching of Christ; such final decisions on doctrine are infallible, irreformable, and irrevocable. In contrast, the teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium are fallible, reformable, and revocable. Thus, the third criterion for the Ordinary Magisterium is that the teaching be a theological position or judgment on doctrine, and yet also not a final decision on doctrine. If the statement of a Bishop is not a theological position, if it is not a judgment on what is, and what is not, the teaching of Christ, then the third criterion is not met.

The fourth criterion for the Ordinary Magisterium is the same as for the Sacred Magisterium. Both the Ordinary Magisterium and the Sacred Magisterium teach only from the Sacred Deposit of Faith on the truths of faith and morals.

The fifth criterion for the Ordinary Magisterium is similar to that for the Sacred Magisterium. The faithful are required to believe all of the truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith, regardless of whether or not these truths have been affirmed by the infallible Sacred Magisterium, because the Sacred Deposit of Faith is Divine Revelation and is the teaching of the Most Holy Trinity. Therefore, if even the Ordinary Magisterium proposes that a teaching is found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith, the faithful have an obligation to believe. However, for a teaching under the Ordinary Magisterium, the requirement to believe is limited because the teaching is fallible.

If a faithful Catholic, who adheres to all of the teachings of the Sacred Magisterium without exception and without reservation, understands a truth of the Sacred Deposit of Faith in contradiction to a teaching by an individual Bishop under the Ordinary Magisterium, then that Catholic is obliged to humbly adhere to the truth, despite a teaching to the contrary by the Ordinary Magisterium. The requirement to believe the teachings of the Church is based upon our faith in God, Who is Truth, and in God's infallible Sacred Deposit of Truth. No one should abandon a clearly understood truth of the Sacred Deposit of Faith in order to adhere to a fallible teaching by an individual Bishop under the Ordinary Magisterium. On the other hand, most teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium are entirely true, for even the fallible Ordinary Magisterium has assistance from the Providence and Grace of God.

The five criteria for a teaching to fall under the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church are as follows:

1. any Bishop or group of Bishops
2. speaking in his/their official role as a leader and teacher of the Church
3. offers a theological position or judgment (not a final decision on doctrine)
4. on the truths of faith and morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith
5. "which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with"

If it turns out that the theological position proposed by the Ordinary Magisterium is in error, then it was never found within the Sacred Deposit of Truth. Thus, the obligation to believe, found in the fifth criterion, is limited, because the teaching of the Ordinary Magisterium is fallible. In the absence of certainty about a teaching of the Ordinary Magisterium, the faithful are obliged to humbly assent to the position of the Bishops. For the Bishops, who each have the gift of participation in the Sacred Magisterium, also have the special assistance of the Holy Spirit, even when they are only exercising the Ordinary Magisterium. This gift of the Holy Spirit is related to the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium. When the Bishops teach the infallible teaching of Christ, they must often address some questions which the Church has not definitively answered. Thus, the Sacred Magisterium is assisted by the Ordinary Magisterium, and the gift of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium is assisted by the gift of the Ordinary Magisterium. This gift is given only to the Bishops of the Church.

#### Authority Beyond the Magisterium

If an idea is proposed which does not meet the criteria for the infallible Sacred Magisterium, and also does not meet the criteria for the Ordinary Magisterium, then the faithful are not obliged in the least to adhere to that idea. Even so, if any person speaks the truth, and one recognizes it as truth, then one is morally obligated to believe that truth and to act accordingly. But, as concerns the teaching authority of the Church, there is no other spiritual teaching authority aside from the Ordinary Magisterium and the Sacred Magisterium of the holy Roman Catholic Church.

The Church does possess a temporal authority, which includes the ability and authority to organize the Church on earth (dioceses, different orders of religious, etc.) and to make practical rules and regulations (Canon Law, rules for religious life, guidelines for liturgical celebrations, etc.). These temporal decisions are based on faith and morals, because they are guided by the desire to serve God and to imitate Jesus Christ.

However, such temporal decisions never have the character of infallibility, because they are not decisions on Christ's teaching about faith and morals. Such decisions may be entirely correct and pleasing to God, but they do not have the force of an infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium.

#### When the Church is Without a Pope

When the Church has a Pope, the third charism can be exercised in either of two forms, by the daily teaching and witness of the Bishops in communion with the Pope, or by the decisions of an Ecumenical Council, (or of another gathering of Bishops), presided over and approved by the Pope. The first and second charisms reside solely in, and are exercised solely by, the Pope.

When one Pope dies, the Church on earth is without a Pope until the next Pope is elected. During the time that the Church is without a Pope, the Bishops dispersed through the world can still participate in the infallible Sacred Magisterium, under the first form of the third charism, by continuing to daily teach and witness to the infallible teaching found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith. But their teaching must be in absolute agreement with the teaching and witness of past Roman Pontiffs. Thus, the teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith remains ever infallible and ever able to be taught through the gift of the Sacred Magisterium.

Nevertheless, when the Church is without a Pope, there can be no new decisions on faith or morals even from the first form of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium. New expressions of a deeper understanding of the teachings on faith and morals found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith can only proceed from the third charism with the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope (under the second charism).

When the Church is without a Pope, the second form of the third charism cannot be exercised. The use of the second form of the third charism requires the Pope's authoritative guidance and governance, which is the second charism of the Sacred Magisterium, belonging solely to the Pope. The Bishops can only be summoned to an Ecumenical Council by the Pope. The Pope must authoritatively guide and govern an Ecumenical Council, under his gift of the second charism. And the Pope's final approval is required for the decisions on faith and morals of such a Council (or other gathering of Bishops) to have the character of infallibility.

When the Church is without a Pope, no one has the ability or authority to summon an Ecumenical Council. No individual Bishop or Cardinal or Patriarch, nor any group of Bishops or Church leaders, no matter how numerous, has that authority. If an Ecumenical Council has already been summoned by the Pope before his death, that Council is still a valid Council, but it cannot undertake any further exercise of the second form of the third charism, by making a definitive decision on faith or morals, until the next Pope is elected. Once a new Pope is elected, if he approves of the continuation of the Council, the Council can again exercise the second form of the third charism by making decisions on matters of faith and morals, under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope, and subject to the Pope's final judgment.

The Second Vatican Council was a valid Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council was summoned by Pope John XXIII. After Pope John XXIII died, Pope Paul VI was elected and the Council continued under his authoritative guidance and governance. That holy Council's definitive decisions on faith and morals were approved by Pope Paul VI and so they fall under the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

When the Church is, for a time, without a Pope, the first and second charisms of the Sacred Magisterium cannot be exercised, because these belong solely to the Pope. Since the second charism cannot be exercised during that time period, the second form of the third charism also cannot be exercised (e.g. decisions on doctrine by an Ecumenical Council). The second form of the third charism can only be exercised in conjunction with the second charism, which belongs exclusively to the Pope.

The exercise of the Ordinary Magisterium can continue, even when the Church is temporarily without a Pope. Any individual Bishop or group of Bishops, however few, can exercise the Ordinary Magisterium, as long as their teaching, under the Ordinary Magisterium, does not conflict with any teaching of the Sacred Magisterium.

## Heresy and the Magisterium

A heretic is someone who both claims to be a member of the Roman Catholic Church and, inwardly or outwardly, rejects or denies any of the truths taught by the infallible Sacred Magisterium. Such truths include teachings affirmed by any of the three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium, including the daily universal witness of the Bishops, dispersed through the world, in communion with the Pope.

Even though a heretic sins by rejecting some of the teachings of the Church, such a person does not cease to be a member of the Body of Christ on earth. Even if a heretic were to commit an actual mortal sin by means of heresy, such a person does not cease to be a member of the Body of Christ on earth. When any member of the Church commits an actual mortal sin and loses the state of sanctifying grace in themselves, such a person remains a member of the Church and of the Body of Christ on earth. Such a person can receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and in some grave and exceptional circumstances, can even receive other Sacraments. Any person who can validly receive the Sacraments is certainly a member of the Body of Christ. Protestants who receive a valid Sacrament of Baptism become members of the Body of Christ, even though they do not believe all that the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Therefore, a heretic does not cease to be a member of the Body of Christ, and the grave moral offense of heresy does not remove someone from the Body of Christ. Once a person has received the Sacrament of Baptism, they cannot be removed from the Body of Christ, except by dying in a state of mortal sin.

However, someone who rejects or denies a teaching of the Ordinary Magisterium is not a heretic or a schismatic, for the teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium are fallible. An individual faithful Catholic might arrive at an understanding of a truth found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith before particular faithful Bishops arrive at that same understanding. Just so, when Peter and John ran to the tomb of Our Lord, John outran Peter and reached the tomb first (Jn 20:4-5). Nevertheless, John did not enter the tomb first, he waited for Peter to enter. When individual Catholics understand a truth of the faith, prior to a definitive judgment by the infallible Sacred Magisterium, they are not obliged to deny or ignore that truth, even if the teaching of particular individual Bishops, exercising the Ordinary Magisterium, contradicts their understanding. But neither can they claim that their understanding is an authoritative and definitive judgment on that truth. They must await the judgment of the Sacred Magisterium, and adhere fully and sincerely to that judgment.

There are three possible types of defect: flaw, omission, imperfection. (See chapter 2 for more on this point.) Therefore, there are three possible types of sin: sins of commission, sins of omission, and sins of imperfection. A sin of commission is an immoral act of the human person, done with some degree of willingness to commit the act and some degree of knowledge that the act is wrong. A sin of commission can be internal, only in the heart and mind, or external, that is, carried out in word or deed. A sin of omission is a refusal to act, willingly and knowingly, in accordance with the requirements of morality and the will of God. As one example, the rich man sinned by refusing to help Lazarus in his dire need (Luke 16:19-31). As another example, the refusal to honor father and mother is a sin (and a violation of one of the Ten Commandments). A sin of imperfection occurs when a human person does something good or refuses to do something evil, but fails to some degree to fulfill all that is required by the moral law. As one example, attending Mass on Sunday is a good act, which fulfills the Commandment to worship God, but if one participates poorly in the worship of God during the Mass, one sins by imperfection. As another example, refusing to join others in committing a sin is moral requirement, but refusing with mixed motivation, partly for reasons of self-interest, is a sin of imperfection.

The three types of heresy correspond to the three types of defect. The first type of heresy is belief in a false teaching. Of course, when referring to the sin of heresy, the teaching must be on the subject of faith or morals and the heresy must be contrary to the teaching of the Sacred Magisterium. This type of heresy corresponds to a sin of commission. An example of this type of heresy is related in Acts of the Apostles, when the Apostles rejected the heretical teaching that a Christian man must be circumcised in order to be saved by Christ (Acts 15:1-21). The second type of heresy is refusal to believe an essential doctrine of the Faith. This type of heresy corresponds to a sin of omission. For example, when Christ taught his disciples about His Real Presence in the Eucharist, some refused to believe (John 6:53-66).

The third type of heresy is belief in a distorted version of an essential doctrine. For example, the teaching that there is “no salvation outside the Church” is a true doctrine if it is properly understood. Everyone who is saved, from every religion and even from those who profess no religion nor any belief in God, is saved by the

Church. The true universal Catholic Church is the Body of Christ, with Christ as its head, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Certainly there is no salvation apart from Christ, and His Body the Church, and the Holy Spirit. However, those persons who are outside of the visible structure of the Church on earth can still be saved, even if they are never baptized and never join the Christian faith. Where the Holy Spirit is, there also is the Church. Where Christ is, there also is the Church. The ancient Israelites were saved by Christ, though they did not know him: "...and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10:2-4). But some heretics have distorted this true teaching. They have narrowed the meaning of the Church and the Body of Christ so as to include only those baptized into Christ. Some have narrowed the meaning of the Church to include only Catholics. (This is ironic, since many of these persons have separated themselves from the Catholic Church.) They have taken a true teaching (no salvation outside the Church) and have distorted it into a heresy.

Most named heresies are actually a set of related heretical beliefs, often involving more than one of the three types of heresy. For example, sede vacantism includes the false belief that the Pope can fall into heresy and can thereby lose his authority, the refusal to believe in the teachings of Second Vatican Council, and distortions in belief on the infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium. For example, they believe that the Pope can teach infallibly, under the criteria established by First Vatican Council, but if the Pope teaches something they judge to be false, they say he is not the Pope and therefore his teaching is not infallible.

#### Heresy and the Roman Pontiff

The Pope alone possesses all three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium. Therefore, the Pope alone possesses the fullness of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium. The Pope can never become a heretic, no matter how sinful he may be, because the fullness of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium, which resides fully only in the Pope, completely protects him from heresy. There is no possibility whatsoever that any Pope could ever fall into heresy, even for a short time, even on a lesser point of faith or morals, no matter what the circumstances, because the gift of the Sacred Magisterium completely protects him from even the sheer possibility of heresy.

The Sacred Magisterium can never cease to be an infallible source of truth on faith and morals. The Pope is the seat of the Sacred Magisterium, therefore, the Pope can never fall into any kind or degree of heresy. The Pope can never depart from the true Catholic faith and the true Catholic Church. Nor can a series of Popes ever be said to have departed from the one true faith of the Roman Catholic Church. No Pope can ever fall into any kind or degree of heresy, manifest or hidden, expressed or unexpressed, because the Pope possesses all three charisms of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The gift of the fullness of the Sacred Magisterium entirely precludes any possibility that any Pope could ever fall away from the one true holy Catholic Church. The gift of the fullness of the Sacred Magisterium entirely prevents even the sheer possibility that any Pope would ever fall into any kind or degree of heresy whatsoever.

Heresy is fundamentally an opposition to teachings of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. Thus, heresy is directly opposed to the Sacred Magisterium. Since the Pope possesses the fullness of the Sacred Magisterium, the Pope can never fall into any kind or degree of heresy. Heresy is the opposite of the Sacred Magisterium. Whoever is entirely filled with the Sacred Magisterium cannot possibly be a heretic.

In order for a man to be a valid Pope, three things are necessary: he must be validly elected or chosen, he must freely accept the office of Pope, and he must be ordained as a Bishop.<sup>88</sup> No man is Roman Pontiff of the one holy catholic apostolic Church, unless all three of these criteria are met. What would happen if a man, who was a heretic, either manifestly or secretly, was elected Pope? Heresy cannot be removed from a man without an act of his freewill, yet the Pope can never be a heretic. In such a case, when the man who is elected makes his decision, of his own freewill, to accept his election and become the Roman Pontiff, he immediately loses his heresy. In accepting the office of Roman Pontiff, he has accepted the seat of the Sacred Magisterium and has become the seat of the Sacred Magisterium. Even if, prior to his election, a man dissented from a teaching of the Sacred Magisterium and harbored an intention to revoke such a teaching if elected Pope, as soon as he freely accepts his election and becomes Pope, he loses his dissent and his heretical intention. He is

completely unable to dissent from, or to intend to reverse, any teaching of the Sacred Magisterium, because he has freely accepted from God the gift of all three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium. He can no longer be a heretic, even secretly in his heart and mind, because he has become the seat of the Sacred Magisterium.

Although the Roman Pontiff can never fall into any kind or degree of heresy, he is not immune to all types of errors. The Pope is able to commit other sins, (but not the sin of heresy). The Pope is able to misunderstand and to make mistakes. It is even possible for a Pope to have a personal opinion on a matter of faith or morals which is in error, so long as his opinion is not contradictory to a prior teaching of the Sacred Magisterium. If a question of faith or morals has not yet been decided by the Sacred Magisterium, the Pope is free to consider various possibilities and could possibly hold an erroneous opinion on the subject. However, he is unable to teach any error on faith or morals using any of the three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

Individual Bishops, other than the Pope, possess only the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium. Individual Bishops, other than the Pope, could possibly fall into heresy, for they have only the first charism of the Sacred Magisterium. Even so, this first charism provides them with grace to strengthen them against falling into heresy or schism. This grace is part of the gift of the Sacred Magisterium.

What is Sede Vacantism?

One heresy found in the Church today is called sede vacantism, which means “the seat is vacant.” These persons believe that the seat of Saint Peter, i.e. the role of the Pope as Teacher and Shepherd in the Church, is vacant. They reject the authority and the validity of the Popes from Pope John XXIII to Pope John Paul II (John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II). They reject the authority and validity of the Second Vatican Council. They will likely reject subsequent Popes and Ecumenical Councils as well.

There are various versions of the sede vacantism heresy. One version is called the “Society of Saint Pius X” (SSPX). This group was not founded by Pope Saint Pius X, nor was he ever a member. The group was founded long after his death. Neither is this group based on the teaching or example of Pope Saint Pius X. The very idea of naming a group, which rejects the spiritual authority of the Popes, after a man who was himself a holy Pope, is self-contradictory. Pope Saint Pius X would never have approved of such a group of heretics.

“Yet this you have, you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” (Rev 2:6). The Nicolaitans were a group of heretics in the early Church. They believed in sexual promiscuity. They attributed their doctrines to Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the first seven Deacons in the Church (Acts 6:5). But this group was not founded by Nicolaus, nor was he ever a member. Neither was this group based on the teaching or example of Deacon Nicolaus of Antioch. The passage from the book of Revelation, which refers to the Nicolaitans, not only serves to condemn those Christians who practice sexual promiscuity, but also condemns the heresy of groups such as the Society of Saint Pius X. In this passage, God is not merely referring to a past heresy, He is also referring to heresies of our time, which are similar to that past heresy of the Nicolaitans.

The sede vacantists think that they are the true Catholic Church. They use the term “Novus Ordo” (New Order) to refer to mainstream Roman Catholics and their Faith. Some splinter groups within this heresy have tried to elect their own Pope. There are several of these false claimants to the Papal seat. Those who adhere to his heresy cannot even agree among themselves as to exactly why the Popes since John XXIII are supposedly not valid Popes. They reject the Second Vatican Council, partly because they judge the teachings of Vatican II to be false, and partly because they judge the Popes of Vatican II (John XXIII and Paul VI) to be invalid.

Despite the disagreements among the sede vacantists, their basic argument is as follows. They believe that anyone who falls into heresy becomes separated from the Church, the Body of Christ. They believe that any Pope can possibly fall into heresy. They believe that any Pope who falls into heresy separates himself from the Church, and therefore cannot possibly be the head of the Church. They believe that individual Catholics can and should judge whether or not each Pope has fallen into heresy. They believe that the Popes since Pope John XXIII have each fallen into heresy and thereby lost their validity as Popes. Some believe that each of these men who became Pope fell into heresy before their election, so that their election itself was invalid. Others believe that these Popes lost their validity after their election. And which heresies are all these Popes accused of committing? Basically, they are accused of believing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. At its core, sede vacantism is the heresy of rejecting the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Strangely enough, sede vacantists generally accept the teachings of the First Vatican Council, including the teaching on Papal Infallibility. They say that a Pope can teach infallibly, but they add that if a Pope does teach a false doctrine under the criteria of Papal Infallibility, then he is no longer a valid Pope and his “false” teaching will therefore not fall under Papal Infallibility. It is, of course, self-contradictory to say that a Pope can teach infallibly, except when his teaching is false, in which case he ceases to be Pope. One cannot call something infallible, if it can possibly fail and be false. Yet that is the position of some of the sede vacantists.

The heresy of sede vacantism claims that the sede vacantists are the true Church, yet they cannot even agree among themselves as to what their theological position is on various points. One can probably find some sede vacantists who will counter the above description of sede vacantism by offering other theories on why the recent Popes lost their validity or authority. In any case, their rejection of the authority of the recent Popes and the Second Vatican Council places them in a state of heresy. The sede vacantist theological position is contrary to the truth.

A similar heresy is found among a group who call themselves “traditional Catholics.” They claim they are Roman Catholics, but they are not in communion with the Roman Pontiff and they reject the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the recent Popes. They disguise themselves as Roman Catholics, by talking about the Rosary and various Saints. They even have some Bishops, seminaries, religious communities, and parishes in their following. But they are not in communion with the Holy See, nor do they adhere to all of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Some persons have tried to remain in the Roman Catholic Church, yet also reject the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the recent Popes. Some of these persons call themselves “traditionalists.” Some refuse to attend Holy Mass, unless it is in Latin. Some continue to attend the Mass at their local parish, all the while rejecting the teachings and decisions of the body of Bishops led by the Pope. Regardless of whether or not such persons attach themselves to a particular heretical group, they are committing the sin of heresy by rejecting the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the recent Popes.

This heresy of rejecting the recent teachings of the Church has many forms and degrees. Some heretics attach themselves to one heretical group or another; some heretics remain largely unassociated with any particular group. Even so, anyone who rejects the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the teaching of the recent Popes commits an objective mortal sin against God, the sin of heresy.

### Contra Sede Vacantism

First, contrary to the sede vacantist position, a person who is a baptized member of the Body of Christ does not cease to be a member of the Body of Christ, even if that person falls into heresy or commits an actual mortal sin. The Sacrament of Baptism brings persons into the Body of Christ. Only members of the Body of Christ are permitted to receive the other Sacraments. A heretic can validly receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as long as they are repentant from whatever sins they confess, even if they have not yet repented from the sin of heresy. And heretics who repent from their sin of heresy can receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many Catholics in the world refuse to believe some of the teachings of the Church. They are in a state of heresy. Yet they validly receive the Sacraments, such as Confession, Communion, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

Bishops and priests, who are in a state of heresy, do not cease to be members of the Body of Christ. If they did, then the Sacraments they dispense would not be valid. If a Bishop or priest were completely separated from the Body of Christ, then they could not dispense the Sacraments of Christ. Heresy can be completely internal; it does not have to be expressed in word or deed to be heresy. So then, one has no way of knowing if a Bishop or priest is in a state of heresy. If heresy completely separates one from the Church, then we would have no way of knowing which Bishops and priests could validly dispense the Sacraments. Therefore, heresy does not separate one from the Church.

Because the sede vacantists believe that heresy separates one from the Body of Christ, they have no way of knowing if their own Bishops or priests are in a state of heresy and if the Sacraments they dispense are invalid. Heresy can be completely internal, hidden in the heart and mind. Therefore, their idea that heresy completely separates one from the Body of Christ means that no one would know which Popes, Bishops, and priests are heretics. The validity of all Popes, Bishops, and priests is called into question, if one adheres to the sede

vacantist position that heresy separates one completely from the Church. Yet the sede vacantists claim to believe in the validity of all the Popes before Pope John XXIII, and of their own Bishops and priests.

Neither can one claim that only externally expressed heresy separates one from the Church. The degree of sinfulness does not depend necessarily upon whether the sin is outwardly manifested or not. Some of the worst sins found in mankind are primarily of the mind and heart. An outwardly manifested heresy is not necessarily any worse than one that is hidden inwardly.

Neither can one claim that only severe cases of heresy separate one from the Church. If such were the case, then we would be left with the same uncertainty about the validity of the clergy and the Sacraments they dispense. If a certain degree of heresy caused someone to be separated from the Church, then we would have to judge who is in a state of heresy, to what degree, and whether the degree of heresy were sufficient to separate that person from the Church. And, without correct judgment on each of those points, we would not know which clergy were valid. The Sacraments, in such a case, would be untrustworthy, because we could not know which Bishops and priests were validly ordained.

Second, contrary to the sede vacantist position, the Pope can never fall into any kind or degree of heresy, because the Pope is the seat of the infallible Sacred Magisterium. The Pope possesses all three charisms of infallibility. Since the Pope possesses the fullness of the infallible teaching authority of the Church, this gift of the three charisms of infallibility entirely prevents the Pope from falling into heresy. The Bishops cannot exercise their gift of participation in the infallible Sacred Magisterium apart from the teaching authority of the Pope. Therefore, the idea that the Pope could fall into heresy is directly contrary to all three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium.

Third, contrary to the sede vacantist position, individual Catholics should not judge whether the teachings of the Pope and the Ecumenical Councils are correct. For a Catholic, Faith includes accepting the teaching of Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium. The sede vacantists have judged and condemned the teachings of the recent Popes and of the Second Vatican Council. The Church has never taught that individuals should make a judgment about each Pope and each Council, to decide if their teaching is correct. The infallibility of the Sacred Magisterium would be meaningless, if one could invalidate a Pope or a Council by claiming that they taught heresy.

Furthermore, the sede vacantist claim of heresy, (and the claim of other heretics,) is based on the conflict between their ideas and the teachings of Second Vatican Council and the Popes since that Council. They say that the Second Vatican Council and the recent Popes have contradicted prior teachings of the Church, but that is not the case. Rather, the emphasis and mode of expression of certain teachings has changed. Some Popes, such as Pope Pius IX, emphasized the authority Roman Pontiff and the primacy of the Roman Catholic Faith, (as is clear from the documents of First Vatican Council). On the other hand the Second Vatican Council emphasized the role of the laity in the life of the Church, and affirmed that the whole human race belongs to God, despite differences in beliefs. Note, however, that the Second Vatican Council also reaffirmed Papal Infallibility and the role of the Bishops in teaching with the Pope. There is no real conflict between recent teachings and past teachings, but rather a difference in emphasis and expression.

#### Ecumenical Councils and the Roman Pontiff

An Ecumenical Council is defined as a group of Bishops, representative of the universal Church and gathered together under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Roman Pontiff, who, together with the Roman Pontiff, exercise the spiritual and temporal authority of the holy Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Pontiff is an essential and indispensable part of any Ecumenical Council. When there is no Roman Pontiff, there is no Ecumenical Council. Without the authoritative guidance and governance of the Roman Pontiff, no group of Bishops, however numerous, constitutes an Ecumenical Council. Without the authoritative guidance and governance of the Roman Pontiff, no group of Bishops, however numerous, can exercise any role or authority similar to the role or authority of an Ecumenical Council.

After the Roman Pontiff dies, and before the next Roman Pontiff is elected, it is not possible for an Ecumenical Council to exist. An Ecumenical Council, by definition, must include the Roman Pontiff. Apart

from the Roman Pontiff, there is no Ecumenical Council. For this reason, Pope John Paul II declared, in *Universi Domestici Gregis*, that when a Pope dies during an Ecumenical Council, that Council ceases to have any authority and must therefore immediately cease its operations.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, in confirmation of the provisions of Canons 340 and 347 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law and of Canon 53 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches in this regard, a Council or Synod of Bishops, at whatever point they have reached, must be considered immediately suspended *ipso iure*, once notification is received of the vacancy of the Apostolic See. Therefore without any delay all meetings, congregations or sessions must be interrupted, and the preparation of any decrees or canons, together with the promulgation of those already confirmed, must be suspended, under pain of nullity of the same. Neither the Council nor the Synod can continue for any reason, even though it be most serious or worthy of special mention, until the new Pope, canonically elected, orders their resumption or continuation.<sup>90</sup>

Pope John Paul II also declared that an Ecumenical Council has no authority whatsoever to elect the next Roman Pontiff.<sup>91</sup> An Ecumenical Council cannot possibly elect a Pope because, without a reigning Pontiff, there is no Ecumenical Council. No group of Bishops, not even every Bishop on earth put together, constitutes an Ecumenical Council, without the authoritative guidance and governance of the Pope.

Furthermore, no decision, declaration, decree, canon, nor any document of any kind, issued by the Bishops of an Ecumenical Council, has any authority whatsoever without the official approval of the Roman Pontiff. In truth, apart from the authority of the Roman Pontiff, an Ecumenical Council has no authority at all. Each Bishop has authority within his own diocese, but no group of Bishops whatsoever has any additional authority apart from the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

An Ecumenical Council can never depose or remove a Roman Pontiff, because Ecumenical Councils have no authority apart from the Roman Pontiff. An Ecumenical Council cannot elect a Roman Pontiff, because Ecumenical Councils do not exist without a Roman Pontiff.<sup>92</sup> An Ecumenical Council can never overrule the decisions of a reigning Roman Pontiff, because the authority of the Ecumenical Council depends upon the authority of that same Roman Pontiff. Nevertheless, an Ecumenical Council can, under the authoritative guidance and governance of the Roman Pontiff, and with his official approval, correct a previous fallible teaching or decision of a previous Pope, a previous Ecumenical Council, or even of the current Pope (if he has changed his mind). This change or correction in teachings and/or decisions is possible only in so far as such teachings or decisions fall under the fallible Ordinary Magisterium or under the fallible temporal authority of the Church. All teachings of the Sacred Magisterium are entirely infallible, irreformable, and irrevocable.

The First Vatican Council taught that an Ecumenical Council does not have authority superior to the Pope and that decisions of the Pope cannot be appealed to an Ecumenical Council. “They wander from the straight path of truth, therefore, who affirm that it is permissible to appeal from decisions of Roman Pontiffs to an ecumenical council as to an authority superior to the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>93</sup> Therefore, an Ecumenical Council can never overrule the decisions of a reigning Roman Pontiff, nor remove him from his role as the one true leader of the Church on earth.

### Truths Beyond the Magisterium

Both the Ordinary Magisterium and the Sacred Magisterium teach only from the Sacred Deposit of Faith. When a Bishop or the Pope speaks about subjects outside of faith and morals, that is, about questions not answered by the Sacred Deposit of Faith, his thoughts and ideas are neither a part of the Sacred Magisterium, nor of the Ordinary Magisterium. Any teaching of the Ordinary Magisterium can eventually be decided upon by the Sacred Magisterium and become the explicit and infallible teaching of the Church. But comments and thoughts on subjects outside of faith and morals, that is, outside of the things taught by the Sacred Deposit of Faith, are in no way a part of the teaching of the Church.

Scientific truths found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith are a part of the teaching of the Church. The Magisterium of the Church can rule on any truths of faith or morals found in the Sacred Deposit of Truth, even if these truths fall within the area of concern of one or another of the sciences. The Church can teach,

using either the Ordinary Magisterium or Sacred Magisterium, that certain scientific theories are in error in so far as they conflict with teachings found within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The Church can also teach that scientific answers to certain questions cannot include particular ideas which conflict with the Sacred Deposit of Faith, or must include particular ideas which are required by the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

For example, the origin of the universe is of interest to astrophysics, a scientific discipline. But Sacred Scripture clearly teaches that God brought about the origin of all creation. Any scientific theory which claims that the universe has always existed, or that the universe brought itself into existence without the necessity of an act of God, is contrary to the teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

As another example, there are various scientific theories on the origins of man. But Sacred Scripture clearly teaches that God brought about the start of the human race, distinguishing man from the lower animals by means of reason and an immortal soul. Any scientific theory which posits that mankind originated from the lower animals, without any special intervention from God, is contrary to the teaching of the Sacred Deposit of Faith. The idea that the human body evolved from lower animals is not, in and of itself, contrary to the Faith. However, any version of the theory of evolution, which attempts to completely explain the origins of life and the various forms of life and especially of mankind, without the necessity of the intervention of God, must be considered contrary to the Faith. For this reason, in the Christian view, the theory of evolution could only ever be thought of, at most, as a partially correct, partial explanation of the origins of life and of various forms of life, especially mankind.

One of the main conflicts between scientific theories and the Christian faith is that science often tries to explain various parts of Creation, without any reference to God, the Creator. God created the entire universe. God influences the entire universe. Therefore, science cannot succeed in completely explaining things as long as science keeps God out of the explanation. Science can only offer partial explanations within each area of scientific knowledge. A complete understanding of any field of knowledge requires the inclusion of faith in God within the ideas of that field of knowledge. Some areas of knowledge are outside of the area of concern of science. All scientific knowledge put together is less than all knowledge put together, because science does not concern itself with knowledge arrived at through faith. And some truths are beyond human comprehension.

### Explicit Versus Implicit

Every possible teaching of the Church is found, either explicitly or implicitly, within the Sacred Deposit of Faith. No new teachings can be added to the Sacred Deposit of Faith. Sometimes it seems as if the Church has arrived at a new teaching, but this is merely a new deeper understanding of the same Sacred Deposit of Faith ever-present within, and ever-cherished by, the Church. A deeper understanding of some aspect of the Faith often leads to a new explicit teaching, which was always implicit in the Sacred Deposit of Faith.

For example, each Pope, including Peter and every one of his Successors, has had the ability to teach infallibly by his sole authority. The Church has always taught, in one way or another, the special role and ability of the Successor to Saint Peter in teaching and guiding the Church. But at the First Vatican Council, our understanding of this teaching, which began with the special ministry Christ gave to Peter, reached a new level. The teaching on Papal Infallibility was always implicit in the Sacred Deposit of Faith (cf. Mt 16:17-19; Jn 11:49-52). But at the First Vatican Council, the Church was able to explicitly state that teaching with a new level of clarity and precision. The Council was able to clearly state the criteria for any Successor of Peter to teach infallibly by his sole ability and authority.

### The Vastness of the Sacred Deposit of Faith

The Sacred Deposit of Faith is like an Ocean of Truth, whose depth and size can be measured only by God. Every day we faithful swim in that Ocean, yet we never touch the bottom, nor reach the other side. The Sacred Deposit of Faith is like a vast Forest, filled with the Mysteries of Christ. Every day, we faithful walk in that same Forest, and every day we see things we never saw before. Has every possible teaching of Christ now been explicitly taught and widely understood by the Church? No, far from it. There are ten thousand truths as yet undiscovered within the ancient Deposit of Faith. These beautiful everlasting truths lie still and hidden within Divine Revelation, awaiting discovery by the Church on earth.

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- <sup>1</sup> Cf. Conte, *the Virginity of Jesus and Mary*, p. 6, describing the Virgin Mary's perfect virginity.
- <sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, (Nov. 18, 1965), n. 2.
- <sup>3</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 4.
- <sup>4</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 11.
- <sup>5</sup> Originally, I had numbered the charisms such that Papal Infallibility was called the third charism. But now I understand that the three charisms of the Sacred Magisterium are a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity and that the charism of Papal Infallibility is a reflection of the Father. Therefore, the charism of Papal Infallibility should be called the first charism. This current edition has the correct numbering of the charisms.
- <sup>6</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, (Nov. 21, 1964), n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>7</sup> A non-geographical, communication-gathering of Bishops in an Ecumenical Council is possible and would be entirely valid, with the approval of the Pope.
- <sup>8</sup> The first form of the first charism is the work-horse of the Sacred Magisterium, daily expressing the infallible teaching found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith.
- <sup>9</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>10</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>11</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 4.
- <sup>12</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>13</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 4.
- <sup>14</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>15</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, intro. by Douglas G. Bushman, S.T. L., (Boston, Massachusetts: Pauline Books & Media, 1999), "General Introduction," p. xix.
- <sup>17</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25.
- <sup>18</sup> Apostolic Constitution of Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, (Dec. 8, 1854).
- <sup>19</sup> Apostolic Constitution of Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, (Nov. 1, 1950).
- <sup>20</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 11.
- <sup>21</sup> Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, (March 25, 1987), n. 3.
- <sup>22</sup> Conte, *Important Dates in the Lives of Jesus and Mary*, chapter 9.
- <sup>23</sup> *Redemptoris Mater*, n. 3.
- <sup>24</sup> First Vatican Ecumenical Council, First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus*, (July 18, 1870), chap. 4.
- <sup>25</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>26</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>27</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>28</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraphs 1, 3.
- <sup>29</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>30</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>31</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ineffabilis Deus*, "The Definition."
- <sup>33</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 4.
- <sup>34</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>35</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>36</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>37</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>38</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.

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- <sup>39</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 4.
- <sup>40</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>41</sup> Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, On Reserving Priestly Ordination To Men Alone, (May 22, 1994), n. 4.
- <sup>42</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 1.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 2.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, released an official Response to Doubt: “On *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, Responsum ad Dubium,” October 28, 1995, which also stated that this teaching is part of the Sacred Deposit of Faith. This Responsum ad Dubium was approved by Pope John Paul II.
- “Dubium: Whether the teaching that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women, which is presented in the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* to be held definitively, is to be understood as belonging to the deposit of faith.
- Responsum: In the affirmative.”
- <sup>47</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>48</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 4.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>51</sup> In this context, Christ’s Return refers to His First Return (often called “the Second Coming,”) at the end of the Antichrist’s reign. Christ’s Second Return (which some have called “the Third Coming,”) will occur at the end of the Millennium of peace and holiness, at the time of the Resurrection of the dead on Judgment day.
- <sup>52</sup> Concerning the claim that a woman was once elected Pope centuries ago, such an election could not possibly have been valid, because Episcopal ordination is a necessary condition for the valid election of a Pope and women cannot be validly ordained to the Episcopate. A person who falsely claims to be Pope is called an antipope.
- <sup>53</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter of October 28, 1995, “Regarding the SCDF Responsum on *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*,” paragraph 11.
- <sup>54</sup> Ratzinger, “Regarding the SCDF Responsum on *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*,” paragraph 11.
- <sup>55</sup> Ratzinger, “Regarding the SCDF Responsum on *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*,” paragraph 11.
- <sup>56</sup> Responsum ad Dubium, commentary.
- <sup>57</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>58</sup> Responsum ad Dubium, commentary.
- <sup>59</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>60</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 2.
- <sup>61</sup> Ratzinger, “Regarding the SCDF Responsum on *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*,” paragraph 11.
- <sup>62</sup> Address of the Holy Father to the German Bishops on the Occasion of Their *Ad Limina* Visit, (November 20, 1999), <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1999/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20111999\\_ad-limina-german\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20111999_ad-limina-german_en.html)>, n. 10.
- <sup>63</sup> *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>64</sup> “If anyone, God forbid, should presume to contradict this our definition, let him be anathema.” First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, chap. 4.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>66</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4.
- <sup>70</sup> Papal Bull of Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, (November 18, 1302), <<http://www.shrine.com/Unam.htm>>.
- <sup>71</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>72</sup> Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, (March 25, 1995), n. 5.

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- <sup>73</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 5.
- <sup>74</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>75</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 5.
- <sup>76</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>77</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>78</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>79</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 5.
- <sup>80</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 57.
- <sup>81</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25, paragraph 3.
- <sup>82</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 5.
- <sup>83</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25.
- <sup>84</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 11, Vatican web site,  
<[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html)>
- <sup>85</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25.
- <sup>86</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 5.
- <sup>87</sup> Responsum ad Dubium, commentary.
- <sup>88</sup> In the present day, the election of the Pope occurs by a vote of the Cardinals. However, the election of the Roman Pontiff does not necessarily have to occur by voting. To elect means to choose. Though the most common form of election today is by voting, other means of choosing the Pope are possible and valid. For example, the Apostle Peter, who was the first Pope, was elected (that is, chosen) by Christ.
- <sup>89</sup> Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II, *Universi Dominici Gregis*, (Feb. 22, 1996), n. 34.
- <sup>90</sup> *Universi Dominici Gregis*, n. 34.
- <sup>91</sup> *Universi Dominici Gregis*, n. 34.
- <sup>92</sup> As a sheer possibility, an Ecumenical Council led by the reigning Pope could choose the Pope's successor before his death or valid resignation.
- <sup>93</sup> First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, (July 18, 1870), chapter 3.