

INFALLIBLE

“Simon, you are Peter.....I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven ,whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16: 19

With these words of Christ to Peter it is understood that whatever Peter bound on earth was already bound in heaven and this authority was passed on to the successors of Peter.

Likewise the bishops, when in union with Peter, are also infallible when teaching on faith and morals. This is taken from Matthew 18:18 where Christ told the apostles whatever they bound in heaven was bound on earth and whatever they loosed on earth was loosed in heaven.

Christ told those He sent out “He who hears you hears me and he who rejects you rejects me.” Luke 10:16

Christ promised the Church the protection of the Holy Spirit:

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” John 16:12-13

Christ instructed the Church to preach everything he taught:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.....teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19–20)

Christ promised the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church. Matthew 16:18

This mandate and promise from Christ guarantees the Church will never fall away from His teachings or teach error in matters of faith and morals.



The teaching on the infallibility of the Pope was formally defined in 1870 at the First Vatican Council:

We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman Pontiff speaks EX CATHEDRA, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable.

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

Protestant Objection: The Pope is a sinner. How can he be infallible? Look at all the “bad” Popes!

Catholic Answer: The Pope’s moral character has nothing to do with being infallible. Peter and Paul were sinners yet they were infallible in their preaching and in their writings contained in the books of the Bible. A Pope is only infallible when he speaks from the chair of Peter to the entire Church on matters of faith and morals.

Protestant objection: Paul rebuked Peter at Antioch. That proves Peter was not infallible.

Galatians 2:11-13 “But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles but when they came he drew back and separated himself.”

Catholic Answer: The Council of Jerusalem had decreed that Gentiles could be saved without having to become a Jew first by being circumcised. The Gentiles were to be considered part of the faith community. Peter reverted to the custom of traditional Judaism which discouraged social contact with non-Jews. Peter’s conduct was improper and was rightly corrected by Paul. Improper conduct by a Pope has nothing to do with infallibility.

Protestant Objection: Pope Honorius was condemned as a heretic at the Third Council of Constantinople. If a Pope cannot teach error on faith and morals then isn’t this proof that Infallibility is false?

Catholic Answer: Catholic Dogma is that Christ has two wills, one human and one divine. Pope Honorius wrote in a letter to a man named Sergius that Christ has only one will. Forty years after Pope Honorius died a Council was called where they condemned him as a heretic. However Pope Honorius taught this heresy in a letter addressed to an individual and not to the whole Church which is one of the conditions for an ex-cathedra statement. Also Pope Honorius did not teach this doctrine as binding on all Catholics another condition for infallibility.

If the Pope were to write a letter to an individual, or make a statement to the media, and say that he believed that Christ committed a sin that would not be an infallible decree because the Pope would not be addressing the whole Church and would not be making a statement that was binding on all the faithful. It would be an erroneous theological opinion not an infallible statement.

Protestant Objection: What about about Pope Zozimus, Pope Vigilus and Pope Liberius?

Read about Pope Zozimus [HERE](#) Pope Vigilus [HERE](#) Pope Liberius [HERE](#)

One of the bad Popes, Alexander VI served as head of the Church from 1492-1503. When he died a man named Martin Luther was twenty years old and was studying at the University of Erfurt in Germany. According to most historians, in the summer of 1505, during a thunderstorm a lightning bolt struck near him as he was returning from school. Terrified, he cried out, "Help, St. Anne! I'll become a monk!" Spared of his life, Luther kept his bargain, dropped out of law school and entered the monastery.

Next topic: Martin Luther and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Recommend books: *Pope Fiction* by Patrick Madrid
The Oxford Dictionary of Popes by J.N.D.Kelly