

Know Your Faith

Session 7 - Papacy

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

- I. The Primacy of Peter in scripture
 - a. Peter often speaks for the other apostles (Mt 19:27; Mk 8:29; Lk 12:41)
 - b. The apostles are sometimes referred to as “Peter and his companions.” (Lk 9:32; Mk 16:7; Acts 2:37)
 - c. Peter’s name always leads the lists of apostles; Judas Iscariot always takes up the rear
 - d. Matthew 10:2 – “These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew...”
 - i. The Greek for “first” is *Protos*
 - ii. Was Peter the first apostle chronologically???
 - e. Peter’s name is mentioned 191 times in the NT, more than all the rest of the apostles put together
 - f. Matthew 16:17-19 - Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, **and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**"
 - i. Is 22:16-23 – “Thus says the Lord, the GOD of hosts: Up, go to that official, Shebna, master of the palace...The LORD shall hurl you down headlong, mortal man...! I will thrust you from your office and pull you down from your station. On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. **I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open.** I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot, to be a place of honor for his family.”
 - g. Luke 22:31-32 - "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; **and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.**"

- h. John 21:15-17 - When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**" He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**" He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." (Jesus) said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**"

II. The Continuance of Apostolic Offices

- a. Acts 1:20 – “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: 'Let his encampment become desolate, and may no one dwell in it.' And: 'May another take his office.'”
 - i. The Greek word for office here is “Episkopain”
- b. 2 Timothy 2:2 – “And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.”
- c. "Through countryside and city [the apostles] preached, and they appointed their earliest converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers. Nor was this a novelty, for bishops and deacons had been written about a long time earlier. . . . Our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the office of bishop. For this reason, therefore, having received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have already been mentioned and afterwards added the further provision that, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry" (Pope Clement of Rome, *Letter to the Corinthians* 42:4–5, 44:1–3 [A.D. 80]).
- d. "It is possible, then, for everyone in every church, who may wish to know the truth, to contemplate the tradition of the apostles which has been made known to us throughout the whole world. And we are in a position to enumerate those who were instituted bishops by the apostles and their successors down to our own times, men who neither knew nor taught anything like what these heretics rave about" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:3:1 [A.D. 189]).
- e. "Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth, so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. . . . For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches with which the apostles held constant conversation, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question?" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3:4:1).
- f. "[I]t is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those

who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the infallible charism of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father." (ibid., 4:26:2).

III. The Primacy of *the Office* of Peter

- a. "Owing to the sudden and repeated calamities and misfortunes which have befallen us, we must acknowledge that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the matters in dispute among you, beloved; and especially that abominable and unholy sedition, alien and foreign to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-willed persons have inflamed to such madness that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be loved by all men, has been greatly defamed. . . . Accept our counsel and you will have nothing to regret. . . . If anyone disobey the things which have been said by him [God] through us [i.e., that you must reinstate your leaders], let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and in no small danger. . . . You will afford us joy and gladness if being obedient to the things which we have written through the Holy Spirit, you will root out the wicked passion of jealousy" (Clement, *Letter to the Corinthians* 1, 58–59, 63 [A.D. 80]).
- b. "Ignatius . . . to the church also which holds the presidency, in the location of the country of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of blessing, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy of sanctification, and, because you hold the presidency in love, named after Christ and named after the Father" (Ignatius of Antioch *Letter to the Romans* 1:1 [A.D. 110]).
- c. "But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the succession of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. With that church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world, and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:3:2 [A.D. 189]).
- d. "The Lord says to Peter: 'I say to you,' he says, 'that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever things you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, they shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matt. 16:18–19]). . . . On him [Peter] he builds the Church, and to him he gives the command to feed the sheep [John 21:17], and although he assigns a like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair [*cathedra*], and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for

that unity. Indeed, the others were also what Peter was [i.e., apostles], but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair. So too, all [the apostles] are shepherds, and the flock is shown to be one, fed by all the apostles in single-minded accord. If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he [should] desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?" (Cyprian of Carthage, *The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4; 1st edition [A.D. 251]).

IV. Infallibility

- a. Follows from man of the scriptures we have looked at, as well as Christ's promise that he could lead the Church into all truth.
- b. There was a gradual understanding of and acceptance of this reality in the Church, especially in the East.
- c. Vatican I - Infallibility defined
 - i. "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" (*Pastor Aeternus*, 9)
- d. Conditions for Papal Infallibility
 - i. The pronouncement must be made by a lawful successor of Peter – in other words, a pope.
 - ii. The subject matter of the declaration must be in the area of faith or morals. It doesn't fall within the pontiff's ability to make infallible declarations on science, economics, history, etc.
 - iii. The pope must be speaking *ex cathedra*, that is, officially, from the office of Peter. In this way, he must be specifically intending to proclaim a doctrine, binding the Church to its assent.
 - iv. 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 (LG 25).

V. Misunderstandings and Objections

- a. Infallibility vs. Impeccability
 - i. Yes the Pope sins.
 - ii. There is nothing mutually exclusive about sinning and acting in an infallible manner. Peter denied the Lord three times, yet produced two inerrant epistles.
- b. Infallibility vs. binding and authoritative
 - i. Infallible statements do not constitute a least common denominator of Catholic belief.
 - ii. **This religious submission of mind and will** must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, **even when he is not speaking ex cathedra**; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking (LG 25)
- c. The “rock” in Mathew 16 is not Peter, but Peter’s confession of Faith, or Christ Himself. In the Greek, it’s two different words for “rock.”
 - i. The word for rock is *petra*., The word used for Simon’s new name *Petros*.
 - ii. No such distinction in Aramaic: What Jesus said to Simon in Matthew 16:18 was this: ‘You are *Kepha*, and on this *kepha* I will build my Church.’
 - iii. “The Greek word *petra* is feminine. You can use it in the second half of Matthew 16:18 without any trouble. But you can’t use it as Simon’s new name, because you can’t give a man a feminine name—at least back then you couldn’t. You have to change the ending of the noun to make it masculine. When you do that, you get *Petros*, which was an already-existing word meaning rock” (From Catholic Answers Tract, “Peter the Rock”).
- d. Paul rebuked Peter for being wrong (Galatians 2:15-16). Therefore, Peter could not be infallible, so neither could the Pope.
 - i. “He recounted an incident in which Peter visited the Church in Antioch (2:11-17). Peter had been the one who first admitted Gentiles to the Church (Acts 10), though doing so subjected him to criticism (Acts 11). When Peter visited Antioch, he kept his usual practice of holding table fellowship with Gentile Christians, but drew back when some Jewish Christians arrived (2:12). Paul rebuked Peter since this action could be misunderstood as implying that Jews should not sit at table with Gentiles and that the Mosaic Law is binding (2:14-16). (We should also note that Paul himself later did something similar, and it led to his arrest [Acts 21:17-33]).

Peter knew that keeping the Mosaic Law was not necessary, and

Paul reminded him of this fact (2:15-16). Peter's understanding of the gospel was correct. The problem was with his behavior, not his teaching (making this totally irrelevant to the issue of papal infallibility, especially since Peter was not trying to define solemnly a dogma of the faith). Nor did Paul's rebuke impugn Peter's authority. If a pope's behavior causes scandal, he should be rebuked by someone. Catherine of Sienna rebuked the pope in her day, and she is regarded as a doctor of the Church. In fact, it is precisely because Peter is so important-*because* he is the chief apostle-that he provides such a useful illustration for Paul's exposition of the gospel's supreme importance.” (Jimmy Akin, This Rock Magazine, May 1998)

Know Your Faith Revised Calendar

- March 29th – The Papacy (Zuker Hall)
- April 5th – No Session; Easter Monday
- April 12th – Mary (Zuker Hall)