

## Opera Omnia, V. 1, Disp. I, Formal Object of Faith

by **Cardinal Joannis de Lugo (Cardinal John of Lugo)**, 1646

[Online Location of Text Here](#)

- *OCR of the original text by AI (claude-3-7-sonnet-20250219).*
- *Translation of the original text performed by AI (claude-3-7-sonnet-20250219).*
- *Last Edit: March 29, 2025.*
- *Version: 1.0*
- *Selection pages: 173-175*

### §. V. It is inferred from what has been said how it is a matter of faith that this is the true and legitimate Pope.

**325.** Although this question is weighty and is usually discussed extensively by some, since almost its entire resolution depends on the doctrine just presented, it does not seem appropriate to defer it to another place, but rather to define it briefly here from what has been said. The discussion proceeds concerning an undoubted Pontiff, and one received as such by the Church: for as long as there is well-founded doubt about the validity of an election, it is certain that it is not a matter of faith that this man is the true Pope. For the negative position, that this is not a matter of faith, Father Suárez *in disputation 10, On Faith, section 5, number 2*, cites Turrecremata, Albertinus, Cajetan, Bañez, Cano, Vega, Córdoba, Castro, and others. This is because God has never revealed that this particular man is the true Pope, nor does it seem to be a matter of faith that he is baptized, as he ought to be to be capable of the Pontificate, nor finally can moral certainty be had about his valid election any more than about the valid baptism of other men, or about the valid consecration of this host, which for that reason we said in the preceding section is not a matter of faith.

**326.** Our more recent Doctors commonly teach the contrary opinion. Suarez *in disputation 5, on Faith, section 8, number 12*, and more extensively in *the said disputation 10, section 5*; Salmeron, Valencia, and Albertinus, from our Society, in their Corollaries, whom the same Suarez cites in *the said section 8, number 12*, and more extensively Hurtado in *disputation 37 throughout*: which opinion I also consider true, and it seems to be presupposed in the decree of Martin V, which was made in the Council of Constance, where from heretics who seek reconciliation, it is required that among other things whose faith they must profess, they say they believe that the canonically elected Pope, namely N. who is in office at that time, his name being expressly stated, is the successor of Peter and has supreme power in the Church.

**327.** It can also be briefly proven by reason, omitting other arguments that are customarily presented, from what has been said above, because this singular object seems to be contained in the universal propositions revealed by God. For from God's revelation, it is established that the Church cannot be deceived in universally believing any error, since it is the *Column and foundation of truth*, 1 Timothy 2, in which universal infallibility of the Church it seems no less contained that the Church cannot err in recognizing the true visible rule of its faith, than in other matters to be believed through faith. For an error concerning the very rule of truth and faith would harm the Church more than errors concerning other particular objects, since it would be an error in the very foundation of faith. Therefore, since the visible rule which the Church follows in its faith and must absolutely follow is its visible head, namely the Supreme Pontiff, whose teaching and definitions it must embrace, the Church cannot be deceived in accepting as Pontiff and rule of faith one who truly would not be Pontiff nor rule of faith, but a pseudo-pope and a private individual.

*The Church cannot be deceived in accepting as Pontiff one who is not truly the Pontiff.*

**328.** It is confirmed firstly, because we ought to believe by faith all things defined in the Council of Trent, for example, and in other legitimate general Councils: therefore we ought to believe by faith that it is a legitimate Council; just as because we ought to believe by faith all things contained in the Gospel of Mark, we ought also to believe by faith that it is a true and canonical Gospel; for if we could prudently doubt or waver concerning the legitimacy of the Council, we could also doubt or waver concerning its definitions. Since, therefore, the validity of a Council depends on the consent and approval of the true Supreme Pontiff, without which it does not have infallible authority, the consequence is that the true Pontiff, from whom the Council has legitimate authority and validity, ought to be believed by the same faith.

It is confirmed secondly, and explained, because just as we must believe by faith what the Supreme Pontiff, recognized by the universal Church, defines and proposes, so too must we believe without fear that he is the true Pontiff. For either we can prudently have doubts about this, or we cannot: if we can, then we cannot believe with divine faith what he himself defines; for whenever we can prudently doubt the authority of the defining Pontiff, we cannot be prudently moved by his definition to restrain all doubt concerning the defined matter. If, however, we cannot prudently doubt the validity of the Pontificate, then we can believe with divine faith that this is the true Pontiff. For as we saw in the preceding section, whenever we cannot prudently doubt whether this individual is contained in the universal revelation, we can believe with divine faith that God has spoken about him. Since it is a matter of faith that all successors of Peter are true Supreme Pontiffs, and moreover we cannot prudently doubt whether this man has been legitimately elected as the successor of Peter, it follows that we can also believe by faith that he is the true Pontiff, and that Christ spoke of him as well when He promised infallible assistance to the Supreme Pontiffs by His authority. You may see certain responses to these arguments brought forward by some, and the refutations of them, in Hurtado in the place cited.

Hence, one can easily respond to the arguments of the first opinion. We say that it has been revealed by God that this specific man, namely our most holy lord Urban VIII, is the Supreme Pontiff, through the universal revelation by which He revealed that the Church would not err. For it is contained therein that the Church does not err in recognizing this individual as the true head and visible rule of the Catholic faith, wherein the Church would err more gravely and dangerously than concerning any particular object of faith that would not be the foundation of others, just as the visible rule is the foundation of the doctrine of faith and of the Church, which is therefore said to be founded upon Peter and his successors. And by the very fact that it is revealed that this man is the true Pontiff, it is also revealed, at least implicitly, that he is baptized. If indeed you wish to include baptism as a part of the truth of the Pontificate, then the baptism itself will also be a matter of faith, because it will be immediately revealed, although confusedly, as a part within its whole. If, however, you wish that baptism itself is not formally included in the truth of the Pontificate, but is essentially prerequisite, as a necessary disposition for God to confer pontifical power upon this man, then it will be more implicitly revealed, because it follows from two matters of faith, namely that the Pontiff must be baptized, and that this man is the true Pontiff. Therefore, when in § 2 we said that the object of a conclusion which is inferred from two revealed premises can also be believed immediately by faith without reasoning from revealed premises, consequently it must be said that the baptism of this man who is the Pontiff accepted by the Church is a matter of faith. Nevertheless, I do not approve what Hurtado stated in *disp. 11, sect. 2, § 21*, that we must believe as a matter of faith that Christ is present in the host consecrated by the Pontiff, because it is established that it was properly consecrated. However, I do not see in what universal revelation this is contained even implicitly, or why the Pontiff could not absolve, ordain, or consecrate without the proper intention, since no error in doctrine or faith would thereby redound to the Church. Otherwise, it could not happen that he might sometimes consecrate invalidly due to invalid matter; yet we have heard that this occurred in our time, when to a certain Pontiff solemnly celebrating in the Basilica of Saint Peter on the feast of the Apostle himself, water instead of wine was given, through an error of the ministers, for the consecration of the chalice, which the Pontiff, without fault, presented to the people for adoration: for in that case he defines nothing, nor does he teach, but conducts himself just as other priests conduct themselves in the elevation of the Eucharist. Finally, regarding what was stated in the last place, that there would be no moral certainty about the validity of the election of this Pontiff any more than about the baptism of some other infant, or the consecration of some particular host, it is evident that this is false: because just as we cannot prudently doubt the legitimacy of this Council by whose authority we believe the dogmas defined therein, so we cannot prudently doubt the true Pontiff, from whom the Council itself receives legitimacy and authority. To restrain such doubt, all those things contribute which prevent us from prudently doubting God's assistance to His Church lest it be deceived: which do not contribute, nor concur, to prevent us from having doubts about the baptism of this infant or the consecration of this host, as has been said.