

## Operum Francisci Sylvii Tomus Quintus Complectens Varia Ejus Opuscula (*Works of Francis Sylvius Comprising His Various Short Works, Volume Five*)

by **Franciscus Sylvius a Brania Comititis (Francis Sylvius, Count of Brania), 1628**

[Online Location of Text Here](#)

- OCR of the original text by AI (claude-sonnet-4-5-20250929).

- Translation of the original text performed by AI (claude-sonnet-4-5-20250929).

- Last Edit: December 24, 2025.

- Version: 1.0

- Selection pages: 317-322

Book VI, On the Principal Matters of Faith, of the Controversies; Book IV, On the Roman Pontiff; Question II, Article IX: Whether it is a matter of certain faith that this Pope (as numbered) is the true successor of Blessed Peter

*Whether it is certain by faith that this particular Pope, e.g., Urban VIII, is the true successor of Blessed Peter, and Vicar of Christ, and Supreme Pontiff.*

IT CAN seem that it is not. FIRST, because it is not certain that he is a man, and indeed baptized: Only a man, and one who is baptized, can be the Vicar of Christ and Supreme Pontiff. The assumption is proved, since although it must be entirely presupposed and believed that this particular Pope whom the Church holds as Supreme Pontiff is not a woman but a man, and one who is baptized; nevertheless there is nothing from which it can be gathered to be certain.

And it is confirmed: concerning other priests there is no certitude of faith that this or that one in particular is ritually baptized and legitimately ordained: therefore neither concerning the Roman Pontiff.

SECONDLY, In the election of the Supreme Pontiff some defect can creep in, as for instance if someone were elected simoniacally. In which case Julius II, in the Bull *Cum tam divino*, declared and decreed that such an election would be null by that very fact, and that the person so elected would not be Apostolic but rather Apostatical. This decree was confirmed and renewed by Pius IV through the bull *In eligendis*, by Pius V through the Bull *Cum primum*, and by Nicholas II in a Synod held at Rome in the Constantinian Basilica, as is reported in tome 3 of the Councils in the Cologne edition of the year 1567. But it is not established by faith that such a defect was not present in the election of the modern Pontiff: therefore neither is it certain by faith that he himself is the true and legitimate Pontiff.

THIRDLY, That proposition, *Urban VIII is the true Vicar of Christ and Supreme Pontiff*, has not been revealed by God, either in the sacred Scriptures, or in Tradition, or in the writings of the

ancient Fathers; nor has it been defined by any Council or Pontiff: therefore it is not a matter of faith.

FOURTHLY, The aforesaid proposition is concluded only from one premise that is of faith and from another premise known by natural reason, therefore it is known and certain not by faith, but only by natural reason.

FIFTHLY, Whoever would withdraw from the modern Supreme Pontiff would indeed be schismatic, but not heretical: therefore it is not a matter of faith that he himself is the Supreme Pontiff; because to withdraw from some dogma pertaining to the faith is heresy, and not merely schism.

SIXTHLY, Concerning the Pontiffs who have preceded, it is not a matter of faith that they were true Supreme Pontiffs: therefore neither is it [a matter of faith] concerning the present Pontiff. The consequence is evident, from parity of reasoning. Moreover, the antecedent is proved, because it is not certain by faith that they existed in reality, since this depends upon histories which say many irrelevant things.

#### *Response to the Article.*

THE question here is not whether it is certain that this man, for example Clement VIII, Paul V, for that time in which each governed the universal Church, was a true and Supreme Pontiff, or even that he who now governs it, Urban VIII, truly is a true and Supreme Pontiff. For among Catholics it is sufficiently agreed that this must be affirmed altogether, nor can it be denied without great temerity and the greatest scandal.

But the controversy concerns the quality of the certitude: concerning which, since there are various opinions of learned men: For Lensaeus, a most learned theologian, in book 1, *On the Church*, chapter 12, writes that although we are bound to believe by faith that the legitimate successor of Peter is the supreme head of the entire Church on earth, nevertheless we are not bound to receive by that same faith that Leo, or Clement, or Gregory is the true successor of Peter, for it does not pertain to the Catholic faith that any given Pontiff be rightly or canonically elected, or has been elected. And Dominicus Báñez writes in conformity with the same opinion in *Secunda Secundae*, question 1, article 10, doubt 2, ad 2.

Nevertheless, the more probable Response is that it is certain by faith that this man, whom the Church has received and venerates as Pontiff, e.g., *Urban VIII*, is the true Vicar of Christ, the successor of Peter, and the Roman and Supreme Pontiff; and this not only when he has defined something to be held by faith, but even before; that is, after he has been elected and peacefully received by the Church and assumed to the Pontificate, as teach Didacus Nuñez, *Supplement*, question 20, article 3; Coriolanus, *Prelude* 10 in the *Summa of the Council*; and many others who are indeed cited, but we were not permitted to see their writings.

PROOF 1: Because we ought to believe not only that the Church of Christ exists in the world, but also that this is the Church of Christ in which the faithful fight under the Roman Pontiff: therefore we ought likewise to believe not merely that there is some Roman Pontiff, but that this man is he. Proof and Confirmation, both from parity of reasoning and because it does not appear how it can be believed that this assembly fights under the Roman Pontiff, unless it is also believed that he under whom it fights is the Roman Pontiff.

PROOF 2: By Catholic faith we believe in the true and legitimate succession of Pontiffs in the Roman Church: But that succession consists of these and those Pontiffs who have died and governed the Church: therefore by the same faith we ought to believe that they were true and legitimate Pontiffs.

PROB. 3. We believe by divine faith in the canons and decrees of an ecumenical Council confirmed by the Roman Pontiff: therefore we similarly believe by divine faith that he was a true and legitimate Roman Pontiff, by whose authority a Council of this kind was convoked and confirmed; for we would not be bound to believe by divine faith in the decrees of a Council, unless they were approved by a true Pontiff.

PROB. 4. When the Supreme Pontiff defines *ex cathedra* something to be believed by faith, all the faithful ought to acquiesce to that definition and hold that dogma by faith: therefore by the same faith it is necessary to believe that he who made that definition possessed the authority to define. But he who defined it is, for example, Stephen, Clement, Paul, *Urban*: therefore it must be held by faith that these men possessed legitimate power to define, and that consequently they were legitimate Pontiffs.

PROB. 5. Christ instituted not only that the Church which militates in this world should be visible; but also that her head should be visible: therefore just as we believe by faith that the Church is visible, so also we believe by faith that her head is visible. But there is no other head of the Church than this Roman Pope who is called *Urban VIII*, just as in the time of Stephen, Clement, and Paul, there was no other head than they themselves while each of them ruled the Church: therefore we hold by faith both that these men in their time were Supreme Pontiffs, and that he now is such.

PROB. 6. It is a dogma of the Christian faith that the Bishops who are appointed by the Roman Pontiff are true and legitimate Bishops: therefore it must be admitted that the Pontiff by whose authority they are appointed is a true and legitimate Pontiff, and consequently that Urban VIII is such: for how can we believe that the Bishops appointed by Urban VIII are legitimate, inasmuch as they have been constituted by a legitimate Pontiff, unless we believe that he who constituted them is a legitimate Pontiff? Moreover, the antecedent is proved from the Council of Trent, Session 23, Canon 8, where it is thus defined: *If anyone shall say that Bishops who are appointed by the authority of the Roman Pontiff are not legitimate and true Bishops, but a human fabrication, let him be anathema.*

PROOF 7. Whatever proposition is contained in some manner under divine revelation such that it can be defined *ex cathedra* and proposed to all the faithful as a matter of belief; if it is received by the whole Church and by the common consent of all as certain, it pertains to the faith; since such acceptance is a certain legitimate and infallible definition. But this proposition, *Paul V was the Roman and Supreme Pontiff*, or this one, *Urban VIII is the Roman and Supreme Pontiff*, is of this kind; for it is contained under that divine revelation by which Christ revealed that His Church would endure until the end of the age, and that it would have heads which would succeed Peter, one after another; and it could be defined by Urban VIII himself and proposed to all the faithful as a matter to be believed by faith; and now it is received by the universal Church and by the common consent of all the faithful as most certain: therefore it pertains to the faith.

PROOF 8. If any dogma were defined by Urban VIII as to be believed by faith, without doubt it would be certain by faith and to be held: therefore it is certain by faith beforehand (although not

immediately known by all) that he himself is the Supreme Pontiff; since it belongs to the Supreme Pontiff alone to define a dogma of faith and to undertake its definition.

ARGUMENT 9. Because in the eighth session of the Council of Constance this article of John Hus is found to have been condemned: *No one would reasonably assert without revelation concerning himself or another that he was the head of a particular Church, nor is the Roman Pontiff the head of the Roman Church*; and likewise the subsequent article, *One need not believe that this person, whoever he may be as Roman Pontiff, is the head of any particular Church, unless God has predestined him*. What also contributes greatly to this matter is that at the end of this Council, one suspected of heresy is ordered to be interrogated, *Whether he believes that the Pope canonically elected who exists at that time, his name being expressed, is the successor of Blessed Peter, having supreme power in the Church of God*.

ARGUMENT 10. In a human Republic there must be human certitude concerning the King or Prince who governs it: therefore in the divine Republic there must be divine certitude concerning the Supreme Pontiff who rules it; but divine certitude is that which is had through faith: therefore through faith we know and are certain that this singular man, e.g., Urban VIII, is the Supreme Pontiff.

From these arguments it appears highly probable what we have concluded, namely that it is certain by faith that this singular man, e.g., Urban the Eighth, is the true Supreme Pontiff.

If you ask whether this proposition pertains to the faith *per se* primarily or immediately, a distinction is necessary.

For if those things are understood to pertain *per se* to the faith which we so believe that we hope to see the same in our heavenly homeland, or by the vision of which we shall be blessed, as St. Thomas [Aquinas] understands it in [*Summa Theologiae*] 2.2. question 1, article 6, reply to objection 1, and article 8, in the body [of the article], then in this manner the proposition “Urban VIII is the true and legitimate Pontiff” does not pertain *per se* primarily or immediately to the faith.

If, however, something is said to pertain to the faith *per se* and *primo* [primarily and in the first instance] in the sense that it is sufficiently made known by God’s revelation itself, whether written or handed down by tradition, such that no other evident proposition is *per se* necessary by which to manifest that it belongs to the faith; Nugnus affirms that the aforesaid proposition pertains to the faith *per se* and *primo*, because even though some naturally known premise may intervene, it is not the formal reason on account of which we assent to the said proposition, but only a presupposed condition. For example, if we argue thus: Whoever is elected Supreme Pontiff in the Church with all the required conditions being observed is the true Supreme Pontiff; But we know with certainty that all the required conditions were observed when Urban VIII was elected; therefore it is a matter of faith that he is the Supreme Pontiff. The minor proposition which is subsumed is not the formal reason for assenting to the conclusion, but is only a required condition which does not contribute to the assent of the conclusion, not even instrumentally. From this he infers that just as the major [premise], which is universal, pertains to the faith (since it is established by faith that the Church has the power of electing the Supreme Pontiff), similarly the conclusion pertains to the faith, namely *per se* and *primo*. For although a conclusion is sometimes in a lesser degree of *perseity* [essential self-evidence] and certitude than the antecedent—as when, from the fact that the subject of the major premise applies to one singular,

it is inferred that its proper attribute applies to that same singular (as in this syllogism: Every man is risible, Peter is a man, therefore Peter is risible; where the consequent is not in the same degree of *perseity* as the antecedent, since the minor is in the first degree of *perseity* and the consequent in the second; and likewise when from one article of faith and from another naturally known premise there is inferred a theological conclusion which is known by demonstration, the major being known and certain by faith)—nevertheless, when that which applies to the universal is predicated of its singular, then the consequent is in the same degree both of *perseity* and of certitude as is the antecedent: as if you say, Every man born of Adam is mortal; Peter is born of Adam; therefore Peter is mortal. The consequent is equally certain by faith just as the antecedent is, even though the minor premise is naturally known. Such is the case in the matter at hand: For from the fact that everyone legitimately elected to the Pontificate becomes the true Supreme Pontiff, it is concluded that this particular man, e.g., Urban VIII, is the Supreme Pontiff. Whoever wishes more [on this matter] may consult Nugnus himself. For what we chiefly intend is this: that the proposition “Urban VIII is the Supreme Pontiff” is certain by faith and pertains to the faith.

*Solution of the Arguments Brought Forward for the Opposing Position.*

TO THE FIRST ARGUMENT, RESPONSE: I deny the assumption. For although that proposition, *this man who is called Urban VIII is a man of the male sex, or is baptized*, considered in itself, is not certain, nevertheless insofar as it rests upon divine revelation, it is absolutely certain; so that according to this consideration it neither can be nor could have been false. This Response is founded in Blessed Thomas [Aquinas], insofar as in II-II, question 1, article 3, ad 2, he writes: *That God not become incarnate, considered in itself, was possible, even after the time of Abraham; but according as it falls under divine foreknowledge, it has a certain necessity of infallibility, as was said in the First Part (namely, I, question 14, articles 13 and 15), and in this way it falls under faith: Whence, insofar as it falls under faith, it cannot be false.* For we speak of this proposition, *Urban VIII is the legitimate Pontiff*, insofar as it falls under divine foreknowledge and revelation: and we say that, viewed in this way, it is certain from faith. Whence that he is of the male sex, and also that he was duly baptized, we are altogether certain, and indeed from faith on account of the revelation from which we know that he is the Supreme Pontiff. For because we believe by Catholic faith that he whom the Church receives and holds as Supreme Pontiff (who now is none other than Urban VIII) is the true Vicar of Christ and the legitimate Supreme Pontiff, it follows by necessary consequence that we also believe that he is male, that he is baptized, and that he possesses all that without which the pontifical power cannot subsist. For it is of divine Providence, which neither wills nor is able to deceive the Church, that the Vicar of Christ, whom He wills to be set over His flock, should lack nothing which the power he wields and the office he must execute necessarily require.

TO THE CONFIRMATION I RESPOND: I deny the consequence, because it is not as necessary to know that this man or that man in particular is a priest, as it is necessary to know who the Supreme Pontiff is; because he is the head of the entire Church, and in his power many things are implicated which must be held by faith, such as that he can convoke a general Council, resolve controversies of the faith, create Bishops throughout the entire Christian world, establish laws for the whole Church, and other such matters which are not implicated in the power of other priests.

TO THE 2ND [OBJECTION], I RESPOND: God, who has singular care for His Church and especially presides over the election of His Vicar, and moderates the votes of the electors, will

either not permit His election to be done simoniacally, or that any other similar defect should intervene in His election; or if He should allow something of this kind to intervene, He will immediately cause it to be detected, or bring it about that one thus elected is not received as the true and legitimate Pontiff—unless a new consent of the Roman Clergy should come about through a better election. And consequently, after the Church has assumed this man or that (as now Urban VIII) elected by the College of Cardinals and has peacefully received him as Supreme Pontiff, it is certain by faith that no essential defect intervened in his election. For by the very fact that the Church receives and admits the election as canonical, that is, as done according to the canons, and assumes the one thus elected to the Pontifical dignity, it is established by faith that the same election was legitimate, and consequently that no defect intervened on account of which it could be said to lack effect. For Christ promised to the Apostles (and there is no doubt [that He promised] also to the successors of the Apostles, that is, to the Church): *I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, etc., who will remain with you and will be in you.* John 14. In conformity with this promise are those things which are read in chapter 16, and those things which He is read to have said in Matthew 28: *I am with you even to the consummation of the world.* By these [passages], as well as by other similar places, divine assistance is firmly promised to the Church; but this [assistance] would fail if God were to permit an essential defect in the election of the supreme head.

But you will say: it is reported that once a certain woman was elected who, having disguised her male sex, held the Roman Pontificate for two years, five months, and four days, as is read in *Martinus Polonus*, *Marianus Scotus*, *Sigebertus*, *Platina*, and others. And heretics confirm this both from the perforated seat which is called the stercorarian chair, and which was long preserved in the Lateran Basilica, in which the new Pontiff was accustomed to sit for the purpose of examining his sex; and from the statue of a woman with a child placed there where it is said that this woman gave birth; and finally from the fact that the Roman Pontiffs, when they proceed from the Vatican to the Lateran, are accustomed to avoid that place where the birth is written to have occurred; and this in detestation of the deed, although otherwise that would be the direct route.

I RESPOND: that what is reported concerning the woman Pope is a mere fable, as *Onuphrius* [Onofrio Panvinio] solidly demonstrates in his work on *Platina* concerning the life of John VIII, *Pontacus* [Ludovicus Pontanus] in his *Chronology* at the year 855, *Baronius* [Cesare Baronio] tome 10 at the year of the Lord 853, and *Bellarminus* [Robert Bellarmine] book 3 on the Pontiff, chapter 24.

HE PROVES IT. FIRST, Since many have written the lives of the Roman Pontiffs from the year eight hundred up to the year one thousand two hundred and fifty (the time in which lived *Martin of Poland*, who is found to have been the first to write this fable, and whom all who afterwards committed the same to writing have followed), no one, neither among the Latins nor among the Greeks, although they were at times not entirely fair toward the Roman Church, makes mention of this female “Popess.” But from what source could *Martin of Poland* have been able to know better what occurred four hundred years before his time than any of his predecessors? This *Martin* was indeed an Archbishop, but a simple and credulous man, who sometimes passed off fables as true histories.

PROOF 2. Those who recount *Pope Joan* write that she was [pope] between Leo IV and Benedict III. However, from various writers it is established that no one sat between these two Pontiffs, especially anyone who was called John: for *Anastasius* the Librarian (as reported by *Onuphrius*) was present at the creation of Sergius II, Leo IV, Benedict III, Nicholas I, Adrian II, and John VIII, and writes that the Roman See was vacant after the death of Leo IV for only fifteen days; and that Benedict immediately succeeded Leo. In conformity with these [facts], that Benedict succeeded Leo without any intermediate [pope], the following write in express words: *Lupus of Ferrières*, *Nicholas the First*, a Roman by birth, *Ado of Vienne*, *Hugh of Fleury*, *Herman the lame*, *Florence of Worcester*, *Honorius of Autun*, *Conrad of Ursperg*, *Albert of Stade*, *Vincent of Beauvais*, *Matthew of Westminster*, [as cited] in *Jodocus Coccus* book 7, *On the Hierarchy of the Church*, article 14, where he also shows that what others [claim]—that this Joan in her girlhood so advanced in studies at Athens that she surpassed all others in learning—is alien to the truth, since at that time studies at Athens lay extinct.

PROOF 3. Because Leo IX, in his epistle against the presumptions of Michael and Leo, Archbishops, thus writes in chapter 23: “*Far be it, however, that we should wish to believe what public report does not hesitate to assert, that it has befallen the Church of Constantinople, that by promoting eunuchs everywhere contrary to the first chapter of the holy Council of Nicaea, you have at some time elevated a woman to the seat of your Pontiffs. Although the enormity or horror of this so abominable crime and detestable deed, and fraternal benevolence, does not permit us to believe it: nevertheless, considering your negligence with regard to the censure of the holy canons, because you still promote eunuchs and those diminished in some part of the body not only to the clerical state but even to the Pontificate indifferently and solemnly, we consider that it could have happened.*” But how would he have dared to reproach the Bishops of the Church of Constantinople for having placed eunuchs, and among them a woman, in the Patriarchate, if a woman had held the Supreme Pontificate at Rome?

Bellarmino therefore thinks that that fable was born from the fact that, since there was a rumor that a woman had been Patriarch of Constantinople, gradually with the name “of Constantinople” being omitted, there remained the report about a Pontiff, and in hatred of the Roman Church some persons received that rumor and spread it about the Roman Pontiff.

Baronius, however, at the year 879, believes that this occurred because, on account of the excessive facility and softness of John VIII, the true Pontiff, having cast aside entirely all manliness, he was called not Pope, as Nicholas and Adrian were, but “Popess” by way of insult; and thus it came into the opinion of posterity that John VIII, the Pope, had been a woman.

But *Onuphrius* writes that this fable arose from the life of John XII (whom *Platina* calls the 13th), a most impure man.

As for the writers who relate this little fable, they write it from uncertain rumor alone: *it is reported*, says Martinus; and *Platina* states, *These things which I have said are commonly reported, but by uncertain and obscure authorities.*

Concerning Sigebert, *Miraeus* (through whose scholarly efforts Sigebert’s Chronicle was published according to the Autograph and ancient manuscript codices) writes thus at the year 854: *At this place, no mention is made of Pope Joan in the Gemblacensis, Aquicinctinus, Lipsianus, or Ortelianus manuscript codices which we have used. Indeed, not even in the margin of any of the said manuscripts is anything of that sort written, as sometimes certain things are*

*added in the margin by a more recent hand. Therefore it is certain that this fable about Pope Joan is most falsely attributed to our Sigebert.* Concerning this matter, it is pleasing to set forth here what the distinguished man of letters *Justus Lipsius* thought. He, in a letter to *Franciscus Suvertius* dated the 5th day before the Kalends of March in the year 1595, whose autograph I preserve, writes thus: *Concerning the little question which you ask about the Pontiff Joan, supposedly a woman, as they foolishly claim, you see what I think, since I call it foolishness; truly it is a fable, not far from the audacity and absurdities of poets: Do you and those companions wish to see the matter clearly? consult the book recently written and published in French at Bordeaux, by the author Florimund de Raemon, Royal Councillor: which is entirely on this subject. The author himself sent it to me, and he has treated everything so fully that nothing remains for us except to believe and assent.* Thus far *Lipsius*. Whoever wishes to know more about these matters should read *Onuphrius, Baronius, Raemon, and others.*

*As concerns Marianus Scotus, whom our adversaries also cite against us, his Chronicle written on parchment in a most ancient hand was sent to me from the Gemblacian library by the Reverend and Venerable Ludovicus Sombechus, Abbot of that place, to be published sometime by our care as well, if God grants life. In it no mention whatsoever of Pope Joan is made, not even in the margin, from which facts it is clear that Marianus and Sigebert are unjustly accused and censured by Baronius in the Annals, tome 10, as asserters of this fable.*

To which the following, written earlier by Cardinal Bellarmine, conforms: *Although in the printed Sigebert and Marianus Scotus there is found a female John, nevertheless in the most ancient manuscripts she is not found, and it is sufficiently established that those authors were corrupted.* And afterwards, *Similarly, that in the most ancient exemplars of Marianus Scotus there is no mention of a female John is testified by that person who published the Metropolis of Albert Krantz in the year 1574 at Cologne.* Thus Bellarmine. And concerning the Chronicle of Sigebert—that in it no mention was formerly made of a female John or Pope Joan—Jodocus Coccius writes in conformity in the aforesaid article 14, and proves it from the Gemblacian autograph. Pontacus also in the Chronology at the year of our Lord 855 may be consulted.

TO the confirmations brought forward, I REPLY that no chair which would serve for examining the sex was ever preserved in the Lateran Basilica or elsewhere. There was indeed one cheap and lowly chair, in which the new Pontiff was accustomed to sit for a short time before being led to the others, so that through this ceremony he might be admonished that he was being raised up from a humble place to a sublime one: and this was called the *stercoraria* [dung chair], because while he was being raised up from it, that passage from 1 Kings 2 was sung: *He raises up the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the dunghill, that he may sit with princes and hold the throne of glory:* but nothing was done for the purpose of proving the sex.

The statue of a woman with a boy could not represent Joan with her infant; since it depicted neither a woman nor did it bear an infant in its bosom, but rather it depicted a boy of many years, who preceded as a servant; and it is likely that it was a picture of some pagan.

As for the fact that the Pope, when going to the Lateran, did not pass through the place where the birth is fictitiously alleged to have occurred, that is not the reason which the heretics claim, but (as Onuphrius attests) because that road is very narrow and exceedingly inconvenient for the papal retinue: he then adds that he knows many Pontiffs have passed through it.



TO THE 3RD ARGUMENT, RESPONSE by distinguishing the antecedent. For if it is understood concerning a revelation by which this proposition, “Urban VIII is the true Supreme Pontiff,” has been revealed in those very terms, it is true; but the consequence is not valid: for something can be a matter of faith which, even though it has not been expressly revealed in itself or in its own terms, is nevertheless held and known from revelation, just as this proposition, “Peter, Paul, John, and other individual men who are now born by the ordinary way of generation, were conceived in original sin and are subject to the necessity of death,” is certain by faith; although it has not been revealed in those terms, because it has been revealed in its universal, from which it is deduced by a certain induction, namely in this: *All have sinned in Adam*; likewise in those: *Through sin came death: who is the man who shall live and not see death? It is appointed unto men once to die.*

But it is similar in the present case: For the aforesaid proposition about which we are now discoursing, although it has not been expressly revealed in its own terms, is nevertheless revealed in its universal in which it is contained, and from which it is deduced by a certain induction, namely in this: “All successors of Peter in the Roman see are Vicars of Christ and true Supreme Pontiffs.” For from this, by a certain induction, it follows that this or that individual man who has been elected, received, and assumed as Supreme Pontiff by the Catholic Church (such as Urban VIII is today) is truly the Supreme Pontiff.

This is confirmed when Christ in Matthew 16 promised Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven and said, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Likewise, when in Luke 22 he said to him, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* And in John 21, *Feed my sheep*, he revealed to us that he was making Peter the Supreme Pontiff, and that all successors in Peter’s chair, for all perpetual times to come, would be, just as Peter himself was, Supreme Pontiffs, as we have demonstrated in book 1, question 1, articles 3, 4, and 5; and consequently we are also certain from this that he gave to his Church the power to elect him who would be substituted in the place of Peter, and thereafter in the place of his successors. From the institution and revelation of Christ, therefore, this proposition is certain: *Every successor of Peter elected, received, and assumed by the Church as Supreme Pontiff, is truly the Supreme Pontiff*: but under this proposition, as a singular is contained under a universal, is contained this one: *Urban VIII, whom the Church has elected, received, and assumed as Supreme Pontiff, is the true Supreme Pontiff*; which therefore can be said to have been revealed in its universal. Wherefore, if the antecedent of the objected argument is understood concerning the revelation of this proposition either in itself or in its universal and equivalent, it must be denied.

---

It can be added that when singular instances are multiplied exceedingly, they are not defined in themselves, but in their common and universal principle. Since, therefore, Supreme Pontiffs are multiplied greatly, as some succeed others until the end of this world, it is not necessary that there exist individual definitions concerning each of them that they are true Pontiffs; but it suffices that this be defined in that common or universal proposition, *Everyone elected and assumed by the Church as Supreme Pontiff is Supreme Pontiff*, which universal proposition is sufficiently defined by Christ’s institution manifested in Sacred Scripture and tradition.

TO THE 4TH [OBJECTION], I RESPOND: I deny the consequence, partly because that naturally known proposition is required only as a certain condition, and not as the formal reason for assent; partly because it is thus concluded from that which is certain by faith, so as to be contained in it as the singular in the universal.

TO THE 5TH [OBJECTION], I RESPOND: First, I deny the consequence, because it is only then heresy to depart from some dogma of faith when it is certain and manifest that that dogma is of the faith, as we have shown in 2. 2. qu. 11. art. 1. But that this proposition is of the faith, *Urban VIII is the true Pontiff*, is indeed stated probably, but it is not certain and manifest, since certain orthodox men, even distinguished in learning, teach the opposite—Lensaecus, Bannesius, and several others.

RESP. 2. that although schism and heresy differ in their formal aspect, as was declared in 2. 2. qu. 39.; nor is it necessary that every schismatic be a heretic, not even one who withdraws from obedience to the Supreme Pontiff, nevertheless if anyone were to withdraw with an error of intellect whereby he did not believe that he whom the Church has received and retains as Supreme Pontiff is the Supreme Pontiff, he would truly be a heretic, provided that the aforesaid proposition certainly and manifestly pertains to the faith.

TO 6. RESP. it is of the faith that those were true Supreme Pontiffs concerning whom it is certain (at least with moral certainty) that while they lived, they presided over the Church, and were held and received by the Catholic Church as Roman Pontiffs, such as Sylvester, Gregory, Clement, Paul and others. Whence it follows that it is also certain that these men existed at some time in reality; since although histories frequently say many irrelevant things, these matters nevertheless are known both from certain histories and from the tradition of the faith. Whether, however, it is certain by faith is not clear; and natural and moral certainty would seem to suffice.

However, as to those concerning whom it is not certain that they have presided over the Church; whether because there is doubt that they ever lived, or because they presided during a schism, or because it is not established (not even with moral certainty) that the Church received or acknowledged them as true Supreme Pontiffs; we entirely admit that it is not a matter of faith that they were true Supreme Pontiffs. But the consequence of the argument does not hold, because the resolution of the present Article concerns only those individual Pontiffs whom the Church elected, assumed, and acknowledges as such; but not those who either sat during a schism, or are doubtful in the judgment of the Church itself.