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Section IV, Chapter X

Whether it is a matter of faith that this specific Pontiff Clement IX, whom the entire Church acknowledges and accepts as legitimately elected, is truly the Pontiff and the head of the whole Church.

In chapter 6, we have shown that it pertains to the faith that the supreme Monarch is essential to the Church; and therefore someone has always succeeded St. Peter in the same supreme power of governing the Church, though subordinate to Christ. And in chapter 7, that the true and legitimate successor of St. Peter in such governance is only the Roman Pontiff canonically elected. In this respect, the succession of other Bishops differs from that of the Roman Bishop, because it is not a matter of faith that the others succeed the Apostles, although this is gathered from historical accounts. However, it does pertain to faith that the canonically elected Roman Bishop succeeds St. Peter both in the Roman Episcopate and in the supreme power over the Church joined to it (whatever may be said about whether that conjunction exists by divine law, that is, by special ordinance and law of Christ, or not—which is disputed among Catholic doctors while preserving the faith). This is held from the tradition of the Church, from the definitions of the Supreme Pontiffs and Councils, and even implicitly from Scripture itself, *both* in general—because when Christ the Lord handed over the said power to St. Peter for himself and for his successors, as we have shown, the application and conjunction of that same power with his succession, which was to occur in fact and which Christ foreknew, is implicitly contained therein, and thus Christ undoubtedly understood it in those words. Therefore, the Church, having later observed the fact of Peter's role, had sufficient foundation to believe from those words of *Christ the Lord* that such succession, which *now exists*, was included—and specifically from that passage in 1 Peter ch. 5: *The Church which is in Babylon, co-elect,*

salutes you; for from what was said in chapter 5, by Babylon Rome is understood, which when Peter calls it “co-elect,” he sufficiently signifies that the Roman Church has been chosen by him and is a participant in his election; which cannot refer to anything except the designation of his succession. That the reading there should be *co-elect*, not *collected*, is clear first, because it has been corrected thus in the revised Bibles; secondly, because Eusebius in book 2 of his History, chapter 14, referring to Peter’s words, writes them thus: *The Church which shares in our election, which is in Babylon, salutes you*. And Cardinal Cajetan, explaining these same words, *collected in Babylon* (for thus he reads), teaches that they were said *for co-elect in Babylon*, although he transfers them to a meaning different from ours, saying that what is called *co-elect* refers to other Churches. For it signifies that it is not alone, but along with other Churches is elect: that is, a part of the elect. Hence, from this authority of Scripture, only a probable argument can be drawn according to the meaning we have adduced, for the truth we intend, which the tradition of the Church teaches must otherwise be held with certain faith.

Therefore, since the two aforementioned matters pertain to faith, now it is again asked whether the same faith also establishes that the true visible Pontiff exists in the individual and in a determinate manner, or what amounts to the same thing, whether this particular Pontiff, e.g., Clement IX, whom the whole Church acknowledges and receives as legitimately elected, is truly the Pontiff and the head of the whole Church. This is so that we may believe not only that there is one supreme head in the Church who has his seat in Rome, but also that this man, or this particular Pontiff whom we see with our eyes, is that head—in a manner proportionally similar to what we said in the previous section concerning the Church, where it is necessary not only to believe in the Church in a general and indistinct manner, but also specifically and individually that this is the Church, or that which we see with our eyes.

Concerning this difficulty, the fewer references found among the ancients in the terms in which it is now disputed, the more celebrated it has become in these times, and agitated by various arguments. For while all Catholic doctors agree, practically and morally, that it is most certain that this or that particular Pope, whom the Church has once proposed and accepted as true without any dissent, is the true and legitimate Pontiff and head of the entire Church; to the extent that anyone who would deny this could be punished not only as highly reckless and scandalous, but also as suspected of heresy, indeed as erring against the faith; inasmuch as, given such consensus of the universal Church, which cannot err in matters of general fact pertaining to the general state of all the faithful, such as the true and Canonical election of the Pontiff, such a person could be presumed to deny this universal proposition, namely, that he who is legitimately elected is the Vicar of Christ and successor of Peter, which whoever denies is without doubt a heretic. While, I say, all Catholics agree on this, whether this is absolutely a matter of faith, there are two opinions of theirs: the first denying, the other affirming, for the understanding of which, and also for the resolution of the more probable position.

It should be observed first that there exists, as it were, a twofold election of Supreme Pontiffs: one particular, which is carried out by the Lord Cardinals according to rules

prescribed by the Supreme Pontiffs; the other universal, which is carried out by the universal Church itself through peacefully accepting the prior election made by the Cardinals, and consequently the person designated for the Supreme Pontificate through that election. This, moreover, is the difference between both elections, or between the election made by the Most Eminent Cardinals and its peaceful acceptance by the universal Church: that this second election always becomes infallible for us, once it is supposed that this man has been duly elected and canonically made head of the Church, which is a matter in itself determinable of faith by the Church. The first election, however, is different, as it can be flawed and doubtful, as is clearly gathered from the Council of Constance, session 39, where in determining that judging a doubtful election pertains to the Council itself, it sufficiently presupposes that there can be a doubtful or flawed election about which it may judge; although also on the part of the electors, the impediment of censure cannot be brought against the election. Indeed, to avoid schisms, and also as far as possible uncertainty of election, it was provided by a singular privilege in the Clementine “*Ne Romani*” (§ “*Caeterum*”) concerning election, that no Cardinal should be rejected from the papal election on the pretext of any censure. Nevertheless, there remain many other causes for which an election can be rendered flawed or doubtful, both on the part of the election itself and on the part of the person elected, according to the defects which the laws themselves assign.

The reason for the distinction brought forward is that, as we saw in the previous section, the Church, according to divine Scriptures, enjoys the privilege of infallibility in matters of faith in what it believes; a privilege which the Sacred College of Cardinals does not possess in its act of election. Therefore, assuming that this man has been duly elected and canonically made the head of the Church, it is a matter of faith in itself. When peaceful acceptance and the universal consensus of the Church are added to this, it also becomes a matter of faith for us, but not through the mere election by the Cardinals. Hence, the crux of the present difficulty seems to consist in this: whether the aforementioned proposition belongs to the faith in itself, and is thus a matter determinable as an article of faith for us by the Church, either through universal peaceful acceptance or through the definition of a Council, if any doubt should arise concerning such an election.

Secondly, it should be noted that an election conducted by the Most Eminent Cardinals can be defective or null for two reasons: first, through the absence of conditions indispensably required for it, whether by divine law—as if a woman were elected instead of a man, or if a man were elected who was not baptized; second, through the absence of conditions pertaining only to positive human law, whether this arises from the malice of the electors, as when they elect someone simoniacally, or from ignorance, as when they elect someone ineligible. There is, however, this difference between the two defects, or the nullity arising from them: that the second can be supplied and healed by the authority of the Church, but not the first. For this reason, just as—supposing that the Church enjoys the privilege of infallibility in belief, and that the proposition with which we are presently concerned is in itself pertinent to faith, as will be declared below—that proposition must be considered as of faith for us given the peaceful acceptance of the universal Church; so too all those conditions required by divine law regarding the person to be elected, which

cannot be supplied by the authority of the Church, become necessary according to theological consequence, because they have an inherent connection with a truth that is certain and certified by faith. Hence also those propositions, "*this man is baptized*" or "*is a man*" or "*is ordained*," speaking of one elected and, moreover, accepted by the universal Church as Pope—which previously, taken absolutely and in themselves, were merely contingent, or, prior to the Cardinals' election, known only with moral certainty due to the investigations made by them—now, with the election completed and accepted, become necessary insofar as they fall under that proposition: "*this man is the true Pontiff*" or "*this specific Pontiff, Clement IX, whom the whole Church acknowledges and receives as legitimately elected, is truly the Pontiff and head of the entire Church.*" From this it is sufficiently clear that faith does not primarily or immediately concern itself with the requirements or qualities indispensably desired in a pontifical election and then with the elect himself, but rather the opposite. However, it is different if we speak of the moral certainty of these same conditions, both in relation to the Cardinals' election itself and to the Church's acceptance, with respect to which, as will be stated shortly, they function only as conditions—just as in the definitions of Councils, prior inquiry or disputation concerning propositions to be defined. For regarding such investigations, since at that point there is no faith but only moral certainty, once the definition has been made, it is certainly inferred by theological consequence that these preceded the definition, supposing that God willed it to be indispensably connected to such investigations, so that it might be infallible for us.

It also follows regarding the aforementioned necessary conditions in electing a Pontiff, that *whether he is baptized or ordained*, no inquiry for ascertaining this, nor any other prior diligence ought to be employed; for although when some truth is immediately defined in particular, an investigation concerning it ought to precede; it is different, however, when something is not immediately defined, but only stands as necessarily connected with that which is immediately defined. Therefore, since in our case the truth which is defined and accepted by the Church immediately is not *that this man Clement IX is baptized or ordained*—for it is sufficiently evident that no revelation exists about this—but *that he is truly the Pontiff and the supreme visible head of the Church Militant*. It is only this latter truth that investigation precedes, and it consists primarily in the fact that it is known by all that the electors were diligently gathered for the act of election, and that the Pontiff designated by them was peacefully presented to the Church as canonically elected. This is sufficient for the Church to universally accept him, and with such acceptance established, that truth becomes a matter of faith, while other truths indispensably connected with it, such as his being baptized or ordained, possess the certainty of Theological consequence.

However, speaking of other conditions which in a papal election pertain only to positive law, and whose defects the Church consequently can remedy by its own authority, neither before nor after his acceptance can there be greater certainty about them than moral certainty; even if it is believed with the certainty of faith that *this particular Pope is the true Pope*; because since these conditions are not indispensably connected with this truth, as were the preceding ones; but despite their defect, and hence the nullity of the election made by the Lord Cardinals, the Church can, by its acceptance, as if by a new election,

remedy that nullity. We can indeed, after that, correctly infer that *this particular Pope is the true Pope*, as well as all other things necessarily and irreplaceably joined with this truth; but not that the election is definitely not simoniacal, or something similar; but at most it can be established with certainty under a disjunction: either it is not simoniacal, if indeed it truly is not such; or if it is such, that defect is remedied and supplied by the Church, when we would see such an election peacefully accepted by it without any dissent, and also the Supreme Pontiff elected. The reason for this is that impediments introduced by positive human law, which render the election of the Supreme Pontiff invalid, are derived from such laws that never speak of, nor can they have place except with respect to that first election which in external appearance and in the external forum is made by the Lord Cardinals; wherefore, even if that election was null due to some such hidden impediment, there still follows another election, which cannot be invalidated by any positive law, which the whole Church makes by peacefully accepting, as we suppose, that elected man as the true Pontiff. For this acceptance, although it proceeds from a preceding error of fact, is nevertheless not conditional but absolute: it is indeed better for the Church to have as Pontiff someone who was invalidly elected, than to unknowingly lack a true Pontiff, and to venerate as such one who in reality is not. This is by nearly the same reasoning by which we said at the end of the previous chapter that God deemed it more expedient for the greater good of the Church to confer Pontifical dignity on a person who is simply capable of it and legitimately elected, by one election or another, whether worthy or unworthy, rather than solely on one who is worthy; because it would result in much greater damage to the Church to often lack a true head, and to always be able to doubt about him, than to occasionally have one who is infirm and weak.

Indeed, if it was expedient that the dominion over things not remain uncertain, and to this end prescriptions were introduced not only by civil law, but also some of very long duration by the law of nations and natural law—through which, dependent upon error, one who was previously not the owner becomes the owner of things—how much more expedient was it that the existence and authority of the Vicar of Christ not remain uncertain. Thus it would be in accordance with divine and natural law, according to the power committed by Christ Himself to the Church to elect the Supreme Pontiff, that whoever is accepted in good faith by the Church as such would become such, even if he had not been so before; provided that he possesses the other conditions of divine law which, under the hypothesis of the Church's infallibility in matters pertaining to faith, cannot but be present in one who has once been accepted by the Church as the true Pontiff, as we have said.

And to this pertains the reasoning that is adduced in the law “Barbarius” in the Digest concerning the office of Praetor, wherein it is declared that a slave unknowingly elected as Praetor and regarded as such not only performed valid acts but was also a true Praetor, because the Roman People, who considered him as such, had the power to dispense with the impediment and is deemed to have willed to do so. This law should not be considered as an arbitrary constitution or one deriving from the power of Civil law (otherwise it would have addressed future rather than past matters about which it makes its determination), but rather as a prudent interpretation and declaration of natural law. Indeed, independently of any positive constitution, the Roman People is deemed to have had in the

said case that intention which it was expedient for them to have. Thus, therefore, in the case of which we are treating, since the power of providing itself with a legitimate head resides in the whole Church, lest it remain headless whenever the ordinary electors, either culpably or inculpably, neither provide nor have concern for providing in the future—as happens when their election was invalid yet is held to be valid—the Church is deemed to elect him whom it accepts, notwithstanding any of his defects regarding positive law, because it is expedient to do so. And although the headless Church cannot dispense against the constitutions of previous Pontiffs, this is of no consequence, since no constitution introducing any impediment extends, either by the intention or by the power of the one constituting it, to such a case or other similar ones, because it is of the essence of a valid law or constitution that it be for the common good. At what time this acceptance by the Church begins will be explained below.

Thirdly, we must recall all those things which we said in the first book of this work, section 3, chapter 2, concerning the certainty of Theological Conclusions, both without the definition of the Church and with it; as well as concerning the difference in truth between a Theological Conclusion that is deduced and one that is explained; where we also assigned and explained rules for judging which explanation is sufficient, and which is not, so that a proposition thus explained may be said to be a proposition of faith, or not. Likewise, we must recall to memory the terms frequently used and to be used throughout the course of this work; namely, that some objects are *of faith primarily per se*; while others are *of faith secondarily per se*; or what amounts to the same thing, some are *of faith immediately and formally*; others *only mediately, or virtually*. The former are said to be those which are directly attained by the light of faith and through its assent, as being immediately revealed by God; the latter, however, are those which are attained from a proposition of faith precisely through inference, and therefore pertain only to the theological light, which, as we showed in the cited book, is purely inferential, from those things which are formally of faith, as from its principles. Hence, to be of faith primarily per se or secondarily per se differs in sacred doctrine just as principles and conclusions differ in other sciences. Furthermore, among those truths or objects themselves which immediately pertain to the light of faith, there is a certain difference and gradation, in that some are of faith *only in themselves* and not *with respect to us*; others *both in themselves and with respect to us*; and some of these latter are of faith *with respect to all*; while some are *with respect to the learned only*, or *with respect to some*. Let each term be explained: objects of faith *in themselves only* are all those truths which are found revealed both in the written Word of God and in tradition, yet are not in fact proposed by the Church to the faithful as to be believed; due to this lack of proposition, or as long as they are not defined by the Church, they are counted among Theological conclusions. For since everything that the Church defines is determined only after the most diligent disputations, it is first the case that they are Theological conclusions inferred through the medium of disputation, before they are defined as of faith. For this reason it is peculiar to sacred doctrine that those things which are sometimes, with respect to us, pure conclusions, can, with the addition of the Church's definition, become its principles.

Matters of faith considered *in themselves and in relation to us* are all those truths which have been so revealed by God that they are furthermore proposed to us by the Church through definition for our belief; of these, some are said to be of faith *for all people*, while others *for some*, or *for the Learned*: because both the revelation itself, through which they pertain to faith, and the definition itself, through which they are declared to us as pertaining to faith, are sometimes so explicitly expressed that they are held without any controversy whatsoever as indubitable among all doctors. For example: *That God is One and Three*; that *the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity assumed our mortal flesh in the fullness of time*; and similarly for other matters. But because it frequently falls under doubt or opinion whether some revealed matter has been sufficiently defined and proposed to us or not, there can sometimes be opinions regarding the censure of a certain proposition, whether it is erroneous or not. For however much that proposition may be revealed or defined, it is nevertheless not entirely clearly and expressly established as such among all people. And therefore, with some propositions, it happens that they are not only matters of faith, but also reflexively so; such that the fact that they are of faith is also a matter of faith. For example, *the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence, and the Incarnation of the second Person*; these are so much matters of faith that it also pertains to faith that they are matters of faith. Sometimes, however, the propositions themselves are matters of faith, but not reflexively so, because some controversy still remains regarding their definition or revelation—namely, whether they are found to be sufficiently contained in Sacred Scripture or traditions. And thus in the present case, it is disputed whether it is established with certain faith that this particular man, Clement IX, is the true Pontiff and head of the Church, or with what degree of certainty this should be held. Concerning this, there are two opinions even among Catholic doctors.

The first opinion absolutely denies that it is certain by divine and Catholic faith that this or that Pontiff is the true and legitimate Vicar of Christ, although its adherents are divided among themselves in assigning a degree of certainty to this proposition; for some, such as Castro in book 1 against heresies, chapter 8, Master Cano in book 6 on theological topics, final chapter, and Bannes in *Secunda Secundae*, question 1, article 10, seem to attribute to it no more than moral certainty; because the truth of such a proposition depends on another, namely, *who has been legitimately or canonically elected*, about which no greater certainty than moral can be had. Those who attribute greater certainty to it place the controversial proposition among theological conclusions, insofar as it proceeds from one proposition of faith, namely, *that he who has been rightly and canonically elected is the true Pontiff*, and another proposition, as they say, naturally known, *that this person has been rightly and canonically elected*; from which it necessarily follows *that he is the true Pontiff*. The second opinion, however, teaches that this kind of proposition is of faith *per se primo* [in itself primarily]; thus Gregory of Valencia in *Secunda Secundae*, question 1, point 7, § 39, Suarez on faith, disputation 10, on the Supreme Pontiff, section 5, Cardinal de Lugo, disputation 1, on faith, section 13, § 6, John of St. Thomas in *Secunda Secundae*, treatise on the Supreme Pontiff, disputation 2, article 2, and many others cited by them. For the reconciliation of these opinions among themselves, as well as for the clearer

resolution, as far as possible, of this laborious difficulty, we establish the following conclusions.

I. Conclusion: it is of divine faith immediately in itself that this man, Clement IX, duly elected, is the true Pontiff and head of the entire Church. The first foundation of this position is derived from the Council of Constance in its condemnation of Wycliffe's errors, which is found in Session 8, final section, where Pope Martin V orders that heretics who seek reconciliation, as well as those suspected of heresy, should be questioned to test their faith, among other things: *"Whether they believe that the canonically elected Pope, whoever he may be at that time, with his name properly expressed, is the successor of Blessed Peter having supreme authority in the Church of God."* These words do not speak of the truth of that proposition in general—that anyone canonically elected is the true Supreme Pontiff—but particularly about him who is Pontiff at that time, expressing his proper name, e.g., Clement IX. And concerning this person whose name is expressed, Martin V commands that the person suspected in faith be interrogated whether he believes that such a person is the true successor of Peter having supreme authority in the Church of God. If such a proposition were not of divine faith immediately in itself, neither would the Supreme Pontiff require, nor could he require, an act of faith concerning it, for he cannot propose anything to be believed as a matter of faith that does not pertain to faith, as is sufficiently established. Therefore, it must be said that the aforementioned proposition is of divine faith immediately in itself.

The second reason is derived from the fact that the Supreme Pontiff is the supreme head of the Church and the supreme Monarch; therefore, just as we believe by faith from what was said in the previous section that this particular Church in which we exist is the true Church of Christ, it must also pertain to the same faith that this particular man who has been legitimately elected, to whom the Church is united as to its head, is the true Supreme Pontiff. The antecedent is a matter of faith, namely, that the Supreme Pontiff is the supreme head of the Church and the supreme Monarch; the consequence therefore is proven because it is of the essence of this particular Church that it be united and joined to its head existing at the time, once his legitimate election has been completed. Indeed, its truth and unity depend most especially on this, given Christ's institution, who willed that the Church's Monarchical state would exist in perpetuity. Therefore, just as it is a matter of faith that this particular Church is the true Church of Christ, so also must it be a matter of faith that, once a legitimate election has taken place (whatever that may be, of which more shortly), this particular man, Clement IX, happily reigning, to whom the Church is united as to its head, is the true Supreme Pontiff. This consequence is most certain, once the truth of the antecedent is established—namely, that it is of the essence of this particular Church that it be united as to its head to this particular Pontiff legitimately elected—which I prove thus: just as from the fact that rationality is of the essence of man as such and in the abstract, it manifestly follows that this particular rationality, or part of rationality, is of the essence of this particular man, e.g., Peter; so similarly, from the fact that Christ the Lord willed the Church's state to be Monarchical and that there would be a perpetual succession of Supreme Pontiffs in it, it also necessarily follows that He willed that of the essence of this particular Church in which we exist would also be this particular Pontiff

existing at the time, legitimately elected. For it is not sufficient that the Church subject itself as to its supreme head to anyone rightly elected as Pontiff, as if in general; rather, it must be united and subject to some visible head. But it is not visible unless it is determined in particular. Furthermore, if it were not certain that this particular Pontiff, rightly elected, to whom the Church here and now is united, is the true Pontiff, by what reasoning could we doubt him? We could also doubt his predecessor, and thus the entire series going back, and consequently the truth of the Bishops who were created by them. Therefore, lest we say that the entire certainty of the true Church and Hierarchical Order collapses, we must admit that it is immediately a matter of faith in itself that this particular Pontiff, rightly elected, is the true Pontiff; and for us, once the whole Church has peacefully accepted him.

The third reason is founded on this: that this particular Pontiff, duly elected, is so much the head of the Church that he is simultaneously also the rule of faith, insofar as he enjoys, among other privileges, infallibility in defining matters pertaining to faith. Therefore, it immediately pertains to the faith that this particular Pontiff, legitimately elected, is the true Pontiff. The antecedent will be made clear from what will be said below; now the consequence is proven, because when something is a rule of faith, it must be no less credible through faith that it is a rule than that what is determined or regulated by it is of faith. Just as when a book of Scripture is proposed as canonical, it is as much of faith that such a book is canonical and received through God's revelation as it is of faith that all it contains is true. Otherwise, we could never be certain about matters defined or handed down in sacred books, as is self-evident. Therefore, if it is once supposed that this particular Pontiff, duly elected, is the rule of faith in defining matters pertaining to it, it must also pertain to that same faith as something credible through it that he is the true Pontiff. This is the only difference between a canonical book and the Supreme Pontiff, insofar as each in its own way is called a rule of faith: that the Supreme Pontiff is such only temporally and dependently on certain temporal conditions that are newly established. Since these are not revealed in particular, there arises that doubt concerning the certainty with which it is held as a matter of faith that this particular man, duly elected, is the true Pontiff—a doubt which does not exist regarding a Canonical book. The latter, being something permanent, does not require any new declaration once it has been proposed to the faithful by the Church as authentic, as the Supreme Pontiff does require, since the nature of such a rule, which is animate and eligible for a time, demands it. Nevertheless, when such a declaration is made through election and its peaceful acceptance by the universal Church, we must hold with certain faith that this particular Pontiff is the true Pontiff, since the Church, being the pillar and foundation of truth, cannot err in accepting and proposing as an animate rule of faith that which is not such.

What some first respond to this reasoning—that infallibility in defining does not belong to the Supreme Pontiff, and therefore that he is the living rule of faith—is of no consequence; for this proceeds from the supposition of this truth, which we shall prove below. Nevertheless, because it is not so certain to many that the same Pontiff is the supreme head of the Church (for on this point all Catholic Doctors agree as an article of faith, although some of them doubt whether it is established by the same faith that he enjoys the

privilege of infallibility in determining matters of faith), the second reason, founded on the dignity of the head, seems to be more effective for us than this third reason for proving our conclusion.

Secondly, others respond that, even if it is conceded that the Supreme Pontiff is the living rule of faith, it does not follow that it must be believed with the certainty of faith that this particular Pontiff existing at a given time is the true Pontiff, but that moral certainty suffices, since the Pontiff only functions as one who applies and proposes the faith, and on the part of the proposer, no greater certainty than moral seems to be required; as is evident in the case of the ministers of the Gospel, whom we are not bound to believe by faith to be legitimate preachers of the Gospel.

But this objection, or response, does not weaken the force of our reasoning, once it is established that the Supreme Pontiff is the living rule of faith; for this is the difference between the Supreme Pontiff proposing matters of faith to be believed by his definition, and an evangelical minister preaching those same matters: that the latter does not function as a determinative rule of matters of faith, but only as a minister announcing to others what ought to be believed; hence we are neither bound to believe that he is a true and legitimate minister, nor are those who believe the matters proposed by him moved to do so by his authority, but rather by the credibility of what is proposed, such that unless these matters are sufficiently proposed, and their credibility made known, they are not bound to believe. But the Supreme Pontiff, once it is admitted that he enjoys the privilege of infallibility in matters pertaining to faith, proposes those matters to be believed as the living rule of faith, or as the supreme judge determining what ought to be believed, so that by his authority the faithful are obligated to believe those things; whence it is necessary that they believe, not merely with moral certainty (which could absolutely admit falsity), but with the certainty of faith, that this particular Pontiff existing at this time and governing the Church is truly its Pontiff. Otherwise, if it happened that the authority which this particular person defining possesses were called into doubt, we could not be certain that the matters defined by him remained matters of faith: just as if a canonical book were called into question as to whether it truly is such, certainty could not be had concerning the things contained in it.

Finally, others respond in a third way concerning the infallibility of definitions of faith made by the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, saying it suffices that he be the true Pontiff, either in reality or putatively—that is, that he be regarded as true by the whole Church. For by this very fact he enjoys the privilege of infallibility in defining, with God assisting him thus for the common good of the Church. The proponents of this response, while denying that it is a matter of faith that this particular person is the true Pontiff, nevertheless maintain that it is a matter of faith that this specific individual, who with merely moral certainty is held throughout the Church to be the true Pontiff, truly and properly performs all that a true Pontiff performs, and enjoys all the privileges and the assistance of the Holy Spirit divinely promised to St. Peter and his legitimate successors. For just as, they say, it pertains to the perfection of divine providence in governing His Church that nothing false should creep into all the codices of Sacred Scripture, or that no Magician or other False Prophet should,

through demonic illusions, present such an apparent case for persuading some error as the Catholic faith has from true miracles (as will be discussed below in Book 4, Section 2, Chapter 6)—similarly, supposing that the Supreme Pontiff as the supreme pastor of the Church is the rule of faith by way of proposing it, it pertains to the gentleness of this same divine providence either never to permit someone to be elected and accepted by the whole Church who has some hidden invalidating impediment that is absolutely incurable by the Church (such as a defect in baptism or legitimate ordination), or if this should sometimes be permitted, that such a Pontiff, whom the whole Church would recognize and accept as true and legitimate, would still possess, by reason of a colorable title concurrent with common error, infallible authority in his definitions.

But this response is of no value, and its authors fall into the same difficulties they attempt to avoid by embracing our position. First, how is it more established through faith that this man whom we consider to be Pontiff enjoys in reality the privileges of the Supreme Pontiff, than that he is the true Pontiff? Indeed, one does not seem to be more revealed than the other; in fact, this solution involves something not only unrevealed, but also false and contrary to what has been revealed—namely, that all the proper privileges of the Supreme Pontiff can be conferred upon someone who is not the true Pontiff, when Christ the Lord promised these not to just anyone, but solely to Peter and his legitimate successors. Furthermore, to explain the matter more clearly: if according to this response we must believe that everything this man does in particular is rightly done, in the same manner as true Pontiffs act, either this is because we certainly believe such a man to be the true Pontiff, or, though he is not such but only putatively so due to some essential defect that cannot be supplied by the authority of the Church, we nevertheless believe he uses the privilege and power of the true Supreme Pontiff. If the first position is maintained—as it should be if we wish to reason consistently because of the necessary connection between both matters (for the effect cannot exceed its cause, and thus if the Pontiff, as the efficient cause of such definitions, were only morally certain and not certain by faith, his definitions likewise could only be morally certain)—if, I say, this first position is granted, we have achieved our aim. But if the second alternative is offered—that despite the absence of a true Pontifical existence, we again believe that God supplies whatever is required for his acts to be valid so that the Church is not deceived in this matter—this is equally uncertain as the first position. For as we were just saying, it is not more revealed that God confers the privileges of the Pontiff upon this man and supplies his authority, than that he is truly the Pontiff. This is especially true since such supplementation and extraordinary concession is not founded upon Christ's own promise, which was made solely to Peter and his true successors; hence, without a new revelation, this cannot be established. We must necessarily conclude that it is to be held with the same certainty of faith that this particular Pontiff existing at this time is the true Pontiff, that he is the true rule of faith, and that he enjoys the prerogatives of the true Pontiff's authority. Thus, it is a manifest contradiction to assert that this man has supreme power of jurisdiction in the Church and the power to define matters of faith through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, while denying that it is held by faith that he is the true Pontiff—for this would affirm that the power of definition belongs to this man, but not that which is defined. Hence it is also understood by what reasoning

those who deny that it is held by faith that this man is the true Pontiff can nevertheless believe by faith what is defined by him. For in reality and in fact, they believe he is the true Pontiff when they believe he has power inseparable from the true Pontiff; but through a certain ignorance, they think they do not believe this. For this reason, through ignorance, they fall into a kind of contradiction.

Therefore, since the previously adduced reasons seem to demonstrate our conclusion clearly enough, the entire difficulty now consists in explaining how it is an object of faith, since only that which we have revealed from divine Scriptures or traditions is such an object; in which God has never revealed this matter.

First, some explain this because they consider a Theological conclusion, deduced from one proposition of faith and another that is at least morally certain and evident, to be a matter of faith; but this is how it stands in the present case, as is clear from the following syllogism: *Everyone canonically promoted to the Apostolic Chair of Peter is the true and Universal Pastor of the Church; but this particular Pope Clement IX was duly promoted and elected to said Chair: Therefore, this particular Pope Clement IX is the true and Universal Pastor of the Church.* Here the major premise is a matter of faith, while the minor premise is at least morally evident; since it is supposed that the legitimate election is established by the irrefutable testimony of the universal Church peacefully accepting it; and the question proceeds concerning a legitimately elected Pontiff who is indubitably admitted as such by the Church, for as long as there is well-founded doubt about the validity of the election, it is certain that it is not a matter of faith, at least for us, that this man is the true Pope.

However, this explanation is not precisely effective. For although from one premise of faith, and another that is certain either morally, physically, or even metaphysically, a most certain conclusion can sometimes follow, this nevertheless does not suffice for it to pertain immediately to the faith, or to be believed through faith, unless it is revealed from elsewhere; and as far as we are concerned, unless the definition or acceptance of the Church believing it in this way is added, and that same definition or acceptance is assumed in the minor premise, thus producing a syllogism consisting of two premises of faith, as will soon be explained. And the reason for this is that only those things are immediately of faith in themselves which have been revealed by God, and which therefore, if they were not true, would make God a liar. But this does not occur in a Theological Conclusion derived dependently from one premise known with merely natural certainty; for such a conclusion and its certainty do not rest on divine truthfulness alone, but also on that naturally certain object which God has not revealed, as is supposed, and which therefore if it were false, and consequently the conclusion also false, we could not on that account complain about God as being a liar or deceiver.

Another way of explaining this difficulty is because such a conclusion can be evidently inferred from two revealed premises through the following reasoning. *It is impossible for the universal Church to err or be deceived in matters pertaining to its common religion, since by God's revelation it is "the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Timothy 2), against*

which the gates of hell shall never prevail. But the judgment whereby the universal Church accepts someone as Pontiff and its supreme head is a matter concerning the religion of the entire Church. Therefore, it is impossible for the universal Church to err in such judgment; and consequently, it is a matter of faith that this particular Pontiff, whom the whole Church acknowledges and receives as legitimately elected, is the true Pontiff and its supreme head.* Where both the major and minor premises are matters of faith, it follows that the conclusion is likewise such, since among many criteria, it suffices for a proposition to be said to pertain to faith if it is deduced with evident logical necessity from two premises of faith. This is especially true when such premises function merely as conditions in theological discourses of this kind, as we explained in Book 1, Section 3, Chapter 2. For in that case, they are not so much theological conclusions or simply deduced ones as they are explicated ones, and therefore they follow evidently from two revealed premises through theological discourse, by way of application or approximation, and are proposed to the intellect in such a manner that, notwithstanding this process, they ought to be called immediately revealed and thus immediately believed.

Thirdly, therefore, the whole matter is explained thus. That which is of divine faith immediately in itself is what has been divinely revealed. But that this particular Pope, Clement IX, or any other who exists at a given time and has been duly elected, is the true Pontiff, has been divinely revealed. Therefore, such a proposition is of divine faith immediately in itself. The major premise of this argument is evident; the minor premise, however, is demonstrated, whether it was divinely revealed when Christ revealed that Peter was the head of the Church and its supreme Pastor; for then He likewise revealed the same generally concerning all his successors legitimately elected by the Church, such that only in relation to us would there be lacking a sufficient proposition of this or that content under that revelation, which proposition is obtained through the universal testimony and approval of the Church. For understanding this, it must be noted that some things were revealed by God in general so that they might be believed in general, such as “God can do all things that do not involve a contradiction,” and similar statements. Through these revelations, God only intended that we should know such universal perfections about Him in general. But other things God revealed in general so that they might be believed specifically and individually, such as: “Any universal Council legitimately convened and representing the entire Church is true, and its definitions obligate every faithful person,” and “Any Pontiff duly elected is the true Pontiff, successor of Peter, and Vicar of Christ the Lord on earth.” But since it would have been lengthy and endless—indeed, absurd and subject to many inconveniences—to reveal and enumerate individually those things which are contained under such universal principles as certain partial truths thereof, God employed, as it were, a kind of generic revelation, namely, the definition or acceptance of the Universal Church, substituting it for the collection of all individual revelations which it was not expedient for Him to make. Thus, the voice of the Church is, as it were, a new utterance of God, or rather an explanation and completion of a past utterance or revelation, through which that which previously did not appear to us as a matter of faith becomes a matter of faith for us, namely when God, through the Church as the most certain interpreter of faith, manifests which particular objects He intended to speak about

when He gave those universal propositions. Hence, when in the treatise on faith it is commonly said that “the Church of God” (speaking of it according to the state of the new testament) “is not governed by new revelations,” or what is the same, that “the material objects of supernatural faith have not increased in it over time,” this should be understood of material objects as they are considered according to substance, not according to circumstances, or quasi-circumstances, which God willed to depend on time, or which did not exist then, when He revealed such objects in common, but only would exist in the future; such as this or that Pontiff existing at this or that different time being the true Pontiff; the First Council of Nicaea and Constantinople, and other such councils being true and legitimate Councils.

Therefore, although those things which have been revealed by God in the first general manner cannot and should not be believed individually, for the reason given above, namely that only those things are to be believed by faith which, if they were not true, would make God liable to the charge of falsehood; nevertheless, when the revelation was made in the second general manner, then individual assent must be a matter of faith. For that experience which we then have of the Church speaking, in whose mouth God has placed the teaching authority of faith, is a certain completion of divine speech, through which God Himself is understood to reveal this particular object: that this specific Pope, duly elected, is the true Pope. Wherefore, if that common consensus of the Church, by which this and similar matters are proposed to us, were false and deceptive, we could complain of God as a deceiver, inasmuch as He would be contributing to that judgment or consensus which would prudently be considered by us as divine speech, although it would not be so; just as if, through demonic illusions, He were to allow such a convincing appearance to be presented in favor of some error—for example, by the Antichrist or another false prophet—as the Catholic faith possesses through true miracles.

Moreover, such a divine immediate revelation of singular truths can be declared from the fact that such truths can be contained in a universal revealed proposition in two ways: first, formally; second, virtually. A singular is contained formally in the universal, as a part in its whole, e.g., in this universal principle: *every man is a substance; is living; is rational*; this particular is contained, *this man is a substance, is living; is rational*; And in this other universal, *every whole is greater than its part*, this singular is contained, namely, *this whole is greater than its part*; When, however, some singular truth is contained in its principle as an effect in its cause, then it is said to be contained only virtually. This being presupposed, just as when a conclusion is contained formally in its principle, then in the natural order another habit is not necessary to assent to the principle and the conclusion; for by the same habit of the intellect by which we judge that every whole is greater than its part, we can also judge that this whole is greater than its part, and so for the rest; whatever may be the case, whether we can also assent to the same conclusion or particular truth by another habit, when it is reduced to syllogistic form; similarly in the supernatural order, by the same habit of infused faith we can immediately assent to the Universal proposition revealed by God, e.g., *Every Pope duly elected is the true Pope and successor of Peter*, and also to the singular formally contained under it, as a part under its whole, e.g., *this particular Pope existing at this time who has been duly elected, is the true Pope, and finally*

the successor of Peter; once we are made certain of such containment through the universal consensus of the Church.

- II. Conclusion: That this particular Pontiff existing at the present time is the true Pontiff is not rendered a matter of faith for us precisely through the election of the Lord Cardinals alone.

This is proven because, although such a proposition in itself can often be a matter of faith—namely, where such an election occurs with all the conditions required both by divine law and ecclesiastical human law—nevertheless, since the sacred College of Cardinals does not enjoy the privilege of infallibility (for nowhere is it read that this was granted to it, but only to the Church), it can sometimes elect someone having an essential defect, or, if he has no defect, render its election invalid on other grounds, which it cannot remedy by its own authority, as we noted above concerning the Church and will soon explain again. Since the Lord Cardinals are bound, under penalty of nullity, to elect according to the form prescribed by the Supreme Pontiffs, as is sufficiently evident from their texts, therefore, that this particular Pontiff existing at the present time is the true Pontiff is not rendered a matter of faith for us precisely through the election of the Lord Cardinals alone, unless, in addition, the consensus of the universal Church is added. Hence it follows that those first acts by which the faithful recognize the newly elected Pontiff are not, with respect to this, acts of divine faith, but of human and fallible faith and prudence, until, with the common acceptance of the Church and the faithful having been added, there results in individuals the obligation of divine faith to believe that he is the true Pontiff.

And the reason is that we are not bound by divine faith to believe in a matter to which falsehood can be subject, either speculatively or practically; but supposing that the Lord Cardinals in electing the Supreme Pontiff do not enjoy the privilege of infallibility, and therefore can elect invalidly, both on the part of the eligible person and on the part of the election itself, falsehood could underlie this proposition, *that this particular Pontiff elected by them is the true Pontiff*, due to a defect in the legitimate election. Therefore, we are not bound to believe it as a matter of faith, unless something else is added elsewhere, by which we may be certainly assured of the legitimate election; for it is not a matter of faith that this particular Pontiff existing at a certain time is the true Pontiff; but rather that this particular Pontiff who has been rightly elected is the true Pontiff, which is contained under that universal revealed proposition: *That all Roman Pontiffs rightly elected are true Pontiffs and successors of St. Peter*.

- III. Conclusion: That this particular Pontiff who has been rightly elected is the true Pontiff, which is a matter of faith in itself, is rendered a matter of faith for us through the universal consent of the Church peacefully and undoubtingly accepting him.

It is proven that, in order for a proposition that is of faith in itself to be rendered such for us, nothing else is required except that it be proposed by one having such authority to which, in matters of faith, no falsehood whatsoever can be subject. But such is the authority of the universal Church. Therefore, when it once declares and proposes this particular Pontiff

currently in office to have been canonically and legitimately elected, it becomes a matter of faith for us that he who was thus properly elected is the true Pontiff. Such a declaration or proposition may occur either through the peaceful acceptance of the universal Church spread throughout the world, or through the definition of a Council if there is any doubt in the election, as is evident from the Council of Constance. Since indeed, especially when an election is not peaceful and peacefully accepted but reasonably doubtful, the elected Pontiff cannot proceed to define or determine regarding it (because while such doubt stands, he cannot impose an obligation that his determinations be received as legitimate and undoubted), it is necessary that such determination be made by the authority of the Church, either through universal peaceful acceptance or through the definition of a universal Council. Given the Church's infallibility in matters of faith, either it will not accept the election if it lacks some condition indispensably required for its validity, or if there was no such defect but only another stemming merely from human law, it will, moreover, remedy it by the fullness of its power, as we noted at the beginning of this chapter. Thus, no doubt can ever arise concerning the legitimate election of this particular Pontiff whom the universal Church accepts and recognizes as the true Pontiff. Concerning him thus accepted and acknowledged, what we adduced above from the Council of Constance in proof of the first conclusion must be understood, as we shall soon declare in answering the following question.

Someone may therefore inquire at what time the said acceptance by the Church begins, and through it a sufficient proposition is made, so that it becomes a matter of faith for us that this particular Pontiff, duly elected, is the true Pontiff; and the faithful are obligated to believe this—whether this occurs as soon as the Cardinals proclaim the elected one to those faithful who are present at the place of election, or rather when the matter has already been divulged throughout the whole world and the Church spread everywhere. It is answered from what has been said that immediately after the concordant election by the Cardinals, the faithful are indeed bound by the precept of obedience and charity to obey the elected Pontiff, such that no one can rightfully separate from him without schism. For this, the moral certainty which is obtained through such an election concerning the duly elected person is sufficient—not, however, for an assent of faith, but for that [assent of faith] the acceptance of the Church is additionally required. This begins negatively as soon as the Church, wherever it knows of such an election, does not contradict it; positively, however, when it is immediately acquiesced to by the prelates and people who are present at the place of election, and gradually in other parts of the world, it is also admitted by the rest of the faithful, both prelates and subjects. Thus, those who see or hear of the elected Pope, and observe that he is not contradicted but admitted by all, are bound according to the more certain opinion which we defend, to believe with divine and supernatural faith that this particular Pontiff, duly elected and accepted by the Church as such, and proposed through its acceptance, is the true Pontiff and successor of St. Peter.

- IV. Conclusion: That this numerically specific Pontiff elected by the Lord Cardinals is truly the Pontiff becomes most certainly and definitively a matter of faith for us when not only does the Church accept him as Pontiff in practical terms, subjecting

itself to him as its supreme head, but furthermore when the Pontiff himself, in exercising his office, defines something that must be held as a matter of faith.

This conclusion follows from what has been said, and presupposes the Supreme Pontiff's indefectibility in determining matters pertaining to faith when speaking *ex cathedra*. For it is impossible that we believe by faith some defined object without simultaneously believing that the definition itself is legitimate, and consequently that the one making the definition here and now possesses infallible authority concerning the determination and regulation of matters of faith—which means believing that this man who is defining is the true Pontiff and enjoys supreme power in the Church. Hence, when the Supreme Pontiff defines something in this way, there is no faithful person who, while assenting to the defined matters through belief, does not simultaneously in practical terms believe him to be the true Pontiff; although when this truth is later considered separately in a theoretical and speculative manner, it may not appear, due to the many circumstances and conditions pertaining to this or that particular man, how it could be a matter of faith that he is the true Pontiff, since divine revelation does not seem to have sufficiently addressed or declared to us all those particular details.

Although from what has been said, one could easily counter all objections that are commonly made against our conclusions, nevertheless, so that their truth may appear more clearly, I shall briefly present and resolve these objections.

Therefore, the first objection is raised: only that which has been divinely revealed is immediately of faith in itself. But that this particular Pope, whom the entire Church acknowledges and accepts as legitimately elected, is the true Pontiff and successor of Blessed Peter, is found to be revealed nowhere. Therefore, it is not immediately of faith in itself. The major premise of this argument is most certain and founded on the definition of the matter. The minor premise, however, is proven in multiple ways: *first*, because neither in Scripture nor in tradition is there a foundation for such a revelation; *second*, because if this were divinely revealed, then the conditions essentially required for the legitimate election of this Pontiff would also have to be considered divinely revealed, such as that he is a man and not a woman; that he is baptized; and properly ordained; because, as it is supposed, a legitimate election must necessarily have occurred for it to be of faith that this particular Pontiff is the true Pontiff, at least concerning those conditions that are indispensably necessary and cannot be supplied by the authority of the Church. *Third*, only that which is divinely revealed, and consequently immediately of faith, is that whose opposite constitutes manifest and formal heresy, but one who denies that this man is Pope is not a heretic but only a schismatic; just as one who would deny that all previous Pontiffs were true Pontiffs would not be such [i.e., a heretic]; Therefore, it is not immediately of faith in itself that this particular Pontiff existing at a given time, whom the entire Church receives and acknowledges as legitimately elected, is the true Pontiff.

The response to this argument is given by conceding the Major premise and denying the Minor premise; to the first proof of which we say that this truth was immediately revealed by God through that universal revelation which, on the one hand, made manifest that all

who are duly elected and promoted to the Chair of Peter would be true Pontiffs succeeding him and His true Vicars; and on the other hand, that the universal Church would never err in matters of faith, since it is the pillar and foundation of truth. For in such universal propositions revealed by God, it is formally contained, as a part in its whole, both *that this particular Pontiff who has been duly elected is a true Pontiff*, and *that the Church cannot err in accepting him*. Hence, if with those universal propositions another particular one is joined—namely, that the true Church, which we see spread throughout the world and which we believe by faith enjoys the privilege of infallibility, accepts this particular Pontiff as duly elected—it immediately becomes a matter of faith for us that he is the true Pontiff, as we explained more fully in the first conclusion.

To the second proof, the response is that the aforementioned conditions and the propositions formed from them can be viewed in two ways: either antecedently to the Church's acceptance of this particular Pontiff as duly elected, or subsequently. If they are considered in the first way, we admit that they are merely contingent matters, having no more than moral certainty, which may admit of falsehood; but if they are considered in the second way, they pertain to faith, not immediately, but mediately, as theological conclusions necessarily inferred from a premise of faith.

Divine revelation, just as the acceptance by the Church itself, does not primarily concern itself with the requisites or conditions which must necessarily concur in both the electors and the person elected for a legitimate election, and subsequently with the elect himself, but conversely, through faith, or revelation implicitly contained in the creed, and in the promise made to St. Peter—applied, however, and declared in practice through the peaceful acceptance of the universal Church—it is only established that this particular Pontiff existing at the time is the true Pontiff. From this it is inferred by theological consequence that he was elected by true and legitimate electors having a true intention of electing; and that he is a man, not a woman; that he is baptized and ordained; that he is not a heretic, if internal and external faith is necessarily and irreplaceably required by the Church for someone to be a true Pontiff—which I consider more probable.

For if, as some maintain, alongside internal heresy mere external profession of faith were sufficient, it could be said that such a defect, having its origin in ecclesiastical law alone, could be remedied by the authority of the Church that unknowingly tolerates him, until such time as the Church, having become aware of this defect, proceeds to his deposition.

We have an example of this in the definitions of Councils, in which, although faith is not concerned with those things that are prerequisites for their definition, such as that a thorough investigation of the truth to be defined must have preceded (indeed, this is merely contingent), nevertheless, when such a definition is made, it is rightly inferred through theological reasoning that all conditions for a legitimate definition were met, and consequently that a diligent inquiry into the truth through disputation preceded it. The reason for this is that when something is in itself a matter of faith, it is not necessary that all things which have a necessary connection with it also pertain to faith; rather, this is what constitutes a theological conclusion, which concerns those things that are

necessarily connected with matters of faith and are deduced from them through pure syllogistic reasoning.

Similarly in this proposition, *this man was duly elected*, since that phrase *duly elected* can be understood in two ways; first, as if by these words it is signified that all necessary conditions were applied so that the election is legitimate prior to the Church's acceptance; if understood in this way, such a proposition has no more than moral certainty nor does it influence this other truth or proposition, *this man is the true Pontiff*, except by way of disposition, *that he may be the true Pontiff, and as such be accepted by the Church*; so that it makes this sense: *this man was duly elected*, that is, *this man was elected with the requisite conditions, on account of which he ought to be accepted as the true Pontiff*; second, the aforementioned phrase *duly elected* can be understood not only concerning an election conducted with all requisites, but also particularly accepted by the Church, and then that proposition is a matter of faith, that *this man was rightly elected*; just as, once a definition has been made by an ecumenical Council, it is a proposition of faith that that definition is legitimate; because, *this man having been duly or rightly elected; and this man being the true Pontiff*, do not count as separate things, for acceptance as Pontiff and being the true Pontiff are the same; just as a matter having been defined by an ecumenical Council, and its definition being true and legitimate are considered one and the same.

Finally, to the third proof, it is answered from what has been said that the Church does not accept that election and the elected person merely as a matter of pure obedience, but moreover as a matter pertaining to faith; because, as we have said, it accepts him as its true visible head. Hence, with the same certainty of faith by which we believe that this particular congregation of the faithful spread throughout the whole world, which adheres to the Supreme Roman Pontiff as to its visible head, is the true Church of Christ, we are also bound to believe that this particular Pontiff to whom it thus adheres, and whom it accepts as legitimately elected, is the true Pontiff. Furthermore, the Church acknowledges him not only as its head but also as an infallible rule of faith, which, as we have seen above, cannot occur unless it is also a matter of faith that he, thus acknowledged, is truly the rule of faith. Therefore, one who would deny that this man is the Pope, whom the entire Church has once accepted as duly elected, would be not only schismatic but also heretical. For he would not only rend the unity of the Church like those who from the beginning might elect two Pontiffs, of whom it is unknown which is the true Pontiff, but would additionally profess a false dogma; because he would deny that one whom the universal Church peacefully receives as such should be held as the true Pontiff, and therefore as the true head of the Church and the true rule of faith. Wherefore then that which St. Jerome teaches in his commentary on the third chapter of Titus would especially apply, and after him St. Thomas in the *Secunda Secundae*, question 39, article 1, reply to objection 3: "No schism exists that does not contrive some heresy for itself, so that it may appear to have withdrawn from the Church with justification."

This response is understood not only concerning the current Supreme Pontiff during his lifetime, but must also be extended to all others who legitimately presided over the Church in all past ages: if we are once assured that they were accepted by the Church, either

because we witnessed it ourselves, or because some definition of theirs remains, in which, by declaring something concerning the faith, they simultaneously left declared that they were the true head of the Church and the true rule of faith. For if we had no certainty of such acceptance, then it would not be a matter of faith for us except incidentally, but we would hold it merely through human historical record. Unless we would prefer to say that we can always have sufficient certainty of faith in this matter through that principle of faith which holds that the Church of Christ has persevered continuously as one and the same from the beginning until these times; and since it is of the essence of the Church to have a true head, all Pontiffs legitimately elected in their time must have been accepted by the Church. Or if they were not legitimate, or even doubtful, they were rejected so that the Church could proceed to another election, lest, contrary to Christ's institution and promise, the Church remain headless and be said to have perished. This is how heretics argue when they contend that at least from the time of Pope Urban VI, the true succession has failed; from this they think they sufficiently infer that it can no longer be certain whether there is a true succession to the Supreme Pontiff, or where in the world the true visible Church exists—among whose principal marks we place the legitimate succession of Supreme Pontiffs continuing to these times, as well as the perpetual union with them and adherence to them as to the supreme and universal head.

If, among some, not the entire Church accepts this truth as a matter of faith, since there are many Catholic Doctors who do not admit it, and yet are not considered heretics on that account; I respond that not all accept it as a matter of faith speculatively, and in explicit terms, or considering it inadequately, thinking it sufficient for the Pontifical office in the Church to have a certain moral or natural certainty that this particular Pope is the true Pope; nevertheless, all accept it virtually, while they profess to believe in one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of which this particular duly elected Pope, existing for the time being, is truly the head of all, and according to the more true opinion, the true rule of faith in it; hence only from ignorance, as we noted above, do they think they do not believe what in reality and in fact they do believe, and thus they contradict themselves as it were; wherefore they are neither to be considered heretics, nor to be punished as such; however, it would be different if some publicly and obstinately denied this truth, according to our opinion, which we think pertains to the faith, and which almost all Theologians and Canonists teach, although they differ somewhat in the manner of explaining it.

It is objected secondly, the principal reason, and that which is more universal, for our assertion is derived from this, that the Supreme Pontiff is the supreme head of the Church; whence just as we believe by faith that this particular Church in which we are is the true Church of Christ, we ought also to hold with the same certainty of faith that this particular man legitimately elected, to whom *the Church is visibly united as to its head*, is the true *Supreme Pontiff*; but this reasoning does not seem effective; since in this particular Church, the certainty of the Sacraments, for example, of Baptism or the Eucharist, does not seem less necessary than the certainty regarding this particular head; but for the certainty of the Sacraments, it is sufficient that we believe their truth in general through faith; in particular cases, however, we are assured of the truth of this or that Sacrament only by moral certainty; for it is not a matter of faith that this particular man was truly

baptized, or that this particular host was consecrated, although it is a matter of faith that every properly consecrated host really contains in itself the body of Christ, as is held according to Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica* 2.2, question 1, article 3, reply to objection 3. Therefore, in the same way, it seems sufficient to believe indeed that it is a matter of faith that *every properly elected man is a true Pontiff*, but not that *this particular Pontiff who has been properly elected and accepted by the Church is the true Pontiff*; but for this latter point, moral certainty suffices, or that it be inferred as a theological conclusion from principles of faith.

One responds to this argument by conceding the major premise and denying the minor premise; to the proof of which, first, the parity is denied; the disparity consists in this: that the Sacraments, taken in particular, or as they proceed here and now from a certain minister, do not function as a rule of faith, nor does the visible unity of the Church, or its union with them, depend essentially on their unity; rather, they function as medicines for sins and divine instruments of grace. Hence, no acceptance or definition of the Church concerns the Sacraments in particular, but only concerns them in species or in common, e.g., by believing: *that those Sacraments which are performed in the due manner are true Sacraments, that the body and blood of Christ the Lord are contained truly, really, and substantially under the species of bread and wine when properly consecrated*, but not that *these particular species have been properly and duly consecrated*; for the nature and virtue of the Sacraments are subject to the definition of faith, but not their use and exercise.

But in the case of the Supreme Pontiff, it is not so, for faith relates to his Apostolic power in several ways; that is, both generally, by believing that *every Pontiff duly elected and unquestioningly accepted by the Church is the true Pontiff*; and particularly, that *this specific Pontiff who has been duly elected and unquestioningly accepted by the Church is the true Pontiff*; because, as we have said, he is accepted by the Church as the rule of faith according to the more correct opinion, whence he must be believed as a matter of faith in particular, just like any other rule of faith. Moreover, according to all, he is accepted as the supreme head of the universal Church; concerning whom, therefore, it must be established as a matter of faith that he is its true head, just as it is established concerning this specific congregation of the faithful that it is the true Church of Christ, because the truth and unity of the Church depends essentially on its union with its true head. For even though during a vacant See such dependence does not exist actually but potentially—because, that is, this congregation is suited and, by its nature, given Christ's institution, essentially requires subjection to one particular head, which it does not actually have at that time—nevertheless when it actually has that head, which is the case we are discussing, and has accepted his election as legitimate, then unless it is united to him in particular, the unity and monarchical state of the Church would perish, as we explained above in chapter 6.

What I have stated regarding a vacant See must likewise be asserted during a time of schism, if there are multiple claimants about whom reasonable doubt exists as to which of them is the true Pontiff. For in such a case, it is the same as if the Church actually had no

head, because she does not yet have one definitively and peacefully according to law. However, if one of them is definitively the Pontiff, while others irrationally usurp this dignity, then just as the Church must accept the true head and unite with him, so too it is a matter of faith that he, and no other, is the Pontiff.

Secondly, it is answered to this argument by admitting, with due proportion maintained, the parity between the Sacraments in particular, e.g., this or these properly consecrated hosts, that they are objects of faith, just as this specific Pontiff properly elected and accepted by the Church; for I presuppose that all such properly consecrated hosts can be considered in two ways, either separately or collectively, as we said about the faithful in the previous section on the Church, chapter 10. If they are taken in the first way, none of them in particular must be believed as a matter of faith to have been properly consecrated, but only with morally certain assent; the opposite is true, however, if they are considered collectively, lest we say that the entire Church everywhere, albeit materially and ignorantly, is idolatrous through the adoration of the most august Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is entirely absurd and contrary to the indefectibility promised to it by God in matters of faith and morals, as cited in the place just mentioned. For even if it is not improper that in some particular place this or that host taken separately, which is not properly consecrated, is nevertheless adored as such, the defectibility of the universal Church does not follow from this, as it would follow if all hosts collectively taken were adored by the universal Church without the body of Christ the Lord being really and substantially contained in them when taken together. Therefore, I consider it a matter of faith that all hosts collectively taken, adored by the Catholic Church spread throughout the whole world, are properly consecrated, so that in respect to this truth, such adoration by the Church relates to us just as its acceptance does in respect to this specific Pontiff properly elected; since in a matter of general fact pertaining to the general state of all the faithful, such as the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist throughout the world, and the true and canonical election of the supreme head himself, it cannot err. A sufficiently clear example of this can be in the collection of Bishops composing a legitimate General Council, which we believe by faith represents the Church and is authoritatively the true Church, in the way that it is a matter of faith that it is a legitimate Council; although it is not a matter of faith that each Bishop, or all taken separately, are true Bishops, because none of them in particular, nor all taken separately, serve as a rule of faith, but only collectively. Hence it is only a matter of faith that their collection is a legitimate congregation or Council in which the whole Church is representatively and authoritatively present. Similarly, since no consecrated host in particular, or taken separately, is the object of adoration of the universal Church, it is not necessary that it be a matter of faith that each host in particular, or all taken separately, were properly consecrated; the opposite is true, however, if we speak of their collection, since it is the object of the aforementioned adoration of the universal Church, lest we say that the Church at least materially persists in perpetual idolatry, which is impious and sacrilegious.

The same parity could also be assigned between this host in particular and this Pope in particular; as if there were only one properly consecrated host given successively, which ought to be adored by the universal Church, just as in fact there is successively only one

legitimately elected Pontiff, to whom the Church must be united as to its head. For then the Church would either not adore that host because it was not properly consecrated, or if it did adore it as such, we would know with certainty by the Church's own authority as a matter of faith, not only that the true body of Christ is contained under every properly consecrated host, but also under this particular one. Likewise, by the same authority, it is established for us not only in general that every *Pope* who is duly elected is *the true Pope*, but also this specific one existing at a given time; once the Church has accepted him as legitimately and canonically elected.

Since the discipline of contraries is the same, after we have discussed the first institution of the Supreme Pontificate established by Christ the Lord in the person of St. Peter, as well as the way by which his successors ought to attain the same dignity, it would now remain to address the ways in which the Supreme Pontiff, even while living, *can fall* from that office. However, I *willingly refrain* from treating this matter, both because it *pertains* little to the purpose and end of my present undertaking, and because it concerns rare occurrences. For while the Supreme Pontiff, during his lifetime, can lose the Pontifical dignity in two ways—first, through voluntary cession, as stated *in chapter 7 on renunciation in the sixth [book of Decretals]*, this has happened only once, in the case of Celestine V of Estuia, who, having been created Pope from being an Abbot of his monastery on the fourth day of September in the year of Christ 1294, voluntarily abdicated the Pontificate, out of love for the solitary life, on the Ides of December [13th] of that same year. For in the Council of Constance, indeed two Pontiffs, but doubtful ones, Gregory XII and John XXIII, voluntarily renounced their rights; and when Benedict XIII refused to do the same, he was deposed to end the schism, and Martin V was elected in their place, by whose authority that same Council was afterwards confirmed. However, for such a renunciation of the Pontificate which one peacefully possesses, some reasonable cause seems to be required; otherwise, to renounce without cause and thus withdraw one's service from the Church would be contrary to the charity of Christ, who gave His life to seek the lost sheep. Nevertheless, where just cause exists, the Pontiff may relinquish his dignity, however peacefully possessed, without awaiting the Church's consent, since the Pontiff does not regard the Church as a superior whose obedience would bind him from renouncing, as is the case with other Bishops, who nevertheless, in order to renounce, await the consent not of their Church but of the Pontiff, who is superior.

Another mode of losing the Pontificate through deposition is even rarer than the preceding one; for there are two principal cases in which the deposition of an undoubted Pontiff takes place (we are not at present discussing the case where the validity of an election is in doubt, but this will be addressed below in chapter 14). The first case is that of perpetual insanity, the second is heresy, or infidelity. Properly speaking, no Supreme Pontiff has been recorded up to this point as having been deposed by the Church for these two reasons. Finally, because this matter belongs more to Canonists than to Theologians, I refer the reader to them; nevertheless, among Theologians who have brilliantly treated this matter are Cajetan in *On the Authority of the Pope*, chapters 18 and 19, Soto in the *4th Book of Sentences, Distinction 22*, Gregory of Valencia in 2.2., Suarez, Tanner, John of St. Thomas, and many others in the same place, Bellarmine in *Book 2 on the Roman*

Pontiff, chapter 30, Driedo in *On Christian Liberty*, chapter 14, where these matters can be examined, along with others cited by them, Andreas Duval, Doctor of the Sorbonne, in *On Ecclesiastical Discipline*, part 3, questions 9 and 19.