

## Cursus Theologicus (*Theological Course*)

by João Poinso (Ioannis A S. Thoma, John of St. Thomas), 1640

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### Question 1, Disputation 7, Article 2 (Q. 1, D. 7, A. 2)

*Whether, after a legitimate election of a pontiff, it is of faith per se primo, or per se secundo that this particular person, for example Innocent X, is pope?*

I. This question has become very celebrated in these times, and has been discussed with various arguments, for little can be found among the ancients in the exact terms in which it is now disputed. Before we propose those matters which create difficulty in this area, two terms must be explained which are proposed or presupposed in the title. The first is the phrase “given a legitimate election”; the second is the phrase “of faith per se primo, or per se secundo.” And as to the first, we suppose that a papal election can be not legitimate, but doubtful or flawed, not only if it is conducted by illegitimate electors, that is, by persons to whom the right of electing has not been given by the Church or the Pope (for then there is no doubt that it is not an election but a violent usurpation), but even if it is conducted by legitimate electors, that is, by the Cardinals, to whom this power is now entrusted in the Church. Concerning this, however, there may be some difficulty as to whether an election celebrated by Cardinals can be vitiated. For, first, it cannot be vitiated on the part of the electors, because Cardinals cannot be impeded from the right of election by any censure. This is a singular privilege of the election of the Supreme Pontiff, as is expressly stated in the Clementine [Constitution] *Ne Romani* §. *Caeterum de electione*, where it is decreed that no Cardinal can be repelled from that election on the pretext of excommunication or censure. This was established to avoid schisms and uncertainty of election, upon which depends the direction and governance of the entire Church. Therefore, by the very fact that Cardinals participate in the election, it cannot be invalidated on the part of the electors. Furthermore, neither can it be vitiated on the part of the election itself nor rendered doubtful, on account of the assistance of the Holy Spirit in conducting that election. For many consider this assistance to be given with probability, and it is especially confirmed by a certain testimony of Sixtus V in Constitution L, where,

treating of Cardinals, he says among other things: “That in that sacred election they are to be considered true interpreters and mediators of the divine will, by whose Spirit, just as the entire body of the Church is sanctified and governed, so most certainly it is entirely certain and clear to all that this whole work of such an election is completed by His inspiration and instinct.” Here the Pontiff attributes a certain special assistance of the Holy Spirit to that election, which is not attributed to other works or common actions, for this assistance is compared to that by which the body of the Church is governed and sanctified by the Spirit. But from this assistance, it is established that the Church cannot err; therefore, from the same [assistance], we must hold that an election made by Cardinals cannot err or be rendered invalid. Otherwise, it would not have special assistance if it sometimes errs and fails, and sometimes does not, for that is found in any other action.

**II.** Nevertheless, it must be said that an election can be rendered flawed or doubtful for many reasons, even if it is conducted by legitimate electors, and this can occur both in the election process itself and with respect to the person elected, according to the defects which the laws themselves specify. Regarding the election process, if it is conducted under fear sufficient to influence a steadfast man, that election is null, as determined in Session XXXIX of the Council of Constance. Similarly, if the form established in the chapter “Ubi periculum” on election in the Sixth [Book of Decretals] is not observed, namely that the person must be elected by two-thirds of the Cardinals. Likewise, if someone is elected through simony, the election is null, as stated in the constitution of Julius II which begins “Cum tam divino,” issued in 1505. An objection of heresy can also be raised against the person elected; if the one elected is a manifest heretic, he is not to be considered as pontiff, as is established in the same constitution of Julius II. Similarly, other exceptions based on natural law can be admitted, such as if the person were not a man, or if he were deprived of judgment, etc. However, other objections that once could be raised against a papal election, such as that it was conducted through violence, fraud, or ambition, according to the chapter “In nomine,” distinction XXIII, cannot now be raised against someone elected by two-thirds of the Cardinals, because no exception of this kind is admitted against him, according to the aforementioned chapter “Ubi periculum,” except those that can be raised based on the constitution of Julius II or on the natural law of incapacity. Finally, the Council of Constance determined that judging a doubtful election pertains to the Council itself; therefore, it supposes that a doubtful or flawed election can occur, which it may judge.

**III.** Therefore, to the reason put forward, I respond that although no censure can be opposed against the electing persons themselves, other defects can nonetheless be raised, such as if it is objected that the election was not truly made by two-thirds of the Cardinals, for this is required by the chapter “Licet” on election; or if it is objected that some of those two-thirds are not truly Cardinals, as Azorius teaches from the Abbot in the said chapter, in Book IV, chapter V, question VII, §. “Quoties insuper”; and similarly if some are not ordained in the order whose title of Cardinal they hold, such as a Cardinal Deacon being a deacon, a Cardinal Priest being a priest, etc., according to a certain constitution of Gregory XIII; and finally if some elect out of fear that would affect a steadfast man, as we have stated from the Council of Constance. Hence the argument does not hold: “The

disqualification of censure cannot be opposed to him, therefore neither can other disqualifications which are established by law.”

**IV.** To that which is objected concerning the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the election of the pontiff, it is answered that the pontiff does not say that infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit is always due to that election, such that the electors can never err; since from the laws cited above, the opposite is inferred. Rather, he says that the work of election is completed by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, that is, when such an election is consummated and peacefully accomplished. For as long as it remains doubtful, it is not completed, but something still remains unresolved. Therefore, when it is completed, it happens by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, that is, by His special providence and assistance by which He governs that work of election, in the manner by which He specially rules the Church. For there are many things which are ordained or done by the special providence of God and assistance of the Holy Spirit, and yet they do not have infallible indefectibility such that such assistance is always given, ensuring they never lack it, but rather that they elect concordantly and properly, since no promise has been made concerning this. Nor does Sixtus proceed definitively in those words, but narratively to uphold the dignity of the cardinals, as is evident from the text. Therefore, the present question does not proceed from the certainty by which this person is believed to be the pontiff absolutely and by any election whatsoever, but presupposes a legitimate election, without which it cannot fall under faith that this person is the pontiff. Nor is it inappropriate for something to fall under faith based on a certain supposition as a required condition, just as for something to be defined as a matter of faith, it is necessary that disputation and investigation precede it, as was done in the Council of the Apostles, Acts 15, and yet this investigation and disputation does not pertain to faith but is presumed to have preceded as a condition.

**V.** The second term to be explained in the title is “per se primo” or “per se secundo” of faith, which in other terms is commonly expressed as something being “immediately and formally” of faith, or “mediately and virtually” of faith. That which is said to be “immediately” and “per se primo” of faith is what is directly apprehended by the light of God and through the assent of believing as something immediately revealed. That which is said to be apprehended “mediately” and “per se secundo” is what is reached through inference from a proposition of faith, and thus pertains to theological reasoning, which draws conclusions from matters of faith. Therefore, “per se primo” of faith and “per se secundo” differ as principles and conclusions do in the sciences. Nevertheless, even among those truths which pertain not mediately but immediately to the light of faith and are revealed, there is a certain difference and gradation: some are of faith only in themselves, others both in themselves and for us. And among these latter, some are of faith for all people, others only for the learned, or for certain individuals. Something is of faith “in itself only” when it is indeed actually revealed and contained in Sacred Scripture or in the tradition of the Church, yet has not actually been proposed by the Church as such—for example, that Grace is a quality or habit; that the Grace of God is independent in its efficacy from any extrinsic factor, but is efficacious by its own nature as it descends from God; that God predetermines all free acts in particular before any foresight of their future occurrence, even conditional foresight; and similar other propositions which have

not yet been explicitly explained by the Church. Such propositions coincide at present with theological conclusions, for everything the Church defines, since she defines it following prior disputation, are first theological conclusions drawn through disputation before they become defined matters of faith. And this is peculiar to theology, that what are at one time conclusions can later become principles. Things are of faith “for us” when they have been actually revealed and proposed by the Church, either through her definition or because they are expressly contained in Sacred Scripture. However, among those things that are of faith for us, some are of faith for all people, while others only for some, or for the learned. The reason for this difference arises from the fact that the definition itself or the revelation of propositions by which they pertain to faith is sometimes so explicit that it is held without any controversy among all—for example, that God is triune and one. At other times, however, it falls under opinion or doubt whether it has been defined or revealed or not. And therefore, there can sometimes be opinions about the censure of a certain proposition, whether it is erroneous or not, because however much that proposition may be revealed or defined, its definition is not entirely established among everyone. And thus, regarding some propositions, it happens that not only are they themselves of faith, but also reflective statements about them—that they are of faith—are also of faith. Just as the Incarnation of Christ and the Trinity of Persons are so much of faith that it is also of faith that they are of faith. On the other hand, sometimes propositions themselves are of faith, but reflective statements about them are not of faith, because there still remains some controversy about their definition, or whether they are contained in Sacred Scripture or in the tradition and acceptance of the Church. Thus, in the present case, we debate whether it is of faith that this specific person who has been legitimately elected is the pontiff and head of the Church, or with what degree of certainty this should be held.

**VI.** Regarding this difficulty, certain theologians in our times have held that it does not pertain to the faith, either primarily or secondarily, that any particular man after St. Peter was pope, but rather this is held with a kind of moral certainty, or natural evidence, or experience by which we see such men governing the Church in the seat of Peter and being accepted by the Church as duly elected. And thus, although one who denied that this man is pope would be schismatic, nevertheless one who denied that it is a matter of faith that this man is pope would not be schismatic, but would be holding a probable opinion. For this conclusion, he cites Master Nuño in the second volume, question 20, article 3, doubt 1, and several more recent authors without naming them, whom he says have not yet published their writings. However, Father Suárez, in his volume on faith, disputation 10, section 5, cites several Thomists and ancient authors for this position, namely: Torquemada in book 4 of the *Summa*, part 2, chapter 9 near the end; Cajetan in 2-2, question 1, article 3, in response to the fourth objection; Master Bañez in 2-2, question 1, article 10 in his earlier commentaries, doubt 2 to the second objection; Cano in book 6 on theological loci, final chapter; Castro in book 1 against heresies, chapter 8 around the middle; Albertini, Córdoba, and others. These authors, says Suárez, hold that it is not immediately a matter of faith that this particular man is pope, but rather this is held with a kind of moral certainty. I myself have not seen Albertini and Córdoba, but regarding the others I form this judgment: that Castro clearly holds this position, for his words do not

admit explanation when he says: “Although they are bound to believe by faith that the true successor of Christ is the supreme pastor of the whole Church, nevertheless we are not bound by the same faith to believe that Leo or Clement is the true successor of Peter, because we are not bound by Catholic faith to believe that any of them was correctly and canonically elected.” From which he concludes that one who denied this would not be called a heretic, but a schismatic. Master Cano inclines sufficiently to this view and says that although it is a matter of faith that Councils legitimately convened are of the most certain truth, nevertheless that this or that Council is legitimately convened is believed only with natural certainty; and similarly, that from the Gospel we have that the successor of Peter possesses his ordinary power, but that the one whom Christ appointed after Peter’s death was the Roman bishop is gathered from historical fact. Thus says Master Cano.

**VII.** As for what concerns Master Bagnez, he seems clearly to indicate and hold this opinion when, in the cited passage, §. Verumtamen, he says that this man being the Supreme Pontiff depends on certain circumstances which may be lacking, such as that he is baptized, and perhaps he is not baptized. And finally he concludes that it would be highly reckless and scandalous if, after the Church has accepted someone as Supreme Pontiff, one were to deny that he is the true Supreme Pontiff, unless one could demonstrate that he was not baptized or not a man; otherwise, one would deservedly be punished not only as vehemently suspect of heresy, but as a heretic. In this passage, Master Bagnez does not dare to simply condemn as heresy and against the faith the opposite of this proposition, and he seems to admit that it is not impossible to demonstrate that this man is not baptized. Cajetan, in the cited passage, says that we adore the Supreme Pontiff not conditionally on whether he is baptized, but absolutely, and yet he says: “Who knows if he was baptized?” Wherein he seems at least to admit that this circumstance is not held by faith. Finally, Torquemada, in the cited passage, says that the truth that this man is Supreme Pontiff has the character of Catholic truth, but with the addition of one naturally known proposition, namely, that this man was peacefully elected, it becomes a Catholic truth. And therefore in the Council of Constance it was determined that one questioned about the faith should be asked whether he believes that this man canonically elected is the true successor of Peter. Here Torquemada does not simply deny that it is a matter of faith that this man is Pontiff, but he says that it is held by faith supposing a certain naturally known truth, namely, that he was duly elected.

**VIII.** The second opinion maintains this proposition, namely that the statement “this particular man is the Supreme Pontiff” is only mediately of faith, insofar as it is inferred from one proposition that is of faith, and another that is known with moral certainty or by natural experience, namely that this man was duly elected. For this opinion holds two things. First, that this proposition essentially depends for its truth upon that proposition as a premise, that this man was duly elected, because for this particular man to be the Supreme Pontiff means that the supreme pontificate has been applied to him, which essentially and per se depends on the active application that occurs through legitimate election. Second, that the proposition “This man is duly elected” is not known through divine faith, or through revelation, or through definition, or through the tradition of the

Church, but only through a certain moral certainty which relies on the declaration of the electors. Master Cano, cited above, seems to hold this opinion when he asserts in a similar case that “this Council is legitimate” depends on one proposition of faith and another known naturally. And those who believe it is only temerarious and scandalous to deny that this particular man is the Supreme Pontiff approach the same opinion, as Bañez seems to hold in the passage cited above, and which Azorius considers probable in Volume II, Book [chapter letter], chapter 5, §. “In this controversy,” although he himself holds it to be against the faith. And these must agree on this point that assent to such a proposition is not elicited from the habit of faith, but from the theological habit (otherwise, if it were elicited from the habit of faith, the opposite would be heresy and against the faith) because it is a conclusion inferred through discourse, whereas faith does not assent through discourse; but those who do not possess the habit of theology seem to hold it in the faith of others.

**IX.** The third opinion simply acknowledges that this proposition pertains to the faith, and that assent to it is immediately elicited from the habit of faith. This opinion seems to me to be held by Turrecremata in the above-cited work, insofar as he asserts it to be a Catholic truth that this particular man is the Supreme Pontiff, presupposing a certain naturally known truth, namely, that he has been duly elected. When he says “presupposing a certain truth,” he sufficiently indicates that such a naturally known truth—that this man has been duly elected—does not influence per se and essentially that truth: That this man is the Supreme Pontiff. For if that proposition were to influence it, it would not be a Catholic truth, because a truth which per se depends upon and is inferred from another naturally known truth is merely a theological conclusion. The same opinion is extensively taught by Master Nugno cited above, and by Suarez, and Azorius, and is common among more recent authors, and the remaining older authorities can easily be drawn to the same position, as I shall presently demonstrate. For the explanation of this opinion, therefore.

**X.** Let this be the conclusion: It is of divine faith immediately that this particular man who has been duly elected and accepted by the Church is the Supreme Pontiff and successor of Peter, not only in himself but also for us, although it is much more manifested to us when the pontiff actually defines something. No Catholic dissents from this conclusion in practice and in its exercise, although in theory and speculatively they may think they do not believe it by divine faith. In this conclusion, two things must be done. First, to explain it; then, to prove it from its foundations, especially from the authority according to which we believe this particular man to be the pope. Indeed, the explanation of this conclusion, in my view, depends especially on three points. First, that the one elected as pope is elected as a rule of faith such that just as a canonical book of Scripture is a certain written rule of faith, so the man elected as pope is a certain living rule of faith. Second, that the Church has been commissioned by Christ the Lord to elect for itself a man who for the time being is such a rule, as we have shown above, and consequently the same Church has been commissioned through its acceptance to determine that he has been canonically and legitimately elected; so that just as it pertains to the pontiff and the Church to determine which books are canonical, so it also pertains to it to determine which man is elected as the canon and living rule of faith. Third, that this matter, namely that this man has been

duly elected and canonically made the rule of faith, is a matter determinable by the Church as a matter of faith.

**XI.** That the pontiff is elected and placed in the Church as a living rule of faith, we have shown abundantly enough in the preceding sections, since it is evident from the Gospel that it was said to Peter and his successors that his faith would not fail, and that he himself would confirm the brethren in the faith, and again that the gates of hell cannot prevail against him. And thus, just as in the ancient fathers it was a matter of faith that the Holy Spirit spoke through them so that matters of faith might be transmitted by them through revelation, so too it must be a matter of faith that in the pontiff resides the authority to explain and propose the faith in such a way that he bears in himself, as it were, the person of all the fathers. Whence Bernard excellently said in the second book of “De Consideratione” to Pope Eugene: “Let us inquire,” he says, “more diligently who you are, that is, what person you bear for this time in the Church of God. You are the prince of bishops, you are the heir of the Apostles, you are primacy in Abel, governance in Noah, patriarchate in Abraham, order in Melchizedek, dignity in Aaron, authority in Moses, judgment in Samuel, power in Peter, anointing in Christ.” Concerning this, the same Bernard should be consulted in the fourth book of “De Consideratione” at the end. Therefore, in the pope there is authority and a living rule of faith, just as in the canonical books there is a written rule and authority, yet each differs according to its nature. For in the pope it exists temporally and dependently on certain temporal conditions which are newly established, and because such conditions in particular are not revealed, from this arises that doubt concerning the certainty with which one holds as a matter of faith that this man is pope—a doubt which does not pertain to the canonical books, which, as an inanimate and written rule, have been declared authentic by the Church. It is necessary, therefore, that this rule be declared and proposed to the faithful by the Church itself whenever a new election occurs, so that just as the canonical books are declared as a written rule of faith in perpetuity, so the living rule of faith, because it is subject to election and endures for a time, must be proposed to the faithful through the election and declaration of the Church. And once proposed, the faithful are no less bound to accept it than a canonical book, which is a written rule—the latter obtained through revelation and proposed through the declaration of the Church, the former through election and its acceptance, because this is what the nature of such a rule demands, which is living and subject to election for a time.

**XII.** That it pertains to the Church to declare and determine who has been canonically and legitimately elected, either through peaceful universal acceptance or through the definition of a Council if there is any doubt in the matter—just as it pertains to the Church to declare which book is or is not canonical—is evident from the preceding article, where we showed that the election of the Supreme Pontiff was entrusted by Christ the Lord to the Church. Consequently, it belongs to the Church herself to determine and declare that an election is legitimate and canonical. First, because it pertains to the Church to legitimately elect and to present to the faithful one who has been legitimately elected; therefore, she must have the power to discern between a legitimate and illegitimate election, which cannot be done unless it belongs to her power to declare which election is legitimate.

Second, because if an election is not peaceful and peacefully accepted, but reasonably doubtful, the pontiff cannot proceed to define and determine regarding that very election, since while such doubt persists, he cannot oblige that his determinations be accepted as legitimate and indubitable. Therefore, it is necessary that the Church, by peacefully accepting, determines the election to be not doubtful but legitimate. That this matter of being canonically elected is determinable according to the faith by the Church is evident from this: when something is a rule of faith and as such is proposed to the faithful, it is no less credible through faith that this rule is true and legitimate than that what is determined through it is a matter of faith. Just as when a book is proposed as canonical, it is not only a matter of faith what is contained in it, but it is also a matter of faith that the book itself is canonical and held by God's revelation. Similarly, when something is defined by a legitimate Council or by the Pope, not only is what is defined through it a matter of faith, but also that it is a true and legitimate definition obliging one to believe. And when a Council is confirmed by the Pontiff, he decrees that it is legitimate and orders it to be observed. Therefore, similarly, when someone is proposed as an infallible rule of faith, it is definable that he is the legitimate pontiff and legitimately elected. The reason for this is that when something is defined, it is a matter of faith that it has been legitimately defined. Therefore, it can and should also be a matter of faith that its definition is legitimate. Similarly, in whatever other rule regulating matters of faith, if it is a matter of faith that something is legitimately regulated here and now in a particular case, it should also be believed through faith that the rule itself which regulates here and now is legitimate. Therefore, that this man has been elected as a legitimate rule is a matter credible through faith, as will be shown more fully immediately. The Church can determine this as a matter of faith because the Church cannot err in matters of faith, since she is the pillar and foundation of truth. Therefore, if she universally accepts something that is a matter credible through faith, she can determine it as a matter of faith.

**XIII.** Having explained these matters, the stated conclusion is proven. And first, Martin V, in the Council of Constance, in the condemnation of the errors of Wycliffe, which appears after the forty-fifth and final session of the Council, among the interrogations to be put to those suspected in faith to ascertain whether they believe legitimately, places this interrogation: "Also, whether he believes that the canonically elected pope, whoever he may be at the time, with his proper name 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 everyone rightly elected is the Supreme Pontiff, but in particular of him who is pontiff at the time, expressing his proper name, for example Innocent X, and concerning this person whose proper name is expressed, the pontiff commands that the person suspected in faith be interrogated whether he believes that such a one is the successor of Peter and Supreme Pontiff. Therefore, this pertains to an act of believing, not to an inference or to moral certainty, for neither of these constitutes believing. Likewise, because by faith we believe this particular Church, in which we are, to be the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and to have a visible head on earth; but once a peaceful and undoubted election has been accepted, that church cannot be received and held as the true Church which is not united with its visible head and subject to him.



Therefore, just as it is a matter of faith that this particular Church is the true Church by that authority by which we believe: “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church,” so it is a matter of faith, once a legitimate election has been conducted, that this man, to whom it is united as to its head, is truly the head of the Church and the Supreme Pontiff.

**XIV.** Next, secondly, it is demonstrated that the same conclusion is *de fide* both in itself and with respect to us by virtue of an election peacefully accepted by the Church. There are two things that the Church accepts in a pontiff: first, that here and now in particular he is an infallible rule of faith; second, that it accepts him as the head to whom the universal Church is united. And thus, having accepted him, it makes this proposition to be *de fide*, for it is impossible that the Church should err in accepting any rule of faith—whether it be the definition of a Council, or some canonical book, or some tradition—and that by accepting it as a rule of faith, it should not be *de fide* that it is a true and legitimate rule. Therefore, it is likewise impossible that the Church should err in accepting a Supreme Pontiff in particular, since it accepts him as the supreme and living rule in proposing matters of faith. The antecedent, besides what has been said, is evident because if it is not certain according to faith that this particular book is canonical, or that this definition is a legitimate definition, we cannot be certain about the matters defined or transmitted in a canonical book. Nor is this similar to one who proximately proposes or preaches matters of faith, whom we are not bound to believe *de fide* to be a legitimate minister of the Gospel, because he who preaches the Gospel and proposes matters of faith does not function as a determinative rule of matters of faith, but only as a minister intimating to others those things which are to be believed. Hence, others who believe are not moved by his authority, but by the credibility of those things which are proposed, and unless they are sufficiently proposed so that their credibility becomes known to the hearer, he is not obliged to believe. But the pontiff proposes matters to be believed as a rule of faith and as a judge determining what must be believed, and thus by his authority man is obliged to believe. It is therefore necessary that the faithful be certain that he who defines and regulates matters of faith has the authority to regulate and define them; otherwise, if it should happen that one doubts the authority which this particular definer has, one cannot be certain that the matters remain defined *de fide*—just as if one doubts whether some canonical book is truly canonical, there cannot remain certainty concerning those things which are contained in it.

**XV.** The second [principle] that the Church universally accepts is that he [the Pope] is her head, as she unites herself to him as the supreme visible head and subjects herself to him. For it is not sufficient that the Church subject herself to whoever is rightly elected as pontiff in a general sense, but she must be united and subject to a visible head; and this is not visible unless it is determined in particular. Therefore, it is necessary that the Church subject herself to and unite with this particular person as head. The Church accomplishes this subjection and union by the very fact that she peacefully accepts the election made in this specific person or that one. But this itself is to determine infallibly that this man is the head of the Church, since indeed in practice the whole Church unites herself to him as head and recognizes him as such. The whole Church cannot err in this matter; therefore, in the very exercise [of this recognition], the Church determines that this man is her head,

such that those who hold the opposite view are schismatics. For there can be no greater determination that someone is pontiff than that the universal Church recognizes and accepts him as pontiff. It is the same thing for the universal Church to say explicitly, "This man is truly and legitimately pontiff," as for the universal Church to say it implicitly through her actual practice by uniting and subjecting herself to him as head. Since this determination concerns a matter of faith—namely, that this universal Church is united to her visible head in particular, without which everything we believe about the Church (that she is true here and now, and catholic) collapses—it is necessary that this determination of the Church regarding such a matter, by recognizing this man as the supreme rule, is a determination of faith.

**XVI.** And this same point is further confirmed when not only does the Church in actual practice accept him as pontiff and [accept] his election, but also when the pontiff himself in the exercise [of his office] defines something as to be held as a matter of faith; for then it is impossible that we believe by faith that object as defined, and not believe that the definition itself is legitimate, and consequently that the one defining here and now has infallible authority concerning the determination and regulation of matters of faith, which is to believe that this defining man is the pope and has supreme authority in the Church. Hence, when the pontiff thus defines, there is no Catholic who, while assenting to the defined matters by believing, does not also in actual practice believe that he who proposes by defining and regulating has this supreme regulative power of faith, and consequently in actual practice believes him to be the pope, even though when afterward this truth is, as it were, considered separately in a formal act and speculatively, it does not appear, on account of the many circumstances and conditions that concern this or that particular man, how this is a matter of faith, since revelation does not seem to touch upon and declare to us all these particulars.

**XVII.** Third, it is proven that it is not sufficient for us to hold with moral certainty that this person is the pontiff, for at the very least we must believe that everything which this particular man does is properly done in the same way as it is done by other true pontiffs. Therefore, such a man must either be believed with certainty to be the true pontiff, or be believed to exercise the privilege of a true supreme pontiff. The antecedent is clear, because by the very fact that he is peacefully accepted as pontiff, all are truly obligated to accept whatever has been defined by him, and they are bound to believe the definitions of faith. Therefore, it is necessary to believe that those acts are properly done and are true definitions. Consequently, it is also necessary to believe that this man has whatever is required for his acts to be valid; otherwise, if they were not valid, the Church would be deceived in accepting and believing those things which are defined by him. But if we believe that this particular man has whatever is required for the definitions made by him to be legitimate and true, we must believe either that he truly possesses the authority of the supreme pontiff, or that if he truly has some defect by reason of which he is not the pontiff, nevertheless God supplies whatever is required for his acts to be valid, lest the Church be deceived in this matter. However, this is equally uncertain as the first proposition, for it is no more revealed that God confers the privileges of the pontiff upon this man and supplies his authority, than that he is truly the pontiff—especially since this supplementation and

extraordinary concession is not founded on Christ's promise itself, which was made only to Peter and his successors. Therefore, without a new revelation, this cannot be established. It ought therefore to be believed that he is truly the pontiff and that God will not permit one to be elected who is not capable of that dignity.

**XVIII.** Nor can it be said that the definitions of Councils, as they are made by any particular Council, or the definitions of popes, as they proceed from this particular pope, are not matters of faith because they are made by these particular authorities (since it may happen that some Council is not a true Council), but rather because they are accepted by the Church, and therefore it suffices to believe with moral certainty that this particular pope or this particular Council has that authority. But against this: the Church does not have greater authority to make matters of faith through its acceptance than this particular Council or pontiff has through his definition; indeed, the whole Church, according to its authority, is represented in the Council. Therefore, the determining and declaring factor that something is a matter of faith is not the acceptance of the Church, but the definition of the Council or the pope. Nor did Christ the Lord promise infallibility and indefectibility of faith to the acceptance of the Church itself, but to Peter himself and his successors. Therefore, the confirmation of the faith does not rest on the Church's acceptance, but on Peter's confirmation. Indeed, the Council, in which the whole Church is authoritatively present, seeks confirmation in determinations of faith from the pontiff himself for that time and considered in particular. Therefore, the confirmation of faith does not occur through the acceptance of the Church, but through the definition of the pope. And finally, if the acceptance of the Church makes something a matter of faith, even if a particular Council or a particular legitimate pontiff did not exist, then the acceptance of the Church, by which it peacefully accepts some man as pontiff and as a rule of faith, also makes it a matter of faith that this man is pope, since this is a matter that can be believed through faith, just as it is believable about any rule of faith that it is a legitimate rule, as we have shown. Therefore, the acceptance of the Church in this matter, which is of faith since it cannot err, renders it a matter of faith.

### ANSWERING THE ARGUMENTS.

**XIX.** For the negative position, namely that it is not a matter of faith that this elected person is the pontiff, several arguments are usually amassed. We reduce all the difficulties to four headings, for just as each thing is brought into being and preserved through four causes, so in a similar manner, according to the four causes that contribute to this truth—that this man is pontiff—let us present the difficulties which we reduce to those four causes or headings. First, therefore, the argument is made from the perspective of the final cause, for the entire reason why it is necessary as a matter of faith that this man is pontiff is on account of the certainty we have concerning the Church—that it is the true and legitimate congregation of the faithful, even that very one which we now see—and thus it is necessary that with the same certainty it be held that the one who is now legitimately elected is the pope; but this reasoning proves nothing; therefore [the conclusion does not follow]. The minor premise is proven, for the certainty of the sacraments in the Church, such as baptism or the Eucharist, is no less necessary than the certainty concerning this particular

head [of the Church]; yet for the certainty of the sacraments, it is sufficiently provided that through faith we believe their truth in general, while in particular cases we are assured only with moral certainty about the truth of this or that sacrament. For it is not a matter of faith that this particular host is consecrated, although it is a matter of faith that every properly consecrated host really contains within itself the body of Christ, as St. Thomas teaches in the *Secunda Secundae*, question 1, article 3, in reply to the third and fourth objections. Therefore, in the same way, it suffices that it be a matter of faith that every legitimately elected man is the pope, yet it need not be a matter of faith that this particular individual has been properly elected and is the pope, but it suffices that this be held with a certain moral certainty, or at most be inferred as a theological conclusion from the principles of faith.

**XX.** If you should say that there is a different rationale concerning this particular host and this particular man elected as Supreme Pontiff, because the latter is the head of the universal Church, and therefore it ought to be a matter of faith that he is the head of the Church, just as it is established by faith that this particular congregation of the faithful is the Church, because the truth of the Church depends on union with its head—a rationale which does not apply to this particular host, or to any other sacrament—against this argument is the fact that the truth of the Church does not depend absolutely on the truth of its particular head, as is evident when there is a schism, or when the See is vacant. For then it is a matter of faith that the Church exists independently of a head; therefore, for such faith to continue when a head exists, it is not necessary that it be a matter of faith that this person is the Pope. Secondly, because the authority of the Church also depends on the congregation of bishops, for in them the Church authoritatively exists, and yet for this it is not necessary that it be a matter of faith that they are bishops; therefore, similarly in our case.

**XXI.** The response is given with the solution stated there, for the certainty of the sacraments is not less necessary than the certainty of the head of the Church, if other things are equal, but not conversely, since these are necessities of different kinds. One is required only for the purpose of attaining salvation, while the other is required also for the purpose of regulating and determining matters of faith, as the infallible rule thereof. The sacraments, however, insofar as they proceed in particular from some minister, do not function as a rule of faith, nor does the visible unity of the Church, or its union with them, essentially depend on them, but they function as medicines for sins and instruments of grace. Hence, regarding these sacraments in particular, no acceptance or definition of the Church is concerned, but only regarding the sacraments in their species, because their nature and power is subject to the definition of faith, not their use and exercise. In the case of the pontiff, however, faith is concerned not only with his power in general, but also with his acceptance in particular, because he is accepted as the rule of faith and the head of the Church, and through his particular definitions his authority becomes known. Hence, he must be accepted in particular like any other rule of faith, as has been stated.

**XXII.** And if you still insist that it is no less a matter of faith that the Church is holy with respect to the sacraments than that it is one and apostolic with respect to its union with its

head, but that despite the holiness of the Church with respect to the sacraments, it is still not a matter of faith that this particular host is consecrated; therefore, despite the unity of the Church and its apostolic character regarding union with its head, it will not be a matter of faith that this specific man is the pontiff—it is answered that, although it is held by faith that the Church is holy with respect to the sacraments, and that it is apostolic with respect to its union with its apostolic head, nevertheless, faith must engage with the apostolic power of the pontiff in more ways than with the sacraments, because it not only believes that apostolic power is given, but must also determine here and now in practice that it is the rule of faith, and that the Church is united to him as its visible head. Regarding the sacraments, however, faith only believes that those sacraments which are properly performed are true sacraments, but does not dictate anything about their actual use and exercise.

**XXIII.** To the objection against this solution, it is stated that the truth and unity of the Church, when the See is vacant, does not depend on the head in actuality but in potentiality, because this congregation is suitable and by its nature seeks to be under one head, which it does not actually have at present. However, we are speaking of when the Church actually has a head and has accepted his election as legitimate; then, unless it is united to that particular man, the unity of the Church will perish. In a schism, if there are two individuals about whom there is reasonable doubt as to which of them is the pontiff, then it is the same as if the Church did not actually have a head, because it does not yet have one determinately and peacefully according to law. If, however, one of them is determinately the pontiff, and the other irrationally usurps the pontificate, then just as the Church ought to accept the true head and be united to him, so it is also a matter of faith that he, and not the other, is the pontiff.

**XXIV.** To the second objection, it is answered that in a congregation of bishops, if it is a General Council legitimately convened, it is a matter of faith that this congregation represents the Church and authoritatively constitutes the whole Church, in the same way that it is a matter of faith that it is a legitimate Council. For this, however, it is not necessary that it be a matter of faith that each bishop, or all bishops taken individually, are bishops, because none of them in particular, nor all of them taken individually, serve as the rule of faith. Rather, it is only a matter of faith that the congregation of those who, with moral or evident certainty, are known to be bishops, constitutes a legitimate congregation and a Council in which the Church is authoritatively present, because it is a legitimate Council convened by the authority of the pontiff.

**XXV.** Second, one argues from the perspective of the efficient cause, that is, of the electors and the election, which is the efficient cause that electively produces the pope, because it is not established by faith that these particular electors have a valid intention of electing, and that they are legitimate and true cardinals, and that the juridical form of election was observed, namely that he was elected by two-thirds of the cardinals; and other conditions without which the election is null. Faith does not teach that all these things were observed, for when the election of a pope is first promulgated, it is not established for the Church that accepts him—through any revelation, or tradition, or by any

other means by which matters of faith are proposed to us—that all those conditions were observed, but these are held only on the testimony of the electors who promulgate the election. Therefore, the Church is never certified with the certainty of faith regarding the one elected, that he was legitimately elected.

**XXVI.** This is confirmed, for the Church's acceptance of any proposition does not make it a matter of faith, unless the Church accepts it as a matter of faith; but for it to be accepted as a matter of faith, it must be proposed to the Church as a matter of faith by some proponent. However, this does not occur in the present proposition. Therefore, it should not be considered a matter of faith. The minor premise is proven, for the elect and the election are proposed to the Church by the electors themselves, of whose election and the conditions observed therein others have no knowledge, since they conduct the proceedings of that election among themselves in private. The electors, however, neither propose that election as a matter of faith, nor do they possess infallible authority in proposing a matter of faith, which was promised only to Peter and his successors, not to the electors. Therefore, by virtue of such a proposition and the Church's acceptance, it is still not certain as a matter of faith that the one elected is the pope.

**XXVII.** But if you should say that the electors do not propose this proposition to the Church as something to be believed, but merely declare the person elected, and that the pontiff himself, as soon as he defines or determines anything, by that very act proposes himself as the living rule and supreme head of the Church; against this is the fact that before the pontiff defines anything, by the very fact that he is elected, it should be no less certain that he is pope than after he defines something. Indeed, even before any definition or act that he might perform, he is the visible head of the Church peacefully elected, such that the Church is bound to maintain union with him, and any church that would not accept him would not be the true Church, but schismatic. Therefore, it is necessary that before any act proceeding from the pontiff himself, there be some foundation of certainty of faith concerning that proposition, and consequently that it be proposed as a matter of faith by some infallible proposer. However, this is not given, since it is only proposed by the electors, who do not have the authority of an infallible rule concerning any proposition of faith, for they have no greater authority than a general Council before the definition of the pope, which nevertheless can err, especially if not all agree or follow the instruction of the pontiff, nor do they propose that election as something to be held as a matter of faith, that it was duly performed: therefore. If you should say that these conditions are known to the Church not from the declaration or proposition of the electors, but from the very evidence of the fact, because it does not appear that the election was not peaceful, and therefore the Church thus accepts it—against this is the fact that no one besides the electors sees all those conditions which are established by law to be observed, but that remains secret among them; therefore this is not known to the accepting Church from the evidence of the fact, but from the declaration of the electors. And although the election may appear to be peaceful, it nevertheless does not appear whether it is peaceful from the true observance of all conditions, or from the inadvertence of the electors, or from their agreement to deceive by proposing as legitimately elected one who was not elected, or by proceeding with some simony, etc. Nor can it be said that God would not permit the Church to be

deceived in such a case. For although this may be piously believed, there is nevertheless no infallible promise about this, nor is it a matter of faith that God would never permit this, especially since it was widely received in the Church, and approved by many, that a certain woman was once elected as pontiff, in which case it also had to be admitted that a peaceful election, accepted by the Church, could contain an error invalidating it, and consequently it is not certain as a matter of faith that God does not sometimes permit the Church, in receiving an election, and the electors, in peacefully proposing it, to err; for if this were a matter of faith, it would also be a matter of faith that the history of the female pontiff was false, which no one claims.

**XXVIII.** We respond that regarding all those conditions, and the intention and truthfulness of the electors, these are not immediately known by faith, because the acceptance and definition of the Church is not immediately concerned with these matters, but they are known mediately and by consequence. What is immediately known by faith is that one who is elected by those persons designated by the Church for this ministry, who elect the pontiff in her person, by the very fact that he is accepted by the Church as legitimately elected, is the pontiff. This is because the definition of Martin V stated above, and the Church's acceptance, are concerned with this matter. From this, mediately and by consequence, it is inferred that if it is a matter of faith that this elected person is the pontiff, then all things required for this have been observed. But faith is not primarily and per se concerned with the requirements themselves and the conditions present in the electors, and then subsequently with the elected person himself. Similarly, in the definitions of Councils, faith is not concerned with those things that are prerequisites for such a definition, namely that diligent inquiry or disputation concerning the propositions to be defined has preceded it. Faith is not given concerning this, but nevertheless, once the definition is made, it is rightly inferred through theological consequence that all requirements for the definition were in place, and consequently that the disputation preceded it. And the reason for this is that when something is per se a matter of faith, it is not necessary that those things which have a necessary connection with such a truth of faith are also matters of faith. Indeed, a theological conclusion consists in this: that it deals with those things which have a necessary connection and consequence with those things which are of faith. For example, it is a theological conclusion that "Christ is a man; therefore Christ can laugh," because the ability to laugh has a necessary connection with being human. Similarly, since it is a matter of faith that this particular man canonically elected according to the acceptance of the Church is the pontiff, it is inferred by theological consequence that he was elected by true electors, with true intention, and that all other requisites without which that truth cannot stand were present. Thus, through faith or revelation implicitly contained in the creed and in the promise made to Peter, and made more explicit in the definition of Martin V, and applied and declared in practice through the acceptance of the Church, it is only established that this particular person canonically elected according to the acceptance of the Church is the pontiff. The other things that are necessarily prerequisite to or follow from such an election are inferred by theological consequence from that proposition of faith, and are believed mediately.

**XXIX.** To the confirmation it is answered that the Church accepts as a matter of faith both the election and the elected, insofar as it accepts him as the infallible rule of faith and as the supreme head to whom it is united, and upon whose union with the Church depends the unity of the Church itself. And when it is said that this must be proposed to the Church by some proposer, it is answered that the election and the elected are proposed by the Cardinals not in their own person, but in the person and by the authority of the Church, by which the power of electing and declaring the elected has been entrusted to them. Hence, in this regard and with respect to this office, they are the Church representatively, for just as bishops legitimately assembled by the Pope are the Church representatively, so too the Cardinals, or whatever other electors legitimately designated by the Church or by the Pope, are the Church representatively for the purpose of electing the head of the Church and the successor of Peter. And just as the Pontiff so assembles the bishops in Council that the confirmation and final judgment in matters of faith depends on him, so too the congregation of Cardinals so elects and declares the elected Pontiff that the Church, by accepting him—of which Cardinals they are ministers—ultimately confirms as a matter of faith that this man is truly the supreme rule of faith and the Supreme Pontiff. Hence, if the Cardinals elect doubtfully, the Church can correct their election, as was determined in the Council of Constance, session XLI. Therefore, even before any definition by the Pontiff himself, through the Church's acceptance alone that proposition becomes a matter of faith, as has been explained—not because of the Church's acceptance in any manner whatsoever, but in a matter pertaining to faith, since he is accepted as the determined rule of faith. And when it is said that nothing of the conditions required for election is seen externally, but this happens only among the electors in whose declaration and statement the Church accepts the Pontiff, it is answered that it is not required that all those conditions, and the election itself, and the intention of the electors be seen, but they are assumed to have been done in a moral way, because they see the electors gathered for the act of election, and peacefully proposing the elected, and declaring him without any reasonable doubt intervening; for this suffices for the Church to universally accept him, and once this acceptance is made, that truth becomes a matter of faith. For it is not required that something be a matter of faith, that all conditions prerequisite to it be seen, but it suffices that they be established with moral certainty beforehand, and afterwards certainty concerning them is had through theological consequence.

**XXX.** I explain this. For when any saint is canonized, or any proposition is defined as a matter of faith, or any book is accepted as canonical, it is necessary that a sufficient investigation precedes, and concerning that investigation before the act of canonization or definition, it is established only with moral certainty or natural evidence that it occurs, and this suffices for the definition to be made. Once that definition is made, since such a definition is a matter of faith, it becomes certain through theological consequence that all required conditions were applied, as has been explained, since they have a connection with such a truth which is of faith. Just as in all other truths of faith, those things which are necessarily connected with them must be certain, yet not as matters of faith, but only theologically, as inferred conclusions. Thus in the present matter, prior to the election, it is established only with moral certainty that the conditions required and necessarily



essential for a legitimate election are applied. Once the election is accepted, it is a theological conclusion that those conditions were applied, because they have a necessary connection and are per se required for such a truth of faith.

**XXXI.** As for what is added that it was accepted by many in the Church that a certain woman was pontiff—though they held nothing contrary to faith or theological conclusion in this—the response is, concerning this matter, that the historical account is false, as has been clearly demonstrated in these times, about which one may consult Baronius, Bellarminus, and other authors who address the Roman pontiff; and on this matter Florimond de Raemond published a certain book, wherein he quite thoroughly exposes this imposture. That some believed this without the mark of error is no obstacle, because they are excused by ignorance, thinking it pertained only to historical narrative. If, however, they were to realize that they were asserting that the Church peacefully accepted as pontiff a person who was truly incapable and not a pontiff, certainly they would not be excused from error, because they would consequently be saying that the Church could err in accepting as the supreme rule of faith one who truly is not the rule, nor capable of being such. Hence it is not only piously believed, but also inferred through theological consequence, that God would not permit someone to be elected and peacefully accepted by the Church who truly does not possess the conditions required and necessary for this, as has been declared, because this necessarily pertains to God’s special providence and the assistance of the Holy Spirit concerning the Church.

**XXXII.** Thirdly, an argument is made regarding the material cause, which is the subject receiving the pontifical dignity through election; for it is not certain as a matter of faith that this subject is capable of such dignity; therefore, neither is it certain as a matter of faith that it actually belongs to him. The consequence is evident, because just as it is necessarily supposed that a legitimate election has taken place for it to be the case that this particular person is the pope, so it is necessarily supposed that this person has the required capacity for such dignity. Therefore, as long as we are not made certain about this capacity, uncertainty will always remain regarding the application of the dignity to this subject. For in a valid inference, if the consequent is contingent, the antecedent cannot be necessary. This is a valid inference: “This man is the Supreme Pontiff; therefore, he is baptized.” Therefore, if the consequent is contingent, the antecedent is also contingent, and thus it is not immediately certain as a matter of faith. The antecedent of the argument is established because it is not a matter of faith that this particular man is baptized, or that he is male, or that he possesses the other required conditions. Indeed, up to the moment of election, this was not a matter of faith, and after the election, no new revelation or definition comes forth declaring that this particular person is baptized, nor is there any tradition of the Church to this effect. Therefore, it does not begin to be a matter of faith. But if it should be said that this truth depends on those conditions as on something requisite, which need not be a matter of faith, the counter-argument is that the truth that this particular person is pontiff depends on his being properly elected and on the other truths as on premises from which it is inferred. Therefore, it depends not only as on an extrinsically required condition, but as on an antecedent that influences per se the truth of the consequent.

**XXXIII.** And it is confirmed firstly, because if it were to become a matter of faith by some definition that this particular man is baptized, it would have been necessary for some investigation to have preceded regarding this particular matter, so that it might be considered to remain defined; just as for it to remain defined that this particular man is blessed, it is necessary that multiple diligent inquiries and great investigation precede. However, no investigation or diligent inquiry is made for knowing this, as is evident; therefore, that truth is not held by virtue of any definition. It remains only that it is held from the tradition of the Church or by revelation. But it is ridiculous to say that it was contained in the tradition of the Church that this man, Innocent X, was baptized, and no revelation has been made; therefore [it cannot be a matter of faith]. It is confirmed secondly, for it is not certain according to faith that this person has the power of episcopal orders; therefore, neither [is it certain that he has] the power of jurisdiction. The consequence is evident, because for it to be a matter of faith that this man is the pope of the universal Church, it must be a matter of faith that he is the Roman bishop, and that he has episcopal dignity which consists of the power of orders and of jurisdiction. The antecedent, however, is proven because if someone who is not a bishop is elected pope, he is consecrated and receives the episcopal character just like other bishops, nor is it more a matter of faith that he receives the character in such consecration than it is for other bishops; if, however, he received it before his pontificate, it is even less certain; therefore [it is not a matter of faith that the pope has the power of episcopal orders].

**XXXIV.** The response is similar to the preceding one, namely that all those conditions required on the part of the person to be elected are presupposed as known with moral certainty prior to the election. Once the election has been conducted and accepted, however, these conditions become necessary according to theological consequentiality, because they have an intrinsic connection with a truth that is certain and certified through faith. And when it is said that in valid logical reasoning, if the antecedent is contingent, the consequent cannot be necessary, we acknowledge this. Nevertheless, the consequent proposition “This man is baptized,” or “is a man,” or “is ordained,” and having the other conditions required for the pontificate after he has been accepted by the Church as pope, is not a contingent consequent, but a theological conclusion necessarily inferred from a matter of faith. This is similar to how, once a definition has been made concerning some truth, it is not contingent but necessary that the investigation required for making such a definition preceded it. And although the proposition “This man is baptized,” taken absolutely and in itself, is contingent, nevertheless as it is subsumed under the proposition “This man is pontiff,” and is deduced from it, it becomes necessary—just as the proposition “Peter will sin” is in itself contingent, yet as it is subsumed under and deduced from “God knows that Peter will sin,” it becomes necessary or infallible, as St. Thomas teaches in the First Part, question 14, article 13.

**XXXV.** To the first confirmation, it is answered that when some truth is immediately defined in particular, an inquiry should precede concerning it; but when something is not defined immediately, but rather something is defined with which another thing has a necessary connection, it is not necessary that an inquiry precede concerning that which is conjoined and connected to it, but only concerning that which is immediately defined. Now, the truth

which is defined and accepted by the Church immediately is not that this man is baptized, or ordained, etc., but that he is truly the pontiff and the rule of faith, and about this a sufficient virtual inquiry precedes, while it is established that he has been elected and presented to the whole Church as canonically done. That he is baptized and possesses the other conditions is not held as a matter of faith, nor is it defined by the Church, but is inferred by consequence; and for something to be inferred by consequence, it is not necessary that an inquiry be made concerning it. To the second confirmation, it is answered that this man being ordained and having the power of orders, whether of priesthood or episcopate, is established in the same way as being baptized, namely not immediately as a matter of faith, but by theological consequence, as something necessarily connected with that truth: That this man is the pontiff and the rule of faith in the Church, which he does not possess precisely through the power of orders, although this is required for it.

**XXXVI.** Fourth, it is argued: From the perspective of the formal cause, since this truth is not particularly revealed, handed down by tradition, or defined, it can only be rendered a matter of faith either by virtue of a peaceful election, or by the Church's acceptance, or by some act which the pontiff himself exercises as pontiff, or from the universal proposition itself: That every person duly elected is pontiff, presupposing as a naturally known condition that this person has been peacefully elected and accepted; for when a proposition is held to be of faith, many conditions are usually presupposed which are nevertheless not matters of faith themselves, but are held only with natural or moral certainty. Just as for a proposition to be defined, it is presupposed that sufficient inquiry concerning it has been made, yet this inquiry or disputation is not established as a matter of faith; and for me to believe something contained in Sacred Scripture as a matter of faith, it is presupposed that this or that particular book contains Sacred Scripture, yet it is not a matter of faith that this particular book which I hold contains Sacred Scripture and is the Bible. That from none of these modes can it be established that this particular person is pope can be proven. For in the first mode, namely by virtue of a peacefully conducted election, this cannot be, because that this election was peacefully conducted and with all due circumstances is not established by any revelation or definition, nor is the public announcement of the peaceful election made by the cardinals equivalent to a definition, since nowhere has the infallible capacity for regulating a matter of faith been promised to them, and even if they had it, they would not have greater power in this matter than a General Council, which nevertheless does not have infallible authority unless confirmed by the pontiff; therefore, similarly, that declaration of peaceful election, unless confirmed by the pope, will not be an infallible rule of faith; it is certain, however, that this is not confirmed, because there is no one who can confirm the election of a pope, nor does the elected person himself confirm his election or declare it to have been legitimately conducted; and if he did, the certainty of this truth would be reduced not to the election itself, but to the act which the pontiff exercises; therefore, by virtue of the election precisely, it is not established that this particular elected person is pope. In the second mode, namely from the Church's acceptance, this is also not proven, for the acceptance of the Church as such does not make something a matter of faith, except when it accepts

something as a matter of faith; for the Church accepts the Lenten fast, and the fasts of vigils, and all other ceremonies of divine worship, yet it does not make all these matters of faith, such that one who denied there was a fast for those days, or that such ceremonies were necessary, would be a heretic; therefore, similarly, to deny that someone in particular has not been duly elected as pontiff, and consequently that he is not pope, will not be against the faith, wherefore since that election is not proposed to the Church as something to be believed, but as something to be obeyed, consequently it does not accept it as a matter of faith, but as a matter of obedience; apart from the fact that not the entire Church accepts it as a matter of faith, since some among Catholics hold that it is not a matter of faith: therefore.

**XXXVII.** In the third way, similarly, it cannot be said that there is certainty of this proposition as a matter of faith, for before the elected pontiff exercises any act whatsoever, by the very fact that he has been elected, the Church is bound to accept him as legitimate head, so that whoever does not accept him is regarded as schismatic. Therefore, the Church ought to be no less certain that this person is pope after he exercises any act than before, since if it were not then certain that this particular man was pope, neither would it be certain that this specific Church, which accepts him as head and universal pastor, is the true Church, for in order for the Church to be true, it must be united to its true and legitimate pontiff, otherwise it will not be true. Wherefore, if before any act of the pontiff there is sufficient obligation to accept him as pope, similarly there will be sufficient obligation to believe that he is the true pope in particular. And furthermore, before the pontiff defines anything, in order for me to assent to the defined truth, I must judge that he who defines is the infallible rule of faith, for as long as this judgment is not formed, I cannot be certain about those things which he defines. Therefore, we say that it must be a matter of faith that this particular man is the Supreme Pontiff, because since this particular man is the rule of faith, it is necessary that it be infallible that he cannot err, and that he has the authority to define, so that what he defines is infallible. It is therefore necessary to form the judgment that this is the Supreme Pontiff in particular before I assent to the definition given by him. Thus, the definition which the pontiff makes, or the act which he exercises, cannot be the reason and motive for assenting to this truth that he is the pontiff, since in order to assent to such a definition, it must be presupposed that he is the pontiff. Hence, a circular argument and begging the question would be committed if I assent to the definition because I assent that the one defining is the pope, and if I assent that he is the pope because he defines.

**XXXVIII.** Finally, in the fourth manner, this proposition cannot be made a matter of faith, namely that: This man is the Supreme Pontiff, because if we assent to that proposition in that manner, there is no difference between the assent that I have regarding this host, that in it is the body of Christ, or this baptism, that it is a true sacrament, and regarding this properly elected man, that he is the pope. For it is also held as a matter of faith in general that in every properly consecrated host the body of Christ is present, and as a condition it is supposed, with a certain moral certitude, or at least with evidence from the one who consecrates, that this host is properly consecrated. And concerning baptism in general, we believe that there is one baptism for the remission of sins, and concerning this particular

baptism, at least from the one who baptizes, it is established with a certain moral or natural certitude that it has been properly performed. And yet this does not suffice for us to say that it is a matter of faith that Christ is contained in this particular host, or that this baptism is a true sacrament. Therefore, if with respect to the pontiff, no other principle is held than that universal one—that everyone properly elected is pontiff—presupposing the conditions with a certain moral certitude, we assent to it in the same way as we do to sacraments in particular instances. Likewise, when I form this syllogism: Every properly elected man is pontiff; this man is properly elected; therefore, he is pontiff—that minor premise is a distinct truth and a distinct premise, upon which the truth of the conclusion depends when speaking per se. Therefore, it does not function merely as a required condition. In this it differs from the instance brought forth concerning the definition of some truth of faith, which, to be legitimate, presupposes as a condition that sufficient inquiry has been made. For the legitimate basis of definition does not per se depend on the fact that sufficient inquiry has been made, but on the fact that it proceeds from one having infallible authority. But that this man is the Supreme Pontiff depends per se on that premise: That he is properly elected. Therefore, it does not function merely as a condition.

**XXXIX.** Response to what has been said. There have been diverse opinions among theologians concerning which of those methods, which are referred to in the argument, it is held as a matter of faith that this particular man is the pontiff. And it has seemed more probable to us that, once the Church has accepted such an election and the elected person, by that very fact it becomes a matter of faith that in particular: This man is the pontiff, although this becomes better known and more manifest when the pontiff himself exercises some act of definition. And when it is said that the Church does not accept that election and the elected person as a matter of faith to be believed, but as a matter of obedience, we have already sufficiently responded above that the Church accepts that matter as pertaining to faith because it accepts him as an infallible rule of faith, which cannot happen unless it is a matter of faith that he who is thus accepted is truly the rule of faith: just as the definition of a Council, and a book accepted as canonical, is a matter of faith that it is legitimate, insofar as it is accepted as such in particular. And when it is added that not all in the Church accept this as a matter of faith, it is answered that not all accept that proposition as a matter of faith quasi-speculatively and as a formal statement, or considering it inadequately, thinking it sufficient for the office of pontiffs that it be held with a certain moral or natural certainty that he is the pontiff; nevertheless, virtually and in practice, they accept him along with the whole Church as the supreme rule of faith, this person in particular. Hence, only out of ignorance, as Suárez says where cited above, do they think they do not believe what in practice and in act they accept as the rule of faith, and thus they contradict themselves, as it were, and their assertion is judged by Master Nuño as rash and proximate to error. To that which is objected against the third method, it is answered that it proves that not only because of that method is it a matter of faith: That this man is the pontiff, but also before any definition by the pontiff through the peaceful acceptance of the Church concerning such an elected person: it does not, however, prove that it is not more clearly manifested and confirmed when the pontiff himself defines

something, since when an object defined as a matter of faith is posited, infallibility must be posited in the definition itself, and thus in the defining power.

**XL.** You will only ask at what time this acceptance by the Church begins to be sufficiently valid so as to render that proposition a matter of faith: whether by the very fact that the Cardinals present the elected person to those faithful who are in the place of election, or when it has already been sufficiently promulgated throughout the whole world and the Church spread everywhere. It is answered that, as we stated above, the unanimous election and declaration by the Cardinals is like a definition made by bishops in a legitimately convened Council, while the acceptance by the Church is, as far as we are concerned, like a confirmation of such declaration. Moreover, this acceptance is understood to occur both negatively—immediately when the Church, wherever it knows of such an election, does not contradict it—and positively when it is immediately accepted by the prelates of the Church who are present there, and gradually in other parts of the world it is also admitted by other prelates, such that those who see or hear of the Pope-elect, and observe that he is not being contradicted, are immediately bound to believe that he is the Pope and to accept him.

**XLI.** Finally, to the objection raised concerning that syllogism: “Every duly elected person is pontiff; this person is duly elected; therefore, he is pontiff,” where the minor premise functions not only as a condition but as a premise influencing the conclusion, etc., it is answered that some hold the opinion that it influences only as a required condition. They hold that the proposition “This man is pontiff” is contained as immediately under that universal proposition “Every duly elected person is pontiff” as the proposition “Peter is mortal” is contained, equally as a matter of faith, under “Every man is mortal,” although it is required as a condition that Peter be generated and be a man—which, however, is not known by faith but through natural knowledge. It seems to me, however, that a distinction must be made: if by the proposition “This man is duly elected,” we understand through the phrase “duly elected” not only an election properly conducted but also particularly accepted by the Church, then it is a proposition of faith that “This man is duly elected,” just as it is a proposition of faith, once a definition has been made by a Council, that “that definition is legitimate.” And once a book has been approved as canonical, it is a matter of faith that it is approved and is canonical, because it is accepted as an infallible rule of faith. Nor does it create a numerical distinction to say “This man is duly elected” and “This man is pontiff,” because acceptance as supreme pontiff and being supreme pontiff are the same thing—just as something being defined and a definition being legitimate do not constitute a numerical distinction. If, however, by the phrase “duly elected” we understand that all the required conditions have been applied so that the election is legitimate prior to the Church’s acceptance, then I say that proposition is characterized by moral certainty and influences the truth “This man is pontiff,” not only as a premise that infers, but as a disposition for him to be pontiff and to be accepted as such. And then the meaning is: “Every duly elected person is pontiff,” that is, “Everyone who is elected with the proper conditions ought to be accepted as pontiff; this person is so elected; therefore, he ought to be accepted.” In the first sense, however, both propositions are matters of

faith, namely: “Everyone duly elected and accepted is pontiff” and “This person is duly elected and accepted,” etc., as shown above.

**XLII.** Finally, it is argued: Because that is immediately of faith, the opposite of which is manifest heresy. But one who denies that this man is not the pope is not a heretic, but only schismatic; therefore, one who affirms that he is the pope does not assent from faith. The minor premise is evident, for those who refuse to recognize this man as pontiff, and deny him obedience, are schismatics, because they divide the unity of the Church, or of its head, yet they are not heretics. Otherwise, schism would never differ from heresy, although it is established that schism opposes charity, while heresy opposes faith, as St. Thomas teaches in [Summa Theologica] 2-2, question 39, or opposes peace, which is the effect of charity. For schism always denies that this particular individual is pope, refusing to obey him and establishing another head; but if it were a matter of faith that: “This particular man is pontiff,” whoever did not recognize him, but denied him to be pope, would at least in the external forum be judged a heretic, because he would be denying what he was bound to believe as a matter of faith, namely that: “This man is pope.”

**XLIII.** This is confirmed, firstly, because it is not now a matter of faith that such men in particular were true and legitimate pontiffs—for example, Julius II or Sixtus IV—but this is established from historical accounts that list them among the pontiffs. It is only a matter of faith that at that time there existed a true and visible Church. Therefore, even if now it is a matter of faith that there exists a true and visible Church in particular, it is not necessary that it be a matter of faith that: “This man is the pontiff.” Because if something is once a matter of faith, it will always remain a matter of faith; or if now it is not a matter of faith that those particular individuals were Supreme Pontiffs, then neither was it a matter of faith then, since what is once a matter of faith always remains a matter of faith. This is confirmed, secondly, because if a pope is a heretic, he immediately ceases to be pope, and it is a sufficiently probable opinion among Catholics that by the very fact that he is a heretic, he ceases to be pope—not through a sentence or deposition by the Church, but by the invisible judgment of Christ the Lord. However, it is not a matter of faith that this man who is pope is not a heretic; therefore, it is not a matter of faith that he does not lose the pontificate.

**XLIV.** We respond that whoever would deny this man to be pope after he has been peacefully and canonically accepted, would be not only schismatic but also heretical. For such a person would not merely rend the unity of the Church like those who from the beginning elect two pontiffs (regarding whom it is unknown which is the true pontiff), but would also add a perverse dogma, because he denies that one whom the Church has accepted should be held as pontiff and as the rule of faith. Hence in these matters, that which Jerome teaches in his commentary on the third chapter of Titus applies, and from him St. Thomas in *Secunda Secundae*, question 39, article 1, *ad tertium*, that there is no schism which does not fabricate for itself some heresy, so that it might appear to have rightly withdrawn from the Church. Thus, although schism is distinguished from heresy, nevertheless it is most often joined with heresy and prepares the way for it, and in the present case, whoever would deny that proposition would be not purely schismatic, but

also heretical, which Suarez also judges in the above-mentioned passage in his response to the fourth objection.

**XLV.** To the first confirmation, we respond that regarding ancient pontiffs, either it is known to us that they were accepted by the Church, because we have seen this, or some of their definitions have remained, in which, while declaring something about faith, they simultaneously left it declared that they were the rule of faith; or it is not known to us about such acceptance by the Church, or about a definition made by them. If it is known to us, then it will be a matter of faith that those particular individuals were pontiffs, just as it is now a matter of faith that this particular person is pontiff. If, however, this is not known, then accidentally it will not be a matter of faith for us, but we will hold it only through human history. For although it is certain that there was a true Church then, nevertheless, accidentally, because the acceptance made by the Church regarding that particular pontiff is not evident to us, we do not believe as a matter of faith that he was the pope in particular. In itself, however, it is a matter of faith whenever the acceptance by the Church becomes known to us, or some definition of the pope himself, which, as an infallible effect, demonstrates that he who defined was truly the pope, just as we believe that this or that past Council was legitimate, because we accept its definitions, and we see its confirmation.

**XLVI.** To the second confirmation, it is responded that one should not admit that the pontiff, by the very fact that he is a heretic, ceases to be pope before the declaration of the Church, although some seem to hold this view, which will be addressed in the following article. What remains a matter of opinion is whether, once the Church has made a declaration that the pope is a heretic, he is deposed *ipso facto* by Christ the Lord, or whether the deposition must be carried out by the Church. Nevertheless, before the Church juridically declares this, he must always be regarded as the pope, as will be more fully explained in the following article.