

## Tractatus De Fide Theologica. In 2. 2. Div. Thom. Ad illustrissimum d. d., Tract De Fide (*Treatise on Theological Faith. In 2. 2. Div. Thom. To the Most Illustrious, Tract on Faith*)

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### Disp. III, Quaest. XI

*WHETHER THIS PROPOSITION: INNOCENT XII is the true Pope is immediately of faith?*

**1.** ALTHOUGH the resolution of this question is now common and uniform among Theologians in favor of the affirmative position, nevertheless it is most difficult, due to challenging arguments and its not easily established proof. However, so that we may proceed more clearly in this matter.

*Some preliminary points.*

**2.** IT MUST BE SUPPOSED first, that a papal election can be either null and invalid, or doubtful. This indeed experience itself teaches, as evidenced from those elections which were followed in the Church by schisms concerning the recognition of the true Pontiff, with some accepting one, others another as legitimate, as happened during the time of the Council of Constance, when the Church, divided by factions, had three pretended Pontiffs, whom the Council itself declared null, or deposed them: If, however, the election had been certainly valid in any one case, and minimally doubtful, such a division in the Church would not have occurred, nor would there have been a necessity of convening a Council to discern the true Pope.

**3.** But you may ask, on what grounds can a papal election be vitiated or invalidated? The reason for doubt is that, first of all, it seems it cannot be invalidated on the part of the electors: For the electors are Cardinals, to whom the Church has committed its elective power; but no objection can be raised against them: Therefore, the election cannot be

invalidated on their part. The minor premise is proven because, primarily, no censure or excommunication can be brought against them, for it is a privilege of this election that no elector can be prevented from the right of electing because of any censure, as is expressly stated in *Clement. Ne Romani* §. *Ceterum, de electione* [the Clementine decree “Ne Romani,” section “Furthermore,” concerning election]. This was justly established so that in the election, upon which the entire governance of the Church depends, schism, doubt, or uncertainty might be avoided. Furthermore, neither can it be objected that the election was conducted through fraud, violence, or ambition, for this objection is not admitted but is rejected, as stated *in cap. in Nomine, distinct. 23* [in the chapter “In the Name,” distinction 23], when the Pope is found to have been elected by two-thirds of the Cardinals, as papal elections are in fact conducted: Therefore, no objection can be raised. And this is confirmed because it is most certain and evident to all that the Holy Spirit assists in this election: But an election in which the Holy Spirit most certainly assists is most certainly valid, and can in no way be doubtful or invalid: Therefore. The major premise is proven from *Sixtus V’s Constitution 50*, where he says thus concerning the Cardinals gathered to elect a Pope: *In that Sacred election they are to be considered true Interpreters and intermediaries of the divine will, by whose Spirit, just as the entire Body of the Church is sanctified and governed, so especially this entire work of election is most certainly and evidently to all completed by His inspiration and prompting*: Therefore it is most certain and evident to all, etc.

**4.** Nevertheless, I say that although it cannot be vitiated by the aforementioned exceptions, such an election can still be invalid or doubtful: first, if it is not conducted by legitimate Electors—for instance, if it were carried out by some who are not Cardinals, but intruders without the Church’s consent. Second, even if it is conducted by Cardinals, if it is done under fear that would overcome a steadfast man, because then it is declared null *in the Council of Constance, Session 39*. Similarly, if the person is not elected by two-thirds of the Cardinals, as stated *in the Constitution of Julius II* which begins: *Cum tam divina, in the Year 1505*. Or if any of those constituting the two-thirds were not truly Cardinals, as is gathered from *Abbate in c. licet, on Election*. Third, if the elected person is a manifest heretic, as established in the said *Constitution*. Fifth, if the person were not a man, if he were deprived of judgment, or if he suffered from some other exception of natural law that would render him incapable of the Pontificate, for these exceptions render the election null on the part of the elect. Any of these exceptions, if it were certainly present in the election, would make the election certainly null. But if there were doubt based on serious and prudent reasoning whether such an exception were present, it would make the election doubtful. To the contrary argument, I say that such assistance of the Holy Spirit is not entirely certain until it is established that the election has been peacefully consummated and promulgated. It is in this sense that Sixtus V speaks, and from there we could also verify the certainty of that election. For he says that it is most certain that the work of election is completed by the inspiration and instinct of the Holy Spirit, but it is not completed while it is not peacefully consummated and promulgated, with the Church’s acceptance. However, it may not be peacefully consummated, but with doubt, and this is when it can be null or doubtful.

**5.** I suppose secondly, that it is immediately of faith this universal proposition: Every one rightly elected as Pope is the true Pope. Thus all Catholics hold, and it is gathered from what has been said especially in question 8. For from this it is established to be of divine faith, by Christ's institution and revelation together with the perpetual tradition of the Church, that the Pontifical Dignity of St. Peter resides in all his legitimate Successors; and consequently every legitimate Successor of St. Peter is the true Pope, or Pastor of the universal Church. Since, moreover, by Christ's own institution, the Successors of St. Peter are designated by election, as is established from the preceding question, it consequently follows that it is of faith that everyone rightly elected is the true Pope, or Pastor of the universal Church. Hence, concerning this universal proposition, no Catholic doubts.

**6.** I suppose thirdly, that it is not of faith, when an election is either certainly null or doubtful in the Church, that the one elected is the true Pope. Thus also without controversy all Catholics hold, because if the election is certainly null, then certainly the one elected is not Pope; if indeed it is doubtful, by that very fact, either he is not the true Pope, because as some believe, a doubtful Pope in the Church is not a true Pope, or granted that he would be the true Pope, he is not proposed to the Church with sufficient certainty such that he ought to be believed through divine faith to be such.

**7.** The question therefore only has relevance when one who is supposed to be rightly elected, and as such without doubt and without schism has been proposed to and accepted by the Church, whether namely then it is of immediate divine faith that this specifically named individual is the true Pope.

**8.** Before resolving this question, John of St. Thomas makes a preliminary distinction in the present discussion, noting that something can be a matter of faith in two ways, namely, either *per se primo*, that is (as he explains), immediately; or *per se secundo*, that is, mediately. Something is a matter of faith *per se primo* and immediately when it is directly believed through the light of faith as something immediately revealed by God. On the other hand, something is a matter of faith *per se secundo* and mediately when it is only virtually contained in an object immediately revealed, and is deduced from it as a theological conclusion; this pertains not to the light of faith, but to theological reasoning. On this matter, see above, disputation 1, question 7, from numbers 1 and 21. The present question, therefore, inquires whether the aforementioned proposition is immediately, or *per se primo*, a matter of faith. Furthermore, something can be a matter of faith in two ways: either in itself (*quoad se*) or in relation to us (*quoad nos*). Something is a matter of faith in itself, but not in relation to us, when it is actually revealed in Sacred Scripture, but has not yet been defined or proposed by the Church as being so revealed. Thus, theologians consider many things to be immediately revealed in Scripture—such as that grace is a quality, that the efficacy of grace is independent of the free consent of the will, that God chooses the predestined for Glory before foreseeing their merits, and other such matters—which nevertheless are not matters of faith in relation to us, because the Church has not defined them as such. That, however, is a matter of faith even in relation to us, which is not only revealed by God but, as so revealed, is proposed to the faithful by the Church.

**9.** Nevertheless, John of St. Thomas further distinguishes that among those things which are of faith for us, some are of faith for certain individuals, namely the Learned, while others are of faith for all: Those matters are of faith for all which are held without controversy by everyone as revealed and defined by the Church, such as the Mystery of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Those matters, however, are of faith only for certain Learned individuals, which are not so clearly revealed and defined that there is no controversy about this among the Learned (for often the Learned dispute about some proposition as to whether it is immediately revealed, and as such defined by the Church, or not, and consequently whether it is of faith; just as concerning its contrary, whether it is heretical or not, and then although such a proposition may directly be of faith, nevertheless the reflexive proposition stating that it is of faith, is not itself of faith).

**10.** Moreover, I have deemed it most necessary to note beforehand, although I have not seen it noted by others, that something can be of immediate faith, and known to us, in two ways, namely either absolutely or conditionally. That which is of faith conditionally is what can only be believed, and must be believed, with a divinely objective conditional faith. That which is of absolute divine faith is what can be believed, and must be believed, with a divinely objective absolute faith. This further occurs in two ways, because divinely objective conditional faith can be either tacitly conditional or expressly conditional. It is expressly conditional when one can prudently doubt the condition, as when there are reasons to prudently doubt the validity of the baptism of a certain infant. In such a case, one could believe with a divinely objective conditional faith, explicitly expressing the condition, namely, if he is validly baptized, that he is in a state of grace. It is only tacitly conditional when one cannot prudently doubt the condition, yet nevertheless the condition is not entirely certain, but remains with contingency and the possibility of falsehood, as when there is no reason to doubt or suspect that an infant's baptism is invalid. Yet because there is no infallible certainty about this, but always some contingency and possibility of the opposite, the divine faith regarding whether that baptized infant is in a state of grace is tacitly or implicitly conditional. Likewise, divine faith can be objectively absolute, either intrinsically or extrinsically. It is intrinsically objectively absolute when it is neither implicitly nor explicitly conditional, because by its intrinsic mode of operation it assents to the object entirely absolutely, with absolute security and infallibility. It is only extrinsically absolute when, from its intrinsic mode of operation, it does not convey that absolute security and infallibility, but only under a tacit condition. However, the condition is believed to be fulfilled through human faith or some other fallible light, because then, through faith or judgment about the fulfilled condition, divine faith—otherwise intrinsically and implicitly conditional—is rendered extrinsically absolute. This doctrine is established from what was said above, in disputation 1, question 9, from numbers 61, 68, 76, etc.

**11.** Therefore, it is certain beyond controversy among Catholics that the proposition in question is a matter of faith, at least under tacit condition, namely, if Innocent has been rightly elected, and consequently it is also absolutely a matter of faith, at least extrinsically, because this imports nothing other than that this universal proposition is a matter of faith: "Everyone rightly elected is the Supreme Pontiff," and it is believed through human faith and moral certainty that Innocent has been rightly elected, without any reason

for prudently doubting or suspecting the opposite. This, however, given the peaceful acceptance that is now presumed, is denied by no Catholic, nor indeed can it be denied.

**12.** From this I infer that the present controversy primarily consists in this: whether it is immediately and absolutely a matter of divine faith, without any condition, neither tacit nor expressed, that “Innocent XII is the true Pope.” In this controversy, the negative position is held by these Catholics: Cardinal Turrecremata [Juan de Torquemada], Cajetan [Thomas de Vio], Castro [Alfonso de Castro], Cano [Melchior Cano], Corduba [Antonio de Córdoba], Bañez [Domingo Bañez], Malderus [Jan Malderus], and Araujo [Francisco de Araujo]. Their passages and words are referenced by the Salmanticenses in the present disputation 4 on the Roman Pontiff, from number 28. Indeed, even Azor [Juan Azor] and Gonet [Jean-Baptiste Gonet] consider it probable, according to these same authors. The affirmative position, however, is now common among modern theologians. For which:

## OUR POSITION

**13. I THEREFORE SAY 1.** It is of divine faith immediately and absolutely that Innocent XII is the true Pope. This is proven first: Because Martin V in the Council of Constance, in the proscription of the errors of Wycliffe, Session 45 and last, commands that this interrogation, among others, be made to those suspected in the faith: *“Whether you believe 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”*: Therefore, those suspected in the faith, in this time when Innocent XII reigns in the Church, should be asked whether they believe *“that Innocent XII is the true Successor of Peter, etc.”* For the interrogation must be made with the proper name of the Pontiff expressed, according to the aforementioned Decree. But they should only be questioned whether they believe what is immediately of faith, for what is only mediately of faith is not believed, but is theologically deduced and known from what is believed: Therefore Martin V with the Council presupposes that it is immediately of divine faith in this time that Innocent XII is the true Pontiff.

**14.** You will say, following the Fathers of Salamanca in this matter, that “to believe” does not always signify an immediate act of faith, but can be extended to theological assent deduced from principles of faith; and thus it can be extended in the aforementioned Decree, because that Decree was formulated against the assertions of Wycliffe, which were not all immediately against the faith, but some only mediately, that is, erroneous, some suspect in faith, or savoring of heresy; thus when those under suspicion are ordered to be interrogated concerning these articles, as to whether they believe them, “to believe” can be taken in a broad sense as “to assent.”

**15.** But to the contrary, because although such a solution suffices for the intention of the Fathers of Salamanca, namely that our opinion not be understood as expressly defined in that Decree, such that it would reflexively be a matter of faith, about which we shall speak below, nevertheless it cannot be denied that in that Decree, when those under suspicion are ordered to be interrogated as to whether they believe, with respect to some articles it

must be understood as believing strictly, namely immediately through faith, especially if the article of interrogation is such that if it is not immediately of faith, it cannot even mediately be of faith. But such is this article, namely that *the present Pontiff, expressly named, is the true Pontiff*, as will be established below. Therefore, when they are ordered to be interrogated whether they believe this, the term “believe” must be understood strictly concerning faith, as the proper act of faith immediately.

**16.** You will say secondly, and more urgently: the aforementioned Decree proves at most that the article concerning the true Pope existing at a given time is immediately of faith under a tacit condition, namely if he has been rightly elected, but not entirely absolutely and without that condition. You may prove this because the Church also commands that the sick, to whom the Viaticum is administered, be asked this question among others pertaining to faith: *Do you believe that this, which I hold in my hands, is the true Body of Christ?* And yet from this it is not inferred that it is absolutely of faith that the Body of Christ is in that particular Host, but only under a tacit condition, as I explained above, *disputation 2, question 4, from number 12*. Therefore, similarly, although Martin V orders that those suspected in faith be asked whether they believe that the one existing at this time is the true Pontiff. But against this, because although there is parity in the manner of both interrogations, there is nevertheless disparity in the purpose for which these interrogations are ordered to be made. Indeed, the interrogation which is ordered to be made to the sick person concerning the particular Host is not required so that he may believe a new article of faith, but only that he may apply the faith already confessed in the prior article, or interrogation, namely that Christ is in any rightly Consecrated Host, to that particular Host, and this so that he may receive it with singular devotion, as is fitting; for which it is not required that this application of faith be without tacit condition and entirely absolute, but it is enough that it be tacitly conditional and extrinsically absolute, in the manner explained above. But the interrogation which Martin V orders to be made to those suspected in faith is ordered to be made so that they may be examined in faith, and concerning the Supreme visible animated rule of that faith, whether indeed they have due firmness concerning it; for this purpose, however, it is necessary, as I shall show below, that concerning the present Pope in particular they have firm faith absolutely, and without any tacit condition; hence when they are required to believe that he in particular is the true Pope, it must be understood *as believing*, or as faith entirely absolute and without tacit condition.

**17.** The Conclusion is furthermore proven by an a priori argument, commonly considered effective by more recent authors, which the Salmanticenses Fathers present as follows: A singular proposition contained within a universal proposition revealed to the whole Church is immediately of faith, just as the universal proposition itself is. But this singular proposition: *Innocent XII is the Supreme Pontiff of the Church* is contained in that universal proposition: *Every person validly elected is the true Pontiff*. Therefore, the aforementioned singular proposition is immediately of faith. The major premise is assumed by them, as it was proven by us above, in *disputation 1, question 7*, where we demonstrated that the revelation of a universal proposition makes all singular propositions contained under the revealed universal immediately of faith. The minor premise is also assumed: Because we presuppose that the Pontiff of whom we speak was not invalidly or doubtfully elected, but

certainly validly elected, and as such accepted by the Church, as is indeed the case with Innocent XII. But by the very fact that he is validly elected and accepted by the Church, that singular proposition is contained under the universal proposition that everyone validly elected, etc. Therefore [the conclusion follows].

**18.** Nevertheless, this reasoning, unless something further is demonstrated, does not yet effectively prove what is assumed. For there is a manifest contradiction in this singular proposition: “This Host contains the true Body of Christ,” which indeed, although we suppose it to be rightly consecrated, as it is assumed when there is no reason for doubting or suspecting the contrary, nevertheless is not absolutely of faith in an unqualified sense, but only under a tacit condition, as we have seen from St. Thomas both in disputation 1, question 9, number 68, and in disputation 2, question 4, from number 32. There is also a manifest contradiction in the case of any infant solemnly baptized, for it is universally of faith that: “Every infant rightly baptized is in a state of grace”; but under this universal is contained this singular: “This infant (designating some solemnly baptized one) is in a state of grace,” because he is supposed to be rightly baptized. Therefore, this singular proposition would be of Catholic faith; which, however, all deny.

**19.** And the reason is that, although universals are immediately of faith, nevertheless the singular content, which we suppose under it, or in it, is not of faith, nor infallible, nor entirely infallibly certain, but comes with a contingency of falsity, since the fact that this Host is properly consecrated, and that this infant is validly baptized, cannot have entirely infallible certainty. But whenever such contingency is given, the singular contained in the universal cannot be entirely absolutely of faith, but at most under a tacit condition. Therefore, in the two examples related, the singulars are not immediately of faith entirely absolutely, but under a tacit condition, namely if the Host is properly consecrated, and if the infant is validly baptized, as is supposed, for what is supposed may not be as it is supposed. Now thus, although that universal, “everyone duly elected, etc.” is immediately of faith, nevertheless, that Innocent XII was duly elected does not seem certain as a matter of faith, nor entirely infallible, because the election could be null due to some defect, namely either because it was done through simony, or because the one elected was not baptized, or by another cause from those enumerated above, number 4. Therefore the aforesaid singular statement *Innocent XII is the True Pope* would at most be of faith under the tacit condition of a valid election, but not entirely absolutely.

**20.** Nor is such a difficulty removed if you should say that such a solution destroys the premise of the present controversy, for this proceeds on the supposition of the legitimate election of Innocent XII, and that he is in peaceful possession, and that the Church does not contradict him; however, with this supposition, it is incompatible to deny the certainty of that minor premise, namely, that *Innocent is legitimately elected*. But to the contrary, because although it may be supposed that he was legitimately elected, it still remains to explain with what certainty this is supposed. Indeed, while we adore a particular Host, we suppose it to have been rightly consecrated, and we suppose this with certainty without doubt or suspicion to the contrary; yet not with such certainty as would suffice for divine faith that is completely absolute and without tacit condition regarding the existence of the

Body of Christ in that particular Host. Therefore, similarly, although in this controversy it is supposed that Innocent was rightly elected, and this is indeed supposed with certainty without any contradiction, nevertheless it does not follow from this that it is of absolutely certain faith that he is the Pope, unless it is first determined what degree of certainty that minor premise should enjoy, namely that he was rightly elected, and whether it enjoys such a degree of certainty.

**THE PRECISE CERTAINTY REQUIRED IS EXPLAINED *for a singular contingency within a universal, such that the singular may be of faith.***

**21.** And hence arises an incidental question, upon which, if I am not mistaken, depends the clear unraveling of this controversy and the solution of the arguments, namely: What certainty is required regarding the containment of a singular subject under the subject of a universal revelation, so that the singular may be immediately of faith? To which I respond.

**22.** I say firstly, that for a particular instance to be a matter of faith under an express condition, no certainty is required, but with doubt concerning such content, it can still be a matter of faith in this manner. This is evident because, even if there were a positive doubt whether this particular Host was properly consecrated, it could and should still be believed under the express condition that if it were indeed properly consecrated, it contains the Body of Christ; and similarly if there were a prudent suspicion: Therefore.

**23.** I say secondly, that for something to be believed with divine faith absolutely but extrinsically under a condition that is only tacit and not to be expressed, human or moral certainty suffices, without prudent suspicion to the contrary. This is also evident because where it is thus certain that a Host is properly consecrated, or an infant properly baptized, it is not necessary to express in the act of believing that condition “if the Host is properly consecrated,” and similarly concerning the infant, but rather it would be imprudence: Therefore.

**24.** The greater, or entire difficulty concerns the certainty required for intrinsically absolute faith, without even a tacit condition. Some respond that it is sufficient that such content be morally certain, for example, in our case, that it is morally certain that Innocent XII was properly elected in the Church. Nevertheless, I do not acquiesce to this opinion, and I challenge it thus: For purely moral certainty is fallible physically and metaphysically. But as long as it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that Innocent was properly elected, it is impossible that it be of divine faith absolutely that he is the true Pope. Therefore. The minor premise is proven because for something to be of divine faith absolutely is the same as for it to be physically and metaphysically infallible, since divine faith is infallible, as we demonstrated above in disputation 1, question 4. But it cannot be physically and metaphysically infallible that Innocent XII is the Supreme Pontiff, so long as it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he was properly elected. Therefore, it cannot be of divine faith absolutely. I prove the minor premise because as long as it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he was properly elected (that is, validly, for in the present context, a proper election is used to mean the same as a valid one), it



also remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he is the true Pontiff. Therefore, it cannot be infallible that he is the true Pontiff, as long as it remains fallible that he was properly, or validly, elected. The antecedent is proven, for a valid election is either of the essence of the Supreme Pontiff, or at least an essential condition required by divine law, for someone to be the true Pontiff, because Christ instituted that Dignity to pass to Successors solely through valid election, as is established from the previous question. But whenever it is physically and metaphysically fallible that the condition essentially required by divine law for someone to be the true Pontiff is present, it is similarly fallible that he is the true Pontiff. Therefore. I prove the minor premise, because it cannot be false that an essential condition for someone to be the true Pontiff exists, without it also being false that the conditioned exists, namely that he is the true Pontiff, because an essential condition cannot be lacking without that for which it is an essential condition also being lacking. Otherwise, if that could persist despite the condition's absence, then that condition would not be an essential condition, that is, essentially required. Therefore, with the same possibility by which it could be false that such a condition for someone to be the true Pontiff exists, by the same token it can be false that he is the true Pontiff. But for something to be fallible means the same as that it can be false. Therefore, as long as it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that the essential condition for someone to be the true Pontiff exists, in the same way it remains fallible that he is the true Pontiff.

**25.** This is confirmed: Because if it is only morally certain that Innocent XII has been validly elected, then physically and metaphysically it is not impossible that some invalidating defect intervened in his election, e.g., that he was not actually baptized, or that he was not actually ordained. Therefore, physically and metaphysically, it is not impossible that due to such a defect he is not today the true Pontiff, and consequently, that the Church is mistaken in believing him to be the true Pontiff. This final consequence is proven because it is a matter of faith, and consequently metaphysically infallible, that one who is not validly baptized, nor validly ordained, is not a true Pontiff. Therefore, if speaking physically and metaphysically, it is not impossible that Innocent XII is not validly baptized, nor validly ordained, but the Church can, metaphysically speaking, be mistaken in this matter, likewise the Church could be mistaken in believing him to be the true Pontiff.

**26.** It is confirmed secondly, because in a metaphysically infallible consequence, by the very fact that the consequent can be false, the antecedent can also be false with the same possibility: for in a valid consequence, it is metaphysically repugnant that the antecedent should be true and the consequent false. But this is a metaphysically infallible consequence: "Innocent XII is the true Pontiff; Therefore, he is validly elected." Thus, if the consequent can, metaphysically speaking, be false today, namely that he was validly elected, then the antecedent can also be false today, metaphysically speaking, namely that he is the true Pontiff. Therefore, it will not be metaphysically infallible, and consequently not a matter of divine faith absolutely, that Innocent XII is the true Pontiff.

**27.** Or alternatively: In a valid inference, if the antecedent is metaphysically infallible, then the consequent must also be metaphysically infallible, because just as from a necessary antecedent nothing follows except what is necessary, so from a metaphysically infallible

antecedent nothing can follow except what is metaphysically infallible. But this is a valid inference: *He is the true Pontiff, therefore he is validly elected*. Therefore, if it is metaphysically infallible that he is the true Pontiff, it must also be metaphysically infallible that he is validly elected. Or alternatively: This is a valid inference: *He is not validly elected; therefore he is not the true Pontiff*. I ask, therefore, whether the antecedent is physically and metaphysically possible, given things as they now stand, namely after peaceful acceptance (for this is the sense in which I always speak, and not in terms considered in themselves, because in terms considered in themselves it is not even morally repugnant that this man is not the Pontiff), or whether it is metaphysically impossible. If it is metaphysically impossible, then it is not only morally but metaphysically impossible that he is not validly elected. Therefore, that he is validly elected is metaphysically infallible, and not just morally so; and I have my intended conclusion, namely that mere moral certainty concerning valid election is not sufficient. If that antecedent is metaphysically possible, then so is the consequent, because in a valid inference, an impossible consequent cannot follow from a possible antecedent, as dialecticians teach. Therefore, given things as they now stand, it would be metaphysically possible that Innocent XII is not the true Pontiff, and consequently it would not be metaphysically infallible that he is the true Pontiff. Therefore, this is not a matter of divine faith in an absolutely unqualified sense.

**28.** It is confirmed thirdly because, although it is morally certain that the Host is validly consecrated, for example, when many Priests in great number concur in consecrating it, as in the celebration of Holy Orders, where it is morally impossible that at least one of them does not have the true intention and validly consecrate; nevertheless, even supposing the moral certainty of valid consecration, it is not a matter of absolutely divine faith that the Body of Christ is in that particular Host, but only under a tacit condition. Therefore, if there is only moral certainty, and not greater certainty, about the valid election of Innocent XII, it cannot be a matter of absolutely divine faith that he is the true Pontiff.

**29.** You will respond first, with Lugo, by distinguishing two degrees of moral certainty, namely: moral certainty which admits prudent fear of falsity, and this is the kind of human certainty derived from witnesses or other human conjectures, which suffices for regulating human actions, although it admits prudent fear of the opposite, because witnesses can indeed deceive, and similarly other motives upon which such certainty rests, and sometimes it happens that someone is deceived by these or similar motives; concerning which moral certainty we have spoken in *our Treatise on Conscience, question 33, from number 8*, and we said that such fear of falsity can be reconciled with it *in the same work from number 45*. And concerning this moral certainty, Lugo says it is not sufficient for divine faith that is completely absolute, because with prudent fear that perhaps this Host might not be properly consecrated, I cannot believe completely and absolutely by divine faith that the Body of Christ is in it, and similarly regarding a baptized infant, that he is in a state of grace. The second moral certainty is that which we called such in the highest degree above in disputation 2, question 6, number 15. And this does not admit prudent fear of falsity, as we said there in number 4. Indeed it seems it cannot admit even imprudent fear, for this kind of certainty is said to be that which we have about the existence of Rome,

or Naples, or Milan: Who, unless he is insane or foolish, could even imprudently fear that perhaps Rome does not exist in reality? And concerning this kind or similar moral certainty, Lugo holds that it is sufficient that one has it regarding the containment of a particular in a universally revealed truth, so that the particular is absolutely of divine faith.

**30.** But against this, firstly, because moral certainty about the proper election, or valid election of Innocent XII, cannot be as great as the certainty of the existence of Rome, for the latter is founded upon the agreement of innumerable eyewitnesses, with no one denying it, and concerns a matter which is seen with one's own eyes. Indeed, it seems not only morally but even physically impossible that all who write and speak about it as eyewitnesses would all wish to deceive, and that no one would dare to reveal the truth; for that all men would constantly and always agree in knowingly uttering some falsehood, especially regarding a matter subject to their own eyes, and in which falsehood they could be caught by anyone, is repugnant not only morally but physically and by the very nature of things to human nature; and therefore perhaps that certainty is not only moral but physical. And if the aforementioned repugnance is physical, it will also be metaphysical, because God by His absolute power, or miraculously, cannot make all men agree in uttering the aforementioned falsehood, nature itself repugnating against it, otherwise God would be the special Author of falsehood. Therefore, it will also be metaphysically repugnant that all who have spoken or written about Rome as eyewitnesses would knowingly wish to deceive us constantly and unanimously, with no one contradicting: Yet this would be absolutely necessary for it to be false that Rome exists. Therefore, this falsity is metaphysically impossible, and consequently it is metaphysically infallible that Rome exists, and the same applies to any other City, or Region, or individual, about which innumerable eyewitnesses unanimously testify, with no one doubting or contradicting. I have said these things in passing; because I see that without examination all these certainties are considered purely moral, whereas from the aforementioned foundation it can be shown that they have metaphysical infallibility. See above, disputation 2, question 6, number 5.

**31.** But let us grant that these are only moral certainties, yet of the highest degree, such that they admit no apprehension of falsehood. The moral certainty regarding the validity of a Pontifical election cannot be of such a high degree, because it does not concern a matter that is evident to the eyes, nor one for which there are eyewitnesses, nor in such great number. Not indeed in such great number, because the witnesses of that election are precisely the Cardinals. Nor are these eyewitnesses to the validity of the election, because its validity consists in multiple conditions not evident in themselves, e.g., that it is not simoniacal, that the elect is a man and not a woman, and especially that he is in reality validly baptized, for of this the Cardinals themselves cannot be eyewitnesses. Indeed, no one can be an eyewitness except the person who baptized the elect, because regarding the intention essentially required in the one baptizing, no one can be an eyewitness. Therefore, the moral certainty about the validity of a Pontifical election cannot be as great as the certainty of Rome's existence, nor of the highest degree of moral certainty like that one, such that it excludes all prudent apprehension.

**32.** It is explained, and a tacit solution is precluded; for either that election is considered independently from the infallibly revealed or promised assistance of the Holy Spirit, solely based on visible and human motives humanly presented to the Church; or by virtue of some revelation or promise, by which Christ absolutely promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit to that election. If it is the latter, then the validity of that election is not only morally certain, but certain and metaphysically infallible, because an election to which Christ promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit so that it would not err is, by virtue of such a promise, infallibly free from error, and consequently was valid. And indeed it is not only morally infallible, but metaphysically so, because what Christ has absolutely promised metaphysically cannot fail to be as He promised. If the former is claimed, truly all those visible motives, however uniform and fitting they may be, since they concern a matter not evident to the eyes, but rather dependent on something most hidden, namely on the intention of the Minister who baptized the elected person, and on Baptism itself (of which no elected person is an eyewitness), and similarly on the Orders received, can by no means exclude, through themselves independently of divine revelation and promise, a prudent fear of nullity or incapacity of the subject.

**33.** It is pressed further: For either the assistance of the Holy Spirit is infallibly promised to that election, that it may not err, or it is not. If it is infallibly promised: Therefore it is infallible, not only morally but metaphysically, that the election has not erred, and consequently that it was valid. But if it is not infallibly promised to that election; then there remains room for prudent fear, lest perhaps the Holy Spirit did not assist that election, and consequently lest perhaps it erred by electing someone not baptized, or incapable by some other qualification; for indeed, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, there can be no certainty about not erring, especially in such a hidden matter.

**34.** It is pressed further, because that election, if we prescind from the assistance of the Holy Spirit, cannot have greater certainty of its validity, or at least of the intrinsic capacity of the subject, than other Canonical elections that take place in the Church for inferior Pastors, for setting aside such assistance, the Cardinals are men, fragile, infirm, carrying vessels of clay, exposed to passions and fallibility, just like electors in other Canonical elections. But other elections, because assistance from the Holy Spirit that they may not err is not promised to each of them absolutely and infallibly, are not so certainly valid that the certainty excludes all prudent fear that perhaps some ground for nullity might have intervened: Therefore, if the assistance of the Holy Spirit is not infallibly and absolutely promised to the election of the Pontiff to prevent error, or prescinding from that assistance, it cannot be so certain as to exclude all fear.

**35.** It is urged thirdly, for in the case where one hundred priests might come together to consecrate a Host, all of them upright and God-fearing, I ask whether there would then be grounds for prudent fear that perhaps it was not validly consecrated, or not? If there would still be grounds for prudent fear, then even though all Cardinals might participate in the election of a single Pontiff, setting aside the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit, there would still remain grounds for prudent fear, especially since for the valid consecration of the Host it is sufficient that one of the hundred be a true Priest who has the intention, and

moreover, the suitability of the matter is visible; but for the validity of a papal election it is necessary that two-thirds of the Cardinals concur, and that they be true Cardinals, and furthermore the suitability of the subject to be elected is not visible, but depends on hidden conditions. If, however, you say that in such a consecration there would not remain grounds for prudent fear, I argue thus: And yet it would not be a matter of absolute faith that the Host contains the Body of Christ, but only under a tacit condition. Therefore, although regarding the valid election of a Pope no prudent fear of its nullity might remain, nevertheless if it is only morally certain, it will not remain a matter of absolute faith that the one elected is the true Pontiff. The consequence is clear, because just as it is revealed that everyone duly elected is the true Pontiff, so it is revealed that every Host duly consecrated contains the Body of Christ. From which...

**36.** Secondly, I challenge the aforementioned solution, because even if, once the papal election has been accepted, there remains no place for prudent fear, nevertheless if it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he has been validly elected, it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he is the true Pontiff, as has been demonstrated. But if the validity of that election is only morally certain, it necessarily remains physically and metaphysically fallible, because moral certainty alone cannot exclude physical and metaphysical fallibility. Therefore, it cannot remain metaphysically infallible, and consequently neither can it be of divine faith absolutely that he is the true Pontiff; rather, at most, it will remain morally certain with a certainty that excludes prudent fear.

**37.** Therefore, others respond that moral certainty regarding the validity of an election is sufficient for it to be absolutely a matter of faith that the one elected is the true Pope, because it is sufficient that we are absolutely obligated to believe that he is the true Pontiff. But against this argument, because that question is not so much established to investigate the quality of the obligation, as to investigate the quality of faith concerning the true Pontiff, and to have certainty of faith about him. I suppose, therefore, that this moral certainty is sufficient for us to be absolutely obligated to believe that the one elected is the true Pontiff, but I ask whether we are absolutely obligated to believe this with intrinsically absolute divine faith, or only with divine faith that is intrinsically and tacitly conditional, and only extrinsically absolute? If the second, then faith concerning the fact that the one elected, namely Innocent XII, is the true Pontiff is not intrinsically absolute, but tacitly conditional, just like faith in the existence of Christ in a specific Host. Therefore, it will remain fallible and contingent in an absolute sense whether he is or is not the true Pontiff; who would say this? But if the first is asserted, the argument already made returns, for as long as the validity of the election remains only morally certain, and consequently physically and metaphysically fallible as to whether he has been validly elected, we cannot believe with divine faith that is entirely and intrinsically absolute that the one elected is the true Pope. Therefore, we are not obligated by virtue of moral certainty alone to believe in this way. The antecedent is evident, because while it remains absolutely fallible physically and metaphysically whether he is the true Pope, we cannot believe it with divine faith that is entirely and intrinsically absolute, as is self-evident. But while it remains fallible in this

way whether he has been validly elected, it remains fallible in the same way whether he is the true Pope. Therefore.

**38.** Finally, others respond that certainty regarding a proper election is twofold: one preceding faith in the truth of the elected Pope, and another following such faith. And this second type is metaphysical certainty in the manner of a Theological Conclusion, because once it is supposed as a matter of divine faith absolutely that Innocent XII is the true Pope, it is consequently inferred with metaphysically infallible consequence that he was validly elected, and thus it is consequently metaphysically infallible that the election was valid. However, antecedently it is not required that the validity of the election be metaphysically infallible, but it suffices that it be morally certain, because since this certainty is required only on the part of credibility, it suffices that it be only moral certainty, which being supposed, it is already absolutely metaphysically infallible that Innocent XII is the true Pope.

**39.** This solution approaches closer to the truth, because it acknowledges that it cannot be absolutely infallible that Innocent XII is the true Pope without it being—with the same infallibility, namely metaphysical—absolutely infallible that he was validly elected, albeit consequently. Nevertheless, it still does not satisfy, because before an intrinsically absolute divine faith in the truth of the elected Pope, there must be given an objective certainty, or a completely absolute fundamental certainty that he is the true Pope, that is, a motive absolutely certifying with metaphysical infallibility the truth of the Pope. But if only that universal revelation is supposed: *Every properly elected person is the true Pope*, with only moral certainty concerning a proper election, then a motive is not supposed that absolutely certifies with absolute metaphysical infallibility that this person is the true Pope. Therefore, greater certainty regarding the validity of the election is required prior to an intrinsically absolute divine faith in the truth of the Pope. The minor premise is proven because that universal revelation: *Every properly elected person is the true Pope* does not by itself absolutely certify that this person is the true Pope, but only under the condition that he is properly elected—just as this revealed universal: *Every properly consecrated Host contains the Body of Christ* does not by itself absolutely certify that this particular Host contains the Body of Christ, but only under the condition that it is properly consecrated. But a motive that by itself only certifies conditionally cannot certify absolutely before the fulfillment of the condition is certain, nor can it certify about the conditioned matter with greater certainty than there is certainty about the fulfillment of the condition. Therefore, if no greater certainty than moral certainty is supposed concerning the fulfillment of the condition, namely concerning the proper election, that universal cannot absolutely certify with greater than moral certainty about the truth of the Pontiff. Therefore, a motive cannot be supposed that absolutely certifies with metaphysical certainty that Innocent XII is the true Pope. And it is further pressed, because even supposing moral certainty that some Host is properly consecrated, that universal: *Every properly consecrated Host contains the Body of Christ* does not absolutely certify with absolute metaphysical certainty that in that Host there is truly the Body of Christ. Therefore, the same applies in our case.

**40.** This is confirmed because, although in motives of credibility no absolute metaphysical connection with the thing to be believed is required, but rather a moral connection suffices, nevertheless, given the motives of credibility that morally and certainly persuade that something has been spoken by God, revelation is required, or a formal motive of believing that absolutely certifies the intellect with absolute metaphysical infallibility regarding the truth of the thing to be believed. But if, on the part of credibility, only moral certainty about the election is supposed, that universal revelation: *Every duly elected person is the true Pope*, does not certify with absolute metaphysical certainty, but only under a tacit condition, namely if moral certainty is not mistaken in the election. Therefore, it cannot establish absolute divine faith that he is the true Pope.

**41.** It is confirmed secondly, because valid election is required not only for the sake of credibility, but rather so that universal revelation may be established as the formal motive of absolute divine faith concerning the truth of the Pope. But the formal motive of divine faith, as such, must be presupposed as certain, not only morally, but metaphysically. Therefore, in order for that universal revelation to move one to absolute faith concerning the truth of the Pope, the validity of the election, by virtue of which it is constituted as an absolute motive, must be supposed certain, not only morally, but metaphysically. The minor premise is evident, because the formal motive of divine faith provides certainty that is not only moral, but metaphysical. Therefore, it must be supposed or proposed as certain, not only morally, but metaphysically, for it cannot provide a certainty which it does not possess. The minor premise is proven: Because that universal revelation is the formal motive of absolute faith concerning the truth of this particular Pope only insofar as it is an absolute revelation of him, for the motive of absolute divine faith cannot be revelation understood as merely conditional. But that universal revelation is constituted as an absolute revelation through the validity of the election. Therefore, through the validity of the election, it is constituted as the formal motive of absolute faith. The minor premise is proven because that universal revelation, of itself, reveals this particular man to be the true Pope only conditionally, namely, if he has been properly elected; but a revelation that is in itself merely conditional becomes absolute through the fulfillment of the condition itself, which in the present case is valid election. Therefore, that universal revelation is constituted as an absolute revelation through valid election.

**42.** It is urged: It cannot be metaphysically certain in an absolute sense that this person is the true Pope, with absolute certainty of faith, unless it is presupposed to be objectively metaphysically certain—that is, absolutely revealed—for the formal motive for believing it absolutely with metaphysical certainty is because it is absolutely revealed. It implies, however, that faith cannot be more certain than its formal motive. But it cannot be supposed as metaphysically certain that this is absolutely revealed, by virtue of that universal principle, unless it is supposed as metaphysically certain that this man has been validly elected; because through this, that universal revelation becomes the absolute revelation regarding this individual. Therefore, a valid election must be supposed metaphysically certain, so that by virtue of that universal principle it can be believed with absolute divine faith that this person is the true Pope. Therefore, metaphysical certainty that follows from absolute faith in the truth of the Pope is not sufficient, but objective and

fundamental metaphysical certainty is required prior to such faith, since such certainty about the validity of the election must be presupposed as part of the motive for absolute divine faith.

**43.** This is confirmed thirdly, because by virtue of that universal proposition: *“Everyone who is rightly elected, etc.”* One cannot, even mediately, infer as a theological conclusion that Innocent XII was rightly elected. Therefore, unless faith in the truth of the Pope rests upon another revelation, metaphysical certainty regarding the validity of the election cannot be established, even as a consequence of faith in the truth of the Pope, nor by means of a theological conclusion. Therefore, neither antecedently nor consequently will there be greater certainty than purely moral certainty concerning the valid election. Therefore, both antecedently and consequently, it remains physically and metaphysically fallible that he was validly elected. But this solution admits that it cannot be reconciled with the claim that it is absolutely a matter of divine faith that this man is the true Pope. Therefore, and so forth. The major premise is proven: Because from this universal proposition: *“Everyone who is rightly elected is the true Pope,”* neither immediately nor mediately can this particular proposition be inferred: *“Therefore Innocent XII is rightly elected.”* For one who would argue thus: *“Everyone who is rightly elected is the true Pope; therefore Innocent XII is rightly elected,”* would argue in a completely disparate manner, no less than one who would argue: *“Every just man is a friend of God; therefore Peter is just.”* Therefore, by virtue of that universal proposition, it is not even mediately revealed that Innocent XII is rightly elected. Therefore, neither can this be rendered certain by means of a theological conclusion, since a theological conclusion must be mediately revealed.

**44.** Nor does recourse to moral certainty prove valid, for if we merely suppose as morally certain this proposition: *“Innocent XII was duly elected,”* by virtue of that universal revelation: *“Everyone duly elected is the true Pope,”* it cannot receive any greater certainty, but will consequently remain only morally certain. The reason is that from that universal proposition it is in no way inferred, but relates to it disparately, as has been shown; but by virtue of that revelation, or revealed proposition, which in no way infers it but relates disparately, it cannot receive greater certainty—indeed, it cannot receive any certainty at all, as is self-evident. Therefore, if it is only supposed antecedently to be morally certain, it will consequently remain only morally certain, not theologically certain in the manner of a theological conclusion. Let me explain: When, by virtue of this revealed universal: *“Every man is mortal,”* having supposed as naturally evident that *“Peter is a man,”* it is believed by divine faith that *“Peter is mortal,”* no one has said that, consequently to this divine faith, *“Peter is a man”* remains certain in the manner of a theological conclusion, or that this was mediately revealed, because, namely, when God reveals that every man is mortal, through this revelation He neither mediately nor immediately reveals who are true men, nor from that universal is it inferred, even mediately: *“Therefore, Peter is a man.”* Hence, this always remains only certain and evident by natural light, not by theological light. Therefore, the same must be said when, by virtue of that universal: *“Everyone duly elected, etc.,”* having supposed as morally certain that *“This person is duly elected,”* it is believed by divine faith that this person is the true Pontiff—namely, that the minor premise will remain consequently, just as it was antecedently, only morally certain.



**45.** And the a priori reason is that since the assent of faith concerning this proposition: *Innocent XII is the true Pope*, is the formal effect of that universal revelation: *Everyone who is rightly elected is the true Pope*, formally motivated solely by that revelation, it cannot produce a certainty greater than what that universal proposition confers, because an effect cannot exceed its sole cause. But that universal proposition, *Everyone who is rightly elected*, etc., even supposing moral certainty about the right election of Innocent XII, does not infer metaphysical certainty about it, because even with such certainty supposed, it neither mediately nor immediately reveals the rightness of the election, but relates to it disparately. Also, because this consequence is disparate: It is metaphysically certain, because it is so revealed, that everyone rightly elected is the true Pope, but it is otherwise supposed to be morally certain that this person is rightly elected: Therefore it is metaphysically certain that this person is rightly elected. Therefore, even supposing such moral certainty of a right election, the assent of faith elicited solely by virtue of that universal proposition: *Everyone rightly elected*, etc., cannot infer metaphysical certainty concerning the right election of Innocent XII.

**46.** From what has been said, you may infer first: That for believing a particular proposition with absolutely divine faith, by virtue of a universal revelation, mere moral certainty about the inclusion of the particular in the universal is not sufficient. Second: That metaphysical and infallible certainty is required, not only consequently to the faith in the particular, but also antecedently, and on the part of the motive for believing, at least as an essential condition for it to move one to absolute divine faith. Third: That it cannot be proven to be a matter of absolute faith, without tacit condition, that Innocent XII is the true Pope, by virtue of the universal principle: “Every properly elected person is the true Pope,” unless it is first demonstrated with metaphysical infallibility that he was properly or validly elected. But from where, you may ask, can this be demonstrated? I respond as follows.

### THE ARGUMENT OF THE *Conclusion* IS RENEWED.

**47.** IF therefore the reasoning of the Conclusion can be established, so that it effectively proves: For whenever a universal proposition is immediately of faith, and the containment of a particular under it is absolutely infallible, then that particular is also immediately and absolutely of faith. But this universal proposition: *Every validly elected person is the true Pope*, is immediately of faith; and it is absolutely infallible that this particular proposition: *Innocent XII is the true Pope*, is contained under the former. Therefore, this particular proposition is also immediately and absolutely of faith. The minor premise, with respect to its second part, in which alone lies the difficulty, is proven: Because it is absolutely, or metaphysically, infallible that Innocent XII was validly, or legitimately elected. But in this consists formally the containment of the aforementioned particular under that universal proposition. Therefore, such containment is absolutely infallible. The major premise is proven: Because it is absolutely infallible that the Electors did not err in that election, at least regarding its validity. Therefore, it is absolutely infallible that the election was legitimate, or valid. I prove the antecedent: It is absolutely infallible that the Electors do not err in an election that is completed and consummated by the instinct and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But it is absolutely infallible that the election of Innocent XII was completed

and consummated by the instinct and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is absolutely infallible that that election was legitimate and valid. The minor premise, in which alone lies the difficulty, is proven first from the perpetual tradition of the Church, which has always held that the sacred election, in which the universal Pastor of the Church and the Successor of Divine Peter, the Vicar of Christ the Lord, is designated, is not completed nor peacefully consummated except through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This tradition is sufficiently confirmed and taught ex Cathedra by Sixtus V in Constitution 50, thus decreeing: *In that Sacred Election, the Cardinals must be considered true interpreters and intermediaries of the divine will, by whose Spirit, just as the entire Body of the Church is sanctified and governed, so most especially this entire work of election, it is most certain, is completed by His inspiration and instinct, and this is well known to all.* But the perpetual tradition of the Church, confirmed by a Pontifical Constitution ex Cathedra, establishes faith and certainty that is absolutely infallible, and not merely moral. Therefore.

**48.** Secondly, because the Cardinals gathered together, peacefully electing and promulgating the election of the Pope, represent the entire Church in relation to that duty of electing and promulgating, or proposing to the Faithful the true Pope as the true universal Pastor and the first visible rule of faith and morals. But it is metaphysically infallible, and not merely morally so, that the Holy Spirit assists the Church, and consequently the Church cannot err in proposing to the Faithful the first visible rule of faith. Therefore, neither can it err in consummating and peacefully promulgating that election. I prove the minor premise: Because the Holy Spirit's assistance to the Church in this duty is certain by virtue of Christ's promise in John 16: "When the Paraclete comes, he will teach you all truth: He will teach you all things and remind you of everything that I have told you." And that the Church cannot err is by virtue of that revelation or Sacred Text in which Paul in 1 Timothy 3 says: "That the Church is the pillar and foundation of truth," see above question 5, from numbers 3-4. But what is certain by virtue of divine promise and revelation is not only morally certain but metaphysically infallible by virtue of it. Therefore, that the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit and cannot err in proposing to the Faithful the visible rule of faith is certain not only morally but with metaphysical infallibility, namely by virtue of divine promise and revelation.

**49.** This is confirmed: Because by virtue of the said promise, revelation, and other similar ones, it is metaphysically infallible that the Church cannot err in proposing matters of faith necessary for salvation. But the visible and animate rule of faith is most certainly a matter of faith, and must be believed out of necessity for salvation, as is evident from what was said above in question 4 and question 9, number 4, where Boniface VIII expressly asserts that it is: "Absolutely necessary for salvation." Therefore, by virtue of the said revelation and promise, it is metaphysically infallible that the Church cannot err in proposing to the Faithful the visible animate rule of faith, and consequently, neither in the election of the Supreme Pastor when it is consummated, absolute, and peacefully accepted, or peacefully promulgated.

**50.** This is further confirmed: Because the visible animate rule of faith (which is the Pope) is no less a matter of faith and necessary for salvation than the visible inanimate rule, such as the Canonical Books. But since by virtue of revelation or tradition the Church is infallible in proposing matters of faith, it is also infallible in proposing to the Faithful the inanimate rule of faith, namely in defining which is the true Scripture and which are the true Canonical Books. Therefore, with even stronger reason, the Church will be infallible in proposing to the Faithful the visible animate rule, namely the true Supreme Pontiff, or Pope.

**51.** It is confirmed thirdly: Because if the Church could err in proposing the living rule of faith, or in proposing a null Pope as true, by that very fact it could err in defining matters of faith. But it cannot err in defining matters of faith, and this infallibility exists by virtue of Divine revelation and promise. Therefore, it is equally infallible that the Church cannot err in proposing the visible living rule of faith by presenting a null Pope as true. The major premise is proven: Because once the Church would err by proposing a null Pope as true, that person would not be an infallible rule of faith in defining matters of faith, since only a true Pope, not a false one, is the infallible rule in defining matters of faith. But if the Pope were fallible in defining matters of faith, by that very fact the Church could err in these matters, because the Church does not define matters of faith except through the mouth of the Supreme Pastor. Therefore [the conclusion follows].

**52.** It is confirmed fourthly: For it is definable and determinable according to faith which is the living visible rule of faith to which all Christ's Faithful are bound to conform in faith, just as it is definable according to faith which is the inanimate rule of faith, e.g., which is the true Scripture. Therefore, there must exist in the Church an infallible Authority to define this, and an infallible method of defining it; but for defining this there is no other Authority designated in the Church except the College of Cardinals, nor any other method of defining this except through peaceful election, peacefully promulgated, because the Church does not otherwise propose to the Faithful, nor define this to be the true Pope, or the true living rule of faith, except by designating through election the true Vicar of Christ and Successor of St. Peter, and by peacefully promulgating to the Faithful the one peacefully elected as truly such. Therefore, the Church is infallible in this function. Therefore, a peaceful election, peacefully promulgated, is infallible and cannot err in proposing a null Pope as true. Therefore, it is contradictory that such an election could be null. Therefore, this is not only morally certain but entirely infallible by virtue of divine revelation and promise, by force of which the Church cannot err in proposing and defining matters of faith. From which:

#### OTHER REASONS FOR The Conclusion.

**53.** SECONDLY, the Conclusion is proven: The Pontiff cannot establish absolutely infallible faith in matters defined by himself ex Cathedra, unless it is absolutely a matter of faith that he is the true Pontiff; But according to all Catholics, this particular Pontiff, namely Innocent XII, establishes infallible faith in matters which he defines ex Cathedra: Therefore, it is absolutely a matter of faith that he is the true Pontiff. The major premise is

proven: Because the Pontiff cannot establish absolutely infallible faith in matters defined ex Cathedra, unless it is absolutely a matter of faith that his definition is legitimate, nor can it be a matter of faith that his definition is legitimate, unless it is absolutely a matter of faith that it was made by a true Pontiff, or by a true rule of faith; But this cannot be absolutely a matter of faith, unless it is absolutely a matter of faith that he is the true Pontiff: Therefore [the conclusion follows].

**54.** The Fathers of Salamanca respond. For those who do not accept this reasoning, they first counter it as follows: *We cannot be obliged to believe by divine faith a matter defined by a Pontiff, unless we are equally obliged to believe by divine faith that his definition is legitimate, and consequently that it proceeds from a legitimate Pontiff: But we are not bound to believe immediately by divine faith that this defining man is a legitimate Pontiff: Therefore, we are not bound to believe immediately by divine faith a matter defined by this Pontiff.* In this discourse, they say: The consequence is legitimate, and the consequent is heretical: Therefore, it is necessary that one of the premises be false: But the minor is not false, because the Church has not thus far defined that men are bound to the aforementioned assent, and to deny it is not heretical: Therefore, the major premise, on which we base the present reasoning, is false or doubtful.

**55.** But indeed, I do not understand by what reasoning they say that the minor premise is not false. For they themselves hold, in accordance with the common opinion, this proposition as true, and defend it as such: We are bound to believe immediately through divine faith that this man is the true Pontiff, since they assert this to be immediately of divine faith. But that minor premise is expressly contradictory to this, as it states: We are not bound, etc. Therefore, they claim that the express contradictory of the proposition they defend as true is not false. This, however, cannot be maintained without denying that evident rule of dialectic which states that of contradictories, if one is true, the other is necessarily false, because it is impossible for the same thing to both be and not be at the same time. Therefore, that minor premise is false. Nor does it stand as an objection that the Church has not expressly defined that we are bound to believe by divine faith that this man is the true Pontiff. This is because, although the Church may not have defined it explicitly and expressly, it has already been defined implicitly or in practice by the same definition by which it was determined that we are bound to believe by divine faith this Pontiff when defining ex cathedra, as an infallible rule in proposing, and this suffices to bind us. Furthermore, for us to be truly obligated, it is not necessary that such an obligation be defined and that denying it be heretical; otherwise, even if all learned persons unanimously stated, with no one contradicting, that we are obliged to something, we would not be obligated until the Church expressly defined it and rendered the contrary opinion heretical, which would certainly be most absurd. Hence, from the aforementioned discourse, it should rather be concluded thus: the major premise is true, as has been demonstrated; therefore, the minor premise is false, since the consequent is heretical.

**56.** They object secondly against the aforementioned reasoning that Bellarmine, as cited by Suárez in disputation 5, section 8, number 12, holds that not only can a true Pontiff not err in defining matters of faith, but neither can one who is merely reputed as such by the

Church. If this were true, then it would not be necessary to believe with divine faith that he is the true and legitimate Pope in order for matters defined by him to be certain as matters of faith. But against this, as Suárez himself later states in disputation 10, section 5, number 4, whoever says this “is ignorant of the first truth and speaks contradictions.” First, because the essence of the Supreme Pontiff, as distinguished from other Bishops, is to have infallible authority in defining matters of faith through the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to say that someone would have this authority even though he were not the true Pontiff, but only reputed as such by the Church, is to say that he would possess the essence of the Supreme Pontiff while not being the true Pontiff—which either demonstrates ignorance of what “true Pontiff” signifies, or asserts contradictions simultaneously. Second, either the Church can err in regarding as the true Pope one who is not the true Pope, or it cannot err in this matter. If it cannot err in this? Then Bellarmine’s statement implies a contradiction, while admitting the possibility of a Pope reputed by the Church who is not the true Pope. If it can err in this? Then, with greater or at least equal reason, it will be fallible in regarding him as infallible in defining matters through the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit. This is true both because the essential difference of the Supreme Pontiff consists in this, and because it is no less certain that he has the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit in defining than that he is the true Pontiff. Therefore, if the Church could be mistaken about this second point, it could also be mistaken about the first, regarding him as infallible in defining when in reality he is not infallible, and presuming the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit where such assistance does not exist.

**57.** Perhaps you will say: It is necessary for the Church’s faith to be firm and infallible, that it cannot be deceived regarding the infallible rule of faith, because if it were deceived in considering as an infallible rule one who was not such, the entire faith of the Church would waver. However, for the firmness of faith, it is not necessary that the Church be unable to be deceived in thinking someone to be the true Pontiff who in reality is either not baptized, or not validly ordained, or not validly consecrated, or not properly elected, because even if all these things were deficient, if the infallible rule of faith nevertheless always remained, the faith of the Church would always remain firm. But against this argument, because in the Supreme Pontiff, just as the infallible authority of defining the doctrine of faith is necessary, so also is the infallible power of binding and loosing necessary, not only in the external and judicial forum, but especially in the forum of Conscience. This is so first because just as the Church’s faith must be infallible, and would not be such if the authority of the head were fallible; likewise, the remission of sins must be infallible in the Church, and would not be infallible if the power of the Keys, or the spiritual jurisdiction for the forum of Conscience in remitting sins, were not infallible in the Supreme Pontiff, from whom such jurisdiction flows to the other Pastors of the Church. Secondly, because Christ the Lord not only entrusted to Peter the infallible Authority of proposing true doctrine of faith through these words: “Feed my sheep,” namely with salutary doctrine; but also the power of the Keys or spiritual jurisdiction of closing and opening the Kingdom of Heaven, of retaining and remitting sins, through these words: “To you I will give the keys: Whatever you bind, etc.” And Christ handed over both authorities, or powers, to Peter for himself and for his Successors, to exist perpetually in the Church. Therefore, Christ judged both to be

equally necessary for His Church, and He wanted both to be infallible. Finally, I ask, in the case that according to this solution is possible, if the Supreme Pontiff were not truly a priest, if he attempted to sacramentally absolve someone properly disposed, would he validly absolve or not? If not, then all who approach the Pope for the absolution of their sins would be deceived. Therefore, the Pontiff would not have jurisdiction to absolve sacramentally. Therefore, he would not validly confer that jurisdiction to inferior Pastors. Likewise, if he consecrated certain Bishops, they would not in reality remain consecrated, and similarly if he ordained Deacons or Priests. Therefore, if the power of orders and spiritual jurisdiction were fallible in the Supreme Pontiff, and the Church could be deceived in this, it could be deceived in recourse to the Pope for the absolution of sins, it could be deceived in recourse to Bishops, because they receive such jurisdiction from the Pope alone; it could be deceived in considering as truly ordained and consecrated those whom the Pontiff had ordained and consecrated, and in all those ordained and consecrated by them, since all such acts would be null. Since these things are most absurd, it must be said that in the Roman Pontiff the power of orders and of the keys, or spiritual jurisdiction, is equally infallible as is the infallible authority in proposing matters of faith. To say, however, that although he were not truly a priest, nor baptized, he would validly absolve sacramentally and validly exercise acts of orders, is heretical. Therefore, it must also be infallibly certain that he is a true priest and truly baptized.

**58.** To say, therefore, along with certain authors whom Suarez cites without naming *in the aforementioned passage*, that such a person would possess all the privileges of the Supreme Pontiff and validly perform all his duties, such as absolving sacramentally, conferring sacramental jurisdiction, ordaining Bishops, creating Cardinals, defining matters of faith, imposing censures, etc., although he would not be the true Pope: This involves a manifest contradiction, or rather a heresy. A contradiction, because he would possess the complete essence of the Supreme Pontiff, yet not be the Supreme Pontiff. A heresy: For it is heretical to say that acts of orders can be validly exercised by one who is neither baptized nor validly ordained. Nor can it be said that the Church would supply the defect, both because the Church cannot supply the power of orders, and because it cannot supply jurisdiction in the supreme Head, since the supreme Head does not receive jurisdiction from the Church, but from Christ alone. If, however, Christ were to confer jurisdiction upon him, this would in fact make him Pope.

**59.** Furthermore, the Fathers of Salamanca add that it is not necessary to believe that a definition is legitimate in order to believe by divine faith the things defined. Therefore, neither is it necessary to believe by divine faith that the one defining is a legitimate Pontiff in order to believe the things defined. They prove the antecedent because divine revelation is more intimately connected to the thing to be believed than the definition of the Pontiff. But it is not necessary for believing a revealed matter to believe the revelation itself through the same faith, because faith in the revealed matter stands with the evidence of the revelation, and consequently without faith in the revelation itself, as they suppose they have proven. Therefore, etc. But truly this foundation is insufficient to take down that reasoning which they suppose to be common among Thomists. For those Thomists require that it be a matter of faith that the definition is legitimate and made by a legitimate Pontiff,

because otherwise one cannot have infallible certainty about this, or because fallible moral certainty about a legitimate definition and legitimate Pontiff is not sufficient. Against this, however, I do not see by what consequence one may oppose the argument that faith in a revealed matter does not require divine faith in the revelation, but that evidence in attestation suffices, which is certainly either more or at least equally certain and metaphysically infallible. For it is the same as arguing thus: For divine faith in a revealed matter, it is not required to believe the revelation itself through faith, but it suffices to have evidence about it that is equally or more certain and infallible than faith itself. Therefore, for divine faith in a defined matter, it is not required to believe by divine faith that the definition is legitimate, but fallible moral certainty suffices, which is much inferior to the certainty of faith. This consequence, however, is most clearly invalid. Therefore, if the Salamancan Fathers were to substitute, in place of divine faith concerning legitimate definition and legitimate Pontiff, infallible supernatural evidence about this very matter—such as is the evidence of revelation—we would willingly grant them that it would not be necessary to believe through faith that the definition is legitimate. But we object to the notion that fallible moral certainty about a legitimate definition suffices for the defined matter to be of infallible faith. Hence...

**60.** I argue thus: The infallibility of divine and Catholic faith rests not only on infallible divine revelation, but also on the infallible proposition of the Church, because it depends on divine revelation as proposed through the Church. Therefore, faith would be deceived not only if the revelation were false, but also if the Church's definition were false. But for a revealed matter to be of divine faith, or certain according to faith, it is required that the revelation be certain according to faith, or in place of that, through infallible evidence, and mere moral certainty does not suffice. Therefore, for a defined matter to be of divine faith, mere fallible moral certainty that the definition is legitimate is not sufficient, but infallible certainty of faith is required, or infallible supernatural evidence. But this evidence is not available regarding a legitimate definition. Therefore, that infallible certainty of faith is required. See above, *disputation 1, question 13, from number 8*.

**61.** But you might say: In order to believe by divine faith something that has been revealed, it is not necessary to first believe by divine faith the revelation itself as the object of belief, as we have shown in the cited passage, from number 11. Therefore, in order to believe by divine faith something defined by the Pontiff, it is not necessary to believe by divine faith that it has been legitimately defined, and by a legitimate Pontiff. I distinguish the consequent: It is not necessary to believe by divine faith explicitly and as the object of belief that the definition is legitimate, I concede the consequence; implicitly and as the means by which, or as that to which assent is given, I deny the consequence. And so we acknowledge that in order to believe by divine faith something defined by the Pontiff, it is not required to first explicitly believe through a prior act of divine faith that the definition is legitimate and from a legitimate Pope, which can be proven by the same reasoning with which we demonstrated the same regarding revelation against Suárez, as above. Nevertheless, just as, this notwithstanding, it is required that revelation be believed by divine faith as the means by which, and as that to which assent is given, and that it be proposed as an infallible motive and as infallibly certain, and it is not sufficient that it be

proposed as merely morally certain from human motives, as we demonstrated in the same place from number 25 and 27, so we say the same about the definition of the Church: Because although this is not the formal motive of faith, it is nevertheless an essential condition on the part of the motive of Catholic faith as Catholic, whence it ought to be proposed as certain and infallible, just like revelation itself. For it is one thing that in the order of believing, neither revelation nor the definition of the Church need be believed first as the object of belief, and another that they need not be certain and infallible, and proposed as such: For we say that both revelation and the Church's definition need not be believed first as the object of divine faith, nor even of human faith, nor by any other judgment; nevertheless, both revelation and the Church's definition must first be proposed with certainty not only moral, but metaphysical and infallible, and they must possess this certainty, so that they can move one to assent of divine faith concerning the thing revealed or defined, because unless they possess and are proposed with such certainty, they cannot move one to a completely infallible assent to the thing defined or revealed.

**62.** Third, the conclusion is proven: Because it is of faith, immediately and absolutely, that today the Apostolic dignity of Supreme Pastor and Vicar of Christ, which Christ himself conferred upon Divine Peter, truly perseveres in the Roman Pontiff. But for that dignity to truly persevere today in the Roman Pontiff most formally means that the Roman Pontiff ruling the Church today, namely Innocent XII, is the true Pontiff and Vicar of Christ. Therefore, immediately and absolutely, it is of faith that Innocent XII, who rules the Church today, is the true Pontiff and Vicar of Christ. The major premise has been demonstrated above, in question 9, and is Catholic dogma, defined most frequently, as can be seen there from number 4. The minor premise is no less certain, because these two statements differ only in terms of active and passive voice: "Today the Pontifical dignity truly perseveres in the Roman Pontiff" and "The Roman Pontiff reigning today truly conserves or retains the Pontifical dignity, or is the true Pontiff." Therefore, one is formally the same as the other.

**63.** It is confirmed, or explained: Because it is immediately of faith that the visible dignity of the Head of the Church conferred upon Peter will persevere in the Church until the day of judgment, for Christ immediately revealed this when He said to Peter: *Upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Therefore, it is immediately of faith, and immediately revealed, that this dignity always truly perseveres in the Church of God, except during the time of a vacant See or schism, which does not remove the moral continuation and perseverance, as we saw above in question 9, from number 11. Therefore, since today is not a time of schism, nor of a vacant See, it is immediately of faith, and immediately revealed, that the supreme dignity of the visible head perseveres in the Church today. Therefore, it is immediately of faith that there is today in the Church a true visible head, to whom the Church is visibly subordinated. This evidently is none other than Innocent XII, because now is not a time of schism, in which two visible heads are proposed to the Church, but only one, namely Innocent. Therefore, it is immediately of faith that Innocent is the true visible head of the Church, or the true Pontiff.



**64.** Perhaps you will say that it is a matter of faith that this dignity perseveres in the legitimate Successors of Divine Peter, but it is not a matter of faith that Innocent is the legitimate Successor of Divine Peter, because it is not a matter of faith that he was legitimately elected. But against this, the argument already made returns: for it is a matter of faith that this visible dignity perseveres today in the legitimate Successor of Divine Peter; therefore, it is a matter of faith that there exists today a legitimate Successor in whom that dignity perseveres. But there is no one else today who possesses the marks of a legitimate Successor except Innocent XII. Therefore, it is a matter of faith that he is the legitimate Successor of Divine Peter. If, however, being legitimately elected is required for this, then at least mediately it will be a matter of faith that he is legitimately elected. Let me explain: That revelation of Christ, in which it is immediately revealed that the dignity of Divine Peter will persevere in the Church, is not conditional upon a fallible or defectible condition, but is an entirely absolute revelation. This is so first because it reveals the firmness of the Rock upon which the Church is founded in the same sense as the firmness of the Church itself; but the revelation concerning the firm perseverance of the Church is not conditional upon a fallible and defectible condition, but is absolutely unconditional—otherwise it would not be absolutely a matter of faith today that the Church founded by Christ perseveres. Therefore, the revelation concerning the firm duration of that Rock, which is the Apostolic dignity of Peter, is absolute and not subject to a fallible and defectible condition. Furthermore, Christ would not have sufficiently assured His Church of the constancy and perseverance of that Rock if He had left it dependent upon a fallible and defectible condition. For if the meaning were: “That most solid Rock will firmly persevere if a proper election does not fail, but will fail if a proper election should fail,” by leaving that election contingent and fallible, how could the Church be certain of this today? Indeed, it might say: “Perhaps that Rock has failed because perhaps a proper election has failed.” Therefore, that revelation must be understood in an absolute sense and believed as absolute. If that is so, then an absolute revelation about the perseverance of the dignity is an absolute revelation about the existence of a subject or Successor in that dignity, because a dignity cannot persevere except in a subject and Successor, as is self-evident. Therefore, that revelation of Christ absolutely reveals that today there exists a true Successor of Peter in whom that dignity perseveres. But this is evidently no one else except Innocent XII. Therefore, by the force of that revelation, it is absolutely revealed and absolutely a matter of faith that he is the legitimate Successor of Divine Peter, and that the dignity of Peter perseveres in him. Therefore, if being properly elected, being validly baptized, validly consecrated, etc., are essentially required for this, all these things will also be matters of faith, at least mediately.

**65.** Nor can it be said that it is indeed revealed and a matter of faith that this dignity perseveres today in some legitimate Successor of his in a vague sense, but not determinately in this specific individual. For the contrary is true, because it is revealed and a matter of faith in the same way that there is one visible head of the Church as there is one Church, since the unity of the visible Church essentially requires one visible head on earth, as we demonstrated above in question 7. But it is not only a matter of faith that there exists one Holy, Catholic, and visible Church in a vague and indeterminate sense, but that it is

determinately this specific congregation of men who profess the faith under Innocent XII, as has been shown in question 6. Therefore, it is not only revealed and a matter of faith that one visible head of the Church perseveres today in a vague and indeterminate sense, but determinately and individually, namely in Innocent XII. This is explained because the reason why the one Catholic Church is a matter of faith, not only vaguely but determinately and numerically this one, is because otherwise men would not have a certain Church of divine faith for finding the true faith and attaining salvation, and because only this specific Church has the marks and signs of the true Church of God. But only Innocent XII today has the marks and signs of the true visible head of the Church; and furthermore, if the head of the Church were only certain as a matter of faith vaguely and not individually, the Church would not have a certain rule of faith for discerning true faith from false. Therefore. See the reasons expounded above in questions 6 and 7, for they equally prove that it is a matter of faith immediately and absolutely that there is one visible head of the Church in the individual sense, just as there is one specific Church, and they can easily be applied to the present matter; for brevity's sake, we do not expand on them here.

**66.** Finally, it is confirmed because it has been revealed and is a matter of faith that the true Church of Christ is visible on earth, as has been shown above in question 5, from number 57. But the visible Church essentially entails, or at least integrally includes, a visible head. Therefore, it is also revealed and a matter of faith that the true head of this Church is visible, for when a perfect visible Body is revealed, its visible head and members are immediately revealed by the same revelations, since they are intrinsic parts of it. But it is entirely evident that today there is no other visible head of this Church, namely the Roman Church, except Innocent XII. Therefore, it is a matter of faith that Innocent XII is the true head of the Church. But this is most formally to be truly the Pope. Therefore, it is a matter of faith that Innocent XII is truly the Pope.

**67.** It is explained, because it is a matter of faith that within this visible Church, the true head or Vicar of Christ is not separated from the visible head and visible Vicar of Christ. Otherwise, it would not be contrary to faith to say that the true Vicar of Christ on earth is not the visible head of the Church, or that the visible head of the Church is not the true Vicar of Christ—both of which are heretical assertions, no less than saying that the visible Church of Christ is not the true Church and Spouse of Christ, or that the true Spouse and Church of Christ is not visible. But it is physically and metaphysically evident that there is no other visible head of Christ's Church today except Innocent XII, because it is most evident that the Church today sees no other head and visibly acknowledges no other. Therefore, it is immediately and absolutely a matter of faith that he is the true Vicar of Christ on earth.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

**68.** FIRST OBJECTION, especially against the first proof: Although it is immediately revealed and a matter of faith universally that *“Every properly elected person is a true Pope,”* it does not follow that it is absolutely a matter of faith that this specific individual, namely Innocent XII, is the true Pope. Therefore, etc. The antecedent is proven. First:

Because it is not a matter of faith that this man has been properly elected. Second, by comparison with a consecrated Host, for although it is immediately a matter of faith universally that “*Every properly consecrated Host contains the Body of Christ*,” it cannot be inferred that it is immediately and absolutely a matter of faith that this particular Host, which is believed to be consecrated, contains the Body of Christ. Therefore, the same applies in our case.

**69.** The common solution is that from this universal premise: *Every duly elected [Pope]*, etc. together with moral certainty regarding this particular case, namely that Innocent XII was duly elected, it follows that it is absolutely a matter of faith that this specific individual is the true Pope. And because this moral certainty regarding a proper election exists in the case of a peacefully elected Pope, but not in the case of a properly consecrated Host, therefore the first particular proposition is absolutely a matter of faith, but not the second. But this solution remains sufficiently refuted, both because perhaps there is no greater moral certainty, by virtue of moral certainty alone, regarding the proper election of a Pope than regarding the proper consecration of a Host, especially if many priests were to consecrate it in great number. And also because moral certainty alone, however great, concerning the containment of a particular case within a universally revealed truth, cannot suffice for that particular case to be absolutely a matter of faith without a tacit condition, as has been demonstrated.

**70.** But you might say: The faith in a revealed matter depends no less on the evidence of credibility than absolute faith concerning a particular depends on the certainty of that particular’s inclusion under a universal revelation. But although the evidence of credibility is only morally certain, and only makes the revelation morally certain, it is sufficient for faith to be absolute. Therefore, although the inclusion of a particular is only morally certain, it suffices for faith concerning such a particular to be absolute. But against this I argue: Because the evidence of credibility neither is, nor constitutes, the formal motive of absolute faith regarding a credible mystery, but consists in motives which make an absolute revelation about the mystery prudently credible, and these being supposed, only the absolute revelation as such is the adequate motive of faith. However, the inclusion of a particular in a universal revelation essentially constitutes the particular itself as being absolutely revealed, and the universal revelation as being an absolute revelation about the particular; hence it intrinsically constitutes, albeit connotatively, the formal motive of absolute faith as absolute, and does not simply pertain to the domain of prior credibility. But although on the part of credibility moral certainty alone suffices, nevertheless on the part of revelation as the motive of faith, it does not suffice that it be proposed as only morally certain, but it must be proposed with metaphysical certainty and infallibility. Therefore, there is an immense disparity. The minor is evident, because moral certainty alone suffices in the motives of prudent credibility for this reason: because faith does not rest upon them. But absolute faith in a revealed matter intrinsically rests upon the absolute revelation as absolute of the revealed matter, as upon a formal motive. Therefore [the disparity stands]. Likewise, there is another disparity, because a mystery being absolutely revealed does not depend on the motives of credibility, for something could be absolutely revealed, even though it might not be evidently credible. But it is impossible for

a particular to be absolutely revealed through a universal revelation unless it is contained under the universal. Hence, faith in a mystery depends on evident credibility only extrinsically and presuppositively, not so much in the nature of absolute faith as in the nature of prudent [faith], as I will say in its proper place; but absolute faith in a particular by virtue of a universal revelation depends intrinsically, in the nature of absolute faith, on the inclusion of the particular under the universal, because it depends intrinsically, and [as] a motive, on the fact that the particular is absolutely revealed. Therefore [the objection fails].

**71.** I set aside the fact that the evident credibility of mysteries with respect to the whole Church, although intrinsically it only establishes moral certainty, nevertheless extrinsically connects metaphysically with the truth of the mysteries, as I will explain in its proper place, because it is metaphysically infallible that God will not permit, in the present providence, that a false mystery or false revelation be made evidently credible to the whole Church. Similarly, therefore, although the election of a Pope peacefully completed and promulgated, of itself and intrinsically only establishes moral certainty, nevertheless it connects extrinsically and metaphysically with the validity of the election and with the truth of the elected Pope, because it is metaphysically infallible, by virtue of Christ's promise and revelation, that He will not permit someone who has not been validly elected or who is not the true Pope to be peacefully elected and proposed to the whole Church as the true Pope. Therefore, moral certainty alone concerning the validity of the election is not sufficient, but rather certainty about the inclusion of the particular case within the universally revealed truth.

**72.** But you may say secondly: An equal certainty of inclusion is not required as the certainty of faith regarding a particular case: Therefore, merely moral certainty suffices. The antecedent is proven, first because the certainty of faith is not required, since it is not necessary that the inclusion of the particular in the universal be a matter of faith. But any other certainty is lesser: Therefore, equal certainty is not required. Second: Because by virtue of the universal proposition "Every man is mortal," which is revealed, this particular proposition "Peter is mortal" is absolutely a matter of faith. And yet the inclusion of the latter under the former is not as certain as faith itself, because it is only certain with the certainty of natural evidence, which is less than the certainty of faith: Therefore, equal certainty is not required. I respond by distinguishing the antecedent: Equal certainty is not required, nor metaphysically infallible certainty, I deny the antecedent. However, metaphysically infallible certainty is required; I further distinguish: For intrinsically absolute faith regarding a particular case, I concede the antecedent; for extrinsically absolute and tacitly conditional faith, I deny the antecedent and the consequent in the same sense. Thus, for intrinsically absolute faith concerning a particular case, which is what we are discussing now, a complete or metaphysically infallible certainty is required regarding the inclusion of the particular under the universal revelation, by virtue of which it is believed absolutely, because such certainty is required that leaves no fallibility in faith. This certainty need not be of faith, nor equal to the certainty of faith, because it is sufficient that it be metaphysical certainty of natural evidence, in which manner the inclusion of this particular proposition "Peter is mortal" under that universal "Man is mortal" is certain, because it is metaphysically infallible that "Peter is a man," and therefore this certainty

suffices, but moral certainty does not suffice, because this would leave faith physically and metaphysically fallible.

**73.** But you will raise objections against this, first: Because it would follow that it is not absolutely *de fide* that Cicero contracted original sin, or that he was mortal. Second, it follows that not even purely physical and natural certainty about someone being human is sufficient for it to be absolutely *de fide* that he is mortal or conceived in sin. This is because certainty of this kind is metaphysically fallible, for one can be mistaken in considering as human someone who appears human by natural evidence, as happened to the son of Tobias, who by natural evidence thought his companion Angel was human, and yet he was mistaken. However, if this is maintained, we could have no absolutely certain faith about any particular individual, because concerning particular individuals we cannot have any certainty other than purely physical certainty from sensible experience, which nevertheless is absolutely fallible. But this is absurd. Therefore.

**74.** I respond that concerning Cicero and other individuals, of whose existence and reality there is only moral certainty, it is only extrinsically absolute faith and tacitly conditional faith that they contracted original sin, or were in fact mortal, or whatever else has been revealed generally about all human beings. But it is not intrinsically absolute faith, without that tacit condition “if they truly existed as narrated”; for this would require greater than moral certainty about whether they truly existed in reality. To the second objection, I say that purely physical certainty which is in reality fallible—such as certainty about particulars derived solely from sensory experience—is not sufficient for divine faith to be intrinsically absolute. This is evident from the very example of the one arguing, because the son of Tobias surely believed with divine faith that every human being is mortal, and he had sensible evidence that his traveling companion was human; and yet he did not have intrinsically absolute faith that the one whom he saw with his eyes was mortal, otherwise divine faith in him would have been false. It follows, therefore, that divine faith regarding particulars as they fall purely under sensible and fallible experience, when it relies solely on universal revelation, is only extrinsically absolute with respect to those particulars. Thus, if perhaps they are mistaken, faith is not intrinsically deceived in itself, but only in that sensible certainty concerning the fulfillment of the condition, by virtue of which faith is called extrinsically absolute; intrinsically, however, it remains only tacitly conditional. But if divine faith is considered with respect to particulars that are in reality and intelligibly such—about which there is metaphysical evidence that they are individuals of human nature, without any fallibility—then faith regarding them can be intrinsically absolute and without tacit condition. And similarly concerning particular individuals explicitly revealed in the Sacred Text.

**75.** But if you should say: Innocent XII is a singular [individual], whose existence is known only sensibly and to the senses. Therefore, it will not be a matter of intrinsically absolute faith that he is the true Pope, since the senses can be deceived regarding his reality, such that he might not actually be a man. I respond by denying the antecedent: Because it is a matter of faith that the visible Pontiff, visibly presented to the Church, is in reality the Pontiff, just as the visible Church is in reality the true Church of Christ, and conversely, as

we stated above in number 64. Hence in this matter, presupposing Christ's revelations, the senses and visible experience cannot be deceived. Concerning other singular [individuals], however, there are no revelations or promises from Christ, and thus other [individuals] are believed with a tacit condition. Yet regarding a singular Pontiff, no condition should be tacitly applied, because it has been revealed that the Head of the Church will be visible, and that the visible Head of the Church is its true Head. See *above*. But you might say: at least with respect to us, it is fallible [knowledge] that he currently lives, for perhaps he has already died. Therefore, faith concerning him cannot be entirely absolute. I respond that this condition, *if he lives*, should always be understood implicitly, nor do we exclude this when we say that faith concerning him is entirely absolute. Rather, we exclude only other conditions that are intrinsically hidden even from those who see him, which, even supposing that he lives, could render his infallible authority less certain.

**76.** I answer better to the principal objection, therefore, by distinguishing the antecedent: It does not follow from this that it is absolutely a matter of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope, from that universal principle precisely, I concede; From that principle, and from the fact that it is entirely infallible that Innocent XII is included under that principle, that is, that he was validly elected, I deny the antecedent. To prove this, I distinguish the antecedent: It is not immediately a matter of faith that Innocent XII was duly elected, I concede the antecedent entirely; That it is neither mediately nor immediately a matter of faith, I deny the antecedent. For it is only required that it be entirely infallible that he was validly elected; for this it suffices that it be a matter of faith, either immediately or mediately, that is, that it be immediately revealed, or that it be infallibly inferred from revealed truths. In this way it is a matter of faith and infallible that his election was valid, because it is revealed that the Church cannot err in universally proposing matters of faith, and also that she is governed by the Holy Spirit in consummating, completing, and promulgating that election. This either formally means that an election, once peacefully promulgated, cannot be null, or at least this is inferred from it by an entirely infallible consequence. To the second proof, the disparity is evident, because it is not at all infallible that a particular Host is duly or validly consecrated, nor is there an immediate or mediate revelation about this, but at most there is moral certitude that is absolutely fallible, which is not at all sufficient, as has been shown. But that the election of Innocent XII was valid is entirely and absolutely infallible by virtue of Christ's revelation or promise, as has been shown.

**77.** But you may reply: It cannot be a matter of faith, either mediately or immediately, that that election was valid. Therefore, the solution collapses. The antecedent is proven because for that election to be valid, several requirements are necessary which are not matters of faith, either mediately or immediately. But it cannot be a matter of faith, either mediately or immediately, that that election is valid unless all the requirements for its validity are matters of faith. Therefore, etc. The major premise is proven because for that election to be valid, it is required that it be made by two-thirds of the Cardinals, that they be true Cardinals, that it not be conducted through simony, that the elect not be a manifestly known heretic, that he be a man, that he be of sound mind, as we have seen above in number 4. But all these things cannot be matters of faith, either mediately or immediately, because they are revealed neither mediately nor immediately. Therefore, etc.

I respond that, among these requirements, some are so essentially required that not even the Church can supply for their defect, such as that he be baptized, a man, of sound mind, validly ordained, etc. And such requirements, once a peaceful election is supposed—that is, peacefully completed and promulgated—are immediately matters of faith and mediately revealed, because they are infallibly inferred from revealed truths, namely from the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit promised to the Church lest it err in proposing matters of faith, from the perpetual duration of the dignity or Chair of Peter revealed by Christ, and from the visible unity of the Church revealed along with its Pastor, according to that saying: “There shall be one fold and one shepherd.” For from these, as already remains demonstrated in the proofs of the conclusion, it is infallibly inferred that the Church cannot err concerning the essential conditions of a valid election, and that the elect, on the supposition that he is elected and peacefully promulgated and presented to the Church, cannot lack those conditions. However, there are other requirements that the Church can supply, namely that the election be by two-thirds of the Cardinals, that all of them be true Cardinals, that none vote through simony or through fear. And concerning these, it is certainly true that they can nullify an election if they are alleged before the election is peacefully completed and promulgated. However, if such grounds for nullity are not alleged beforehand, but with them being unknown or overlooked, the election is completed and peacefully promulgated with no one reasonably objecting, it already remains infallible that either those defects did not occur or the Church has supplied for them, as it can. Nor do the contrary Canons present an obstacle, because if the Canons declare that those defects nullify an election, this must be understood in the manner explained, namely if they are alleged before its peaceful promulgation, but not absolutely. For no Pontiff nor Council could decree that on those grounds, even if not alleged in time, the election would remain null and the Pope null, even after its peaceful promulgation and acceptance. Wherefore, in formal terms, I deny the antecedent. To the proof, I distinguish the major premise: Several requirements are necessary, from among those which the Church cannot supply, which are not matters of faith either mediately or immediately, supposing a peaceful election and its promulgation—I deny the major premise. From among those which the Church can supply, I subdistinguish: Which are not matters of faith mediately or immediately such that they determinately concurred—I let the major premise pass. That it is not a matter of faith in a general way either that those requirements concurred or that the Church supplied for their defect—I deny the major premise. To the proof of which, the answer is clear from what has been said.

**78.** But you may ask whether it is immediately or only mediately a matter of faith that such an election was valid, and similarly concerning the essential conditions for its validity? I respond that, as the Fathers of Salamanca correctly note on this matter, it matters little for our purpose whether these things are of faith immediately rather than mediately, because as long as it is metaphysically infallible that he was validly elected and with all the essential conditions for the validity of the election, this suffices for it to be immediately of faith, absolutely and in particular, that this peacefully elected person, namely Innocent XII, is the true Pope. Nevertheless, I say that it is more probable that a proper or valid election and its essential conditions are only mediately of faith, and have only infallible theological

certainty by way of theological conclusion. For if we attend to that revelation, by virtue of which the perpetuity of the Apostolic See in the Successors of Divine Peter is immediately revealed, by virtue of that revelation only this is directly revealed, and only this is defined by the Church: namely, that the Roman Pontiff existing at a given time is the true Vicar of Christ and the true Successor of Divine Peter, from which it is inferred by theological consequence that he was properly elected and that all essential conditions were present. However, this is neither immediately and directly revealed by that revelation, nor is it thus defined by the Church. If, however, we attend to that revelation in which the assistance of the Holy Spirit is promised to the Church, and the Church is called the Pillar and Foundation of truth, although it seems through that revelation to be implicitly and immediately revealed that the Church cannot err in that election as peacefully promulgated, nevertheless because this is not directly defined by the Church in this sense, although it is inferred from what is defined, it is more probable to me that, although in itself by virtue of those revelations the validity of that already peacefully promulgated election would be immediately of faith, nevertheless for us it is only mediately of faith and theologically certain.

**79.** From this it is evident, to satisfy an unspoken objection, that not only is it piously believed that the Church does not err in the election of the Pope, but it is theologically certain and metaphysically infallible based on the aforementioned revelations and promises, as has been demonstrated. Nor does that story—which is more a fable than history—pose an obstacle, concerning a person believed by the Church to be Pontiff, who was afterward discovered to be a woman. For this is utterly false, an old wives’ tale narrated by Martin of Poland [Martinus Polonus], a most simple man who was quickly deceived through his mental weakness, from whom some others transcribed it—all of them either deceived or deceiving. On this matter, see Bellarmine, Book 3 on the Roman Pontiff, chapter 24, and Baronius, from the year 853, and others who have written about the Roman Pontiff, who clearly demonstrate the falsity of such a fable. If, however, you should say: “At least one who believes this tale is not a heretic; therefore, it is not a matter of faith that the tale is false; therefore, it is not a matter of faith that a Pope elected and accepted by the Church is the true Pope.” I respond that those who might believe this fable out of ignorance and lack of knowledge in matters of faith, or without pertinacity, would not be heretics, just as those who ignorantly believe other things contrary to the faith are not heretics. However, one who pertinaciously believes this fable to be true and contends that at some time the entire Church was in error by accepting a woman as the true Pontiff would then be a heretic.

**[The numbering here jumps from 80-90. This is a mistake of the original editor.]**

**90.** You will object secondly: It is not a matter of faith, at least with respect to us, that Innocent XII is the true Pope before he is elected, nor that he is elected before the peaceful promulgation of his election, nor that he is promulgated before the acceptance of the Church, nor immediately after the peaceful acceptance of the Church, nor finally when the Pope defines something *ex Cathedra*: Therefore it is never immediately a matter of faith. The antecedent, as to the first part, is evident, because one not yet elected is not Pope. As



to the second part it is also certain, because before the promulgation of the election he is not proposed to the Church as Pope: But nothing is a matter of faith for us, or with respect to the Church, before it is proposed to the Church as something to be held by faith: Therefore, although he may be peacefully elected, if the election has not yet been promulgated, it is not yet a matter of faith for us that he is the true Pope. As to the third part, it is also proven, because even after the election has been peacefully promulgated, if it is not accepted by the Church, he will not be a certain Pope: Therefore, it is not a matter of faith that he is such. Secondly: Because the Cardinals who promulgate the election do not have infallible authority in proposing matters of faith, for if a General Council without the Pope does not have such infallibility: Therefore, much less does the College of Cardinals: But for something to be a matter of faith for us, it must be proposed to the Church by one having infallible authority in proposing matters of faith: Therefore, when an election has been promulgated by the Cardinals, but not yet accepted by the Church, it is not yet a matter of faith for us that the elected one is the true Pope. As to the fourth part it is also proven, because the acceptance of the Church, says Father Sedio, in the present Controversy 6, number 79, only produces moral certainty consisting in the consent of many: Therefore, it cannot itself make something a matter of divine faith which was not previously presupposed to be of divine faith. Secondly: Because the Church that accepts is the remaining Body of the Church, confused, without a Head, and without unity, because apart from the College of Cardinals, which promulgates the election, there remains only the lower Clergy, and the crowd of the Faithful, in which, considered apart from such a College, and from the Pope not yet accepted, there is no unity of Head, nor of Congregation, because it is not congregated in the manner of a Council: But in the Body of the Church thus taken, there is no infallible authority to make a matter of faith what is not a matter of faith: Therefore, through the acceptance of the Church it does not become a matter of faith for us that the elected one is the true Pope. As to the fifth part, finally, it is also proven, because the infallible authority of the Pope must be presupposed before he defines: for he does not have infallible authority in defining because he defines, but rather he defines infallibly because he has infallible authority in defining: Therefore, if before he defines, he does not have infallible authority of defining, neither will he have it in the very act of defining: But he does not have such infallible authority unless it is a matter of faith that he is the true Pope: Therefore, if it is not a matter of faith that he is the true Pope before he defines, neither in the very act of defining will it be a matter of faith that he is the true Pope. This is explained: If before he defines, it is not a matter of faith that he is the true Pope: Therefore, neither is it a matter of faith that he has infallible authority in defining, because the Dignity of the Pope consists most especially in this authority: But if this is not a matter of faith: Therefore, before he actually defines, this conditional is not a matter of faith: If he defines, his definition will be infallible: Therefore, when he has defined, his definition will not be to be believed by faith, nor infallible: But through a definition, which it is not a matter of faith is infallible, it cannot be made a matter of faith that the one defining is the true Pope: Therefore.

**91.** This argument requires that we determine when it begins to be a matter of faith for us that the elected person is the true Pope. I say first, that before someone is peacefully

elected, it is not a matter of faith, indeed he is not even in reality the true Pope. No one doubts this, because as we have shown above, Christ did not institute this dignity to pass to Successors except through the election of the Church. I say secondly, that one who is rightly elected, but not yet peacefully promulgated, is indeed already in reality the true Pope, but it is not yet a matter of faith for us. The first point is evident because Christ, in order to confer in reality that Apostolic Dignity, awaits the designation of the person to be made by the Church, and such designation is consummated and absolute when the election, in the nature of an election, is consummated and peacefully resolved. Moreover, when the Church, represented in the Sacred College of Cardinals, promulgates the election and proposes the elected as the true Pope, it does not propose as the true Pope anyone except him whom it already supposes to be the true Pope, for that promulgation and proposition is not designative of the person so that he might become the true Pope, nor does it make the true Pope, but is only declarative of the true Pope. Therefore, prior to this, the elected must already be supposed to be the true Pope, otherwise the Church would declare what was not true, but false before that declaration. The second point is also evident, and is rightly proved in the argument, because what has not been promulgated or sufficiently proposed to the Body of the Church is not a matter of faith for us, although in itself it may be true and infallible. Before the Pope can define something *ex Cathedra*, it must already be absolutely presupposed as a matter of faith for us that he is the true Pope. This is evident, both because it is rightly proved in the argument, and because the second reason for the Conclusion above in number 52 also proves this, as will be clear to anyone who considers it. Nor does it stand as an objection if you say: It would be sufficient provision for the infallibility of faith and of the Church if Christ's promises were understood disjunctively, so that He only promised one of two things, namely, either that He would not permit an invalidly elected person to be regarded by the Church as the true Pope, or that if such a person were so regarded, He would not permit him to define and propose anything *ex Cathedra*; for with this assertion, the certainty of faith would remain firm and secure. But Christ's promises were made solely for this purpose, that the Church might never be deceived in faith, and that the Chair of Peter might be infallible in proposing matters of faith. Therefore, they ought to be understood in that conditional or disjunctive sense. But understood in this way, they do not make it an absolute and determinate matter of faith that one peacefully elected is the true Pope, but only make it a matter of faith disjunctively, either that he is the true Pope, or that God will not permit him to define anything *ex Cathedra*. Therefore, until it is established that he has defined something, it will not be an absolute matter of faith that he is the true Pope. This objection, I say, does not stand. First, because Christ's promises were made not only for the purpose that the Church might not be deceived in matters defined *ex Cathedra Petri*, but also that it might have a certain and infallible power of the keys, to which the Faithful with firm hope might have recourse for the remission of sins and for obtaining indulgence, for He promised this when He said: "I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." And the Supreme Pontiff begins to exercise this power immediately. Second, because these promises are also ordained so that the Church might be perfect and truly one, truly and infallibly joined to its one visible head and true Pastor, and also so that the Church might not be deceived, nor could be deceived, in recognizing this head. But before the Pontiff

defines anything *ex Cathedra*, the Church reveres him as its Supreme Pastor, as having the keys of Heaven, and as the infallible rule of faith in first act. Therefore, lest the Church be deceived in these matters, Christ's promises must be understood absolutely and determinately, not under that disjunction. This is confirmed because, for the Church to be rightly provided for, it is not enough that the one whom the Church holds as Pope cannot define falsehood, but it is necessary that in controversies of faith he can and has the authority to define truth, for this power and authority is absolutely necessary in the Church, as we showed above in question 4. But if it were only a matter of faith disjunctively, either that this person is the true Pope or that he will not define anything *ex Cathedra*, it would only be certain that he could not falsely define anything, but it would not be determinately certain in the Church that he could define, because if he were not the true Pope, he could not define *ex Cathedra*. Therefore, the Church would not be sufficiently provided for. Thus, Christ's promises must be understood in a determinate and absolute sense, so that to the Successors of Divine Peter He absolutely promises the power of the keys and infallible authority independently of whether they actually define something or not.

**92.** Therefore, the entire difficulty remains between promulgation and acceptance. I maintain, however, that it seems more probable to me that from the moment an election is peacefully promulgated, and the elected person accepts the election, and all this is authentically proposed to the Body of the Church, it begins to be an absolute article of faith that the elected person is the true Pope—even prior to the acceptance by the Body of the Church. I am moved to this position, first, because the remaining Body of the Church is bound to accept that election and that elect who has been thus peacefully elected and promulgated. From the moment he is peacefully elected and promulgated, no one from the remaining Body of the Church has the authority to reject that election as null, nor the one so elected as a false or invalid Pope. This is because all others, apart from the Cardinals and the elected one, are considered as subjects and inferiors, who are bound to ratify whatever the College of Cardinals decides and peacefully carries out in that election. Indeed, the entire universal Church has committed to them full power and faculty concerning that election, and has determined that whatever that College peacefully performs and promulgates should be ratified by the remaining Body of the Church; therefore that College represents the entire Church. Thus, all others are bound to accept it as soon as possible. But acceptance occurs by believing him to be the true Pope. Therefore, they are bound to believe as soon as possible that he is the true Pope. Consequently, even before their acceptance, it is already presupposed as a matter of faith for them that he is the true Pope. Let me explain: the definitions and declarations of the Pope *ex Cathedra*, to be matters of faith for us, do not depend on our acceptance, nor on the acceptance of the Body of the Church, but once made and promulgated, they are matters of faith for all subjects of the Church, and they oblige all to faith in them. But the peaceful election of the Pope, peacefully completed and promulgated, and accepted by the elected himself, has the force of a sufficiently promulgated definition of the Church. Therefore, even before the acceptance of the subjects, it is already presupposed absolutely as a matter of faith, and obliges all subjects to faith in it. Furthermore: if before acceptance it were not a matter of faith, and became a matter of faith through the

acceptance of the subjects, the subjects themselves would make for themselves an article of faith regarding the existence of the Pope, and would be for themselves an infallible rule of faith, or at least by accepting would constitute for themselves an infallible rule of faith. But this is repugnant to subjects or members of the Church. Therefore [it cannot be so]. Finally, because the infallible authority of the Pope, once peacefully elected and promulgated, over all members of the Church is independent of the subjects, for the elected one receives it solely from Christ, independently of the rest of the Body of the Church. Therefore, even before the acceptance of the subjects, the elected Pope is already presupposed as an infallible rule with respect to them. But he cannot be understood as an infallible rule with respect to them unless it is understood as a matter of faith, for them, that he is the true Pope. Therefore [my position is proven].

**93.** It follows, therefore, that it begins to be a matter of faith for the members of the Church that the elected person is the true Pope when, after the election has been peacefully completed and accepted by the elect, it is peacefully promulgated and proposed to the rest of the Body of the Church, for from that moment all are bound to believe absolutely that he is the true Pope. To the proof of the third part of the antecedent to the contrary, I respond by denying the possibility of the case where, after the election has been peacefully completed and peacefully promulgated, the whole Church would not accept it. It could only happen that some subject or subjects would refuse to accept it, and then he or they would be punished as schismatics—namely, if they purely refused to render obedience to him; but if they refused to believe in him as the infallible rule of faith, or denied that he was the true Pope, they would have to be regarded as heretics. To the second proof I say that the Cardinals, in that function of completing and promulgating the election, possess infallible authority, since in that function they possess the authority of the whole Church, which is without doubt infallible. Nor is this authority without the Head of the Church, for since the preceding Supreme Pontiffs with General Councils committed the entire authority of the Church for that function to the Sacred College of Cardinals, consequently in that College there virtually lives the authority of the preceding Pontiffs and of the whole Church with its head. Furthermore, because the newly elected, by accepting such an election for himself and by presenting himself as the true Pope, quasi-confirms his own election and authorizes its promulgation. Nor does it stand against this that he himself cannot make himself a matter of faith, for declaratively and by way of proposition he is the reason of himself and of others, since he is the first in his kind, and thus with the College of Cardinals he can declare himself the true Pope. This indeed is evident from the act itself; for many Pontiffs have defined with the universal Council that the Roman Pontiff is the true Successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ. See above, question 9, from number 4.

**94.** Third objection: What is not immediately revealed, nor defined, is not immediately of faith. But it is not immediately revealed, nor defined, concerning this particular man, namely Innocent XII, that he is the true Pope, because no mention of such a particular man is made in Sacred Scripture, nor in the definitions of the Church, nor can it be derived from immemorial tradition, since it is a new fact. Therefore, it is not immediately of faith. I respond by conceding the major premise but denying the minor, because for something to be immediately revealed, it is not required that it be found in Scripture in express terms

and by proper name, but it is sufficient that it be revealed in Scripture according to its sense, and that such sense is established from the tradition of the Church or the common understanding of the Fathers. It is evident, however, that Christ expressly revealed that the Rock upon which the Church is founded is the Divine Peter as Pastor of the Church, and that this foundation would always remain firm in the Church, so that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. This, according to the perpetual tradition of the Church and the common understanding of the Fathers, has no other meaning than that the Dignity of Peter, firm, true, and infallible, will persevere in each and every one of Peter's Successors visibly until the day of judgment, without ever lacking a true Successor, except during a Vacant See or in time of schism. And consequently, that today, when it is not a time of Vacant See nor of schism, that particular man who visibly governs the Church in the See of Peter is the true Successor of Peter and the true Pope, or Vicar of Christ.

**95.** You will object fourthly: One who denies a proposition which is immediately of faith is a formal heretic. But one who would deny this proposition: "Innocent XII is the true Pope," would not be a formal heretic. Therefore, that proposition is not immediately of faith. I distinguish the major premise; one who denies such a proposition pertinaciously, after sufficient promulgation, I concede; if one denies it otherwise, from ignorance or insufficient promulgation, I deny the minor premise. And having distinguished the minor premise in the same way, I deny the consequence, because if anyone now knowingly, after the peaceful election of this particular Pope has been sufficiently promulgated, were to deny that he is the true Pope and Vicar of Christ on earth, he would undoubtedly be a formal heretic, although he would not be such if he had denied it out of ignorance or insufficient promulgation.

**96.** You will object fifthly: It is not immediately of faith that Julius II, Eugene IV, and so on for others of past times, were true Popes. But the same reasoning applies to Innocent XII, now reigning. Therefore, it is not immediately of faith that he is the true Pope. The major premise is evident because their having been Popes is known only from human histories; therefore, it is not of divine faith. It is confirmed firstly: Because the definitions of faith made by Predecessors are immediately of faith, although it is not immediately of faith that they themselves were true Popes. Therefore, it is not necessary that it be immediately of faith that the one defining is the true Pope, in order that an article defined by him be immediately of faith, contrary to the reasoning explained above in number 53. It is confirmed secondly: For Innocent to be the true Pope today, it is essentially required that he be alive today. But it is not of faith, even mediately, indeed not even morally certain, that he is alive today. Therefore, neither is it [of faith] that he is the true Pope. The consequence is evident because for something to be absolutely of faith, it is required that the essential conditions requisite for it be of faith, at least mediately, or certainly theologically, or at minimum with moral certainty.

**97.** I respond by distinguishing the major premise: If there exists in the Church an infallible tradition concerning them as true Pontiffs, I deny the major premise. If concerning them there is only a morally certain tradition, I further distinguish: It is not intrinsically absolute faith, without that tacit condition, *if they truly existed and peacefully obtained the Chair of*

*Peter*, that they were true Popes, I concede. It is not extrinsically absolute faith, with that tacit condition, I deny the major and minor premises. Because concerning some Predecessors in the Chair of St. Peter, there exists today in the Church an infallible tradition, especially concerning those for whom there exist definitions of faith, in the preservation of which traditions the Church is completely infallible; and concerning these, it is of intrinsically absolute faith that they were true Popes, nor is it necessary to understand the aforementioned condition, because their Pontificate is not established from purely human histories as human, but from the tradition of the Church, which has, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, divine authority in these traditions, since they pertain to the firmness of faith. Concerning others, however, of whose Pontificate there exist neither definitions in the deposit of the Church nor a constant and uniform tradition, but only fallible history, albeit morally certain, it is only extrinsically absolute faith, and with the tacit condition, in the manner often explained. Concerning Innocent XII, however, who reigns today, there is metaphysical evidence that he is the one who peacefully and visibly reigns, which being supposed, it is of immediate faith that he is the true Pope—of intrinsically absolute faith, I say, and without tacit condition. From this, the answer to the first confirmation is clear. To the second, having conceded the major premise, I distinguish the minor: Taking “today” mathematically for this day on which I write these things, I concede the minor premise. Taking “today” morally, in relation to the time morally present to us, in which he visibly appears in Rome, in which sense we take it, I deny the minor premise and the consequence in the same sense. Because when we say it is of absolute faith that Innocent is the true Pope today in the Church, by “today” we do not understand mathematically this day, but speaking morally, we understand that time morally present to us in which he visibly appears in Rome, although mathematically with respect to this day it is past. But if “today” is understood mathematically, for this day, the tacit condition “if he is alive” is always understood, as we explained above. Hence, when we said in the conclusion that it is absolutely of faith, we do not exclude this tacit condition, but only others which, even supposing that he is alive, would leave his true Pontificate, his authority, and dignity fallible, e.g., these: “If he is rightly elected, if he is rightly baptized, etc.” Because if faith would believe only under these conditions, leaving those fallible, the certainty of faith concerning the true Pope would not be sufficiently absolute, so that, with him presiding, there would be given an absolute firmness of Apostolic dignity in him. Hence these conditions must be of faith, at least mediately, or certain with theological certainty; but that other condition, “if he is alive,” need not be so certain, indeed not even morally certain without prudent fear: In which indeed all are bound to assign a disparity.

**98.** You will object sixthly: Faith in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and Christ’s presence therein is no less necessary in the Church than faith in the true Pope, nor is the former less revealed than the latter, especially since Christ explicitly said: “This is my Body: Do this as often as you will, etc.” And: “Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” And yet it is not immediately and absolutely a matter of faith that the Sacrament of the Eucharist in a particular instance, nor that Christ’s Body is present in this specific Host, but only in general terms. Therefore, the same applies to the Pontiff. To this argument, some offer no other distinction except that it cannot be morally certain that this particular

Host has been validly consecrated, in the way that it is morally certain that this particular man has been validly elected. But truly, if one considers only the grounds for moral certainty, I have never been able to comprehend this, for indeed the validity of a papal election depends on more fallible conditions than the consecration of a Host. The latter depends solely on the consecrator being a true Priest, having the right intention, and the matter being valid. Regarding the matter, there is little or no possibility of falsity, since it is visible; thus fallibility exists only in the first two conditions. However, a valid papal election depends on more factors: namely, that the Cardinals are actually Cardinals; that they do not elect through simony; that the one elected is a man, validly baptized (which also depends on the intention of the one baptizing), validly ordained (which likewise depends on the ordaining bishop being a true Bishop and having the proper intention). Concerning these matters, no investigation is conducted by the electors other than the standard one, which is presumed to have been done when the elect was baptized and ordained—a diligence which is inherently fallible. Therefore, if one attends only to the grounds for moral and human certainty, a papal election can have more points of fallibility than the consecration of a Host, especially if a hundred or a thousand Priests were to concur in its consecration, for it would scarcely seem possible that among them there would be no true Priest who had the proper intention.

**99.** The disparity, therefore, must be established from the supernal certainty derived from the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which indeed is promised to the Church in peacefully completing the election of the Pope, but not to priests in consecrating the Host. And likewise because, since the Sacrament of the Eucharist is not a rule of faith for the whole Church, it is not necessary that there be given in the Church this numerically one Sacrament of the Eucharist, concerning which it is a matter of faith that it is a true Sacrament. Moreover, because it is not of the essence of the Sacrament of the Eucharist that it be numerically one only in the Church, nor visibly findable. But it is of the essence of a true Supreme Pontiff that he be only one in number, and this visibly. Hence when Christ revealed: “Behold, I am with you, etc.,” He did not determine one numerically visible Sacrament in which alone He would be present; it was otherwise when He revealed the Apostolic Rock as the foundation upon which the Church was to be built and sustained, for it is a matter of faith that this is only one visibly presented to the Faithful. Recall the reasons by which we have left our position proven, which certainly do not prove about any numerically one Sacrament, neither of baptism, nor of the Eucharist, nor of any other, and this is sufficient disparity. And this can be further demonstrated in the visible Church, which is a matter of faith, not only vaguely, but determinately and numerically that one, without it being permitted to infer the same about any Sacrament.

**100.** You will object sixthly: Let us suppose that someone not yet initiated into Holy Orders were elected as Pope, and that this election were peacefully promulgated. In that case, he would clearly not yet be a true Pontiff, since he would not possess the power of the Keys. Therefore, it is not a matter of faith that everyone duly elected is a true Pope. This argument not only contradicts the singular proposition which is the subject of our inquiry, but also the universal proposition which all presume to be a matter of faith. It attempts to prove that this proposition is not only not a matter of faith, but is actually false. Hence, because

it proves too much, it proves nothing. I say, therefore, that when someone not yet initiated into Holy Orders is elected, he is not elected to become immediately and completely a true Pope, but rather to become so after consecration. Thus, that election does not have its complete effect, nor is it understood to be fully confirmed until the elect receives Holy Orders. It is therefore not at all surprising that until then, the elect is not adequately a true Pontiff, because the Cardinals have not declared this, nor would they promulgate it, but only that after he has been consecrated will he be fully a true Pontiff.

**101.** But you might say: Let us suppose that the Bishop of Ostia, to whom by right belongs the duty to ordain and consecrate him, either is not a true bishop, or does not intend to have the proper intention—this is certainly possible. But in that very case, the one consecrated would not be a true Pope. Therefore, it is not a matter of divine faith that he, even when initiated into the Sacred Orders and consecrated, is the true Pope. I respond that although according to itself and in its terms the supposed situation is possible, nevertheless, given the supposition of Christ's promise and His revelation concerning the solidity and firmness of that Apostolic Rock, such a supposition is consequently impossible. Indeed, it remains infallible that Christ will not allow His Church to be deceived into regarding as the true Vicar of Christ—to whom Christ has handed the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—one who in reality does not possess such Keys. Therefore, it belongs to Christ's governance and providence to prevent such a supposed situation, or to reveal it to the Church, avoiding that one who is truly not the Gatekeeper of the Kingdom of Heaven be peacefully proclaimed as such.

**102.** You will object seventhly: A Pope once elected and peacefully promulgated can fall into heresy, at least secretly. But then he would cease to be the true Pope, because he would cease to be the true Head of the Church, and this despite being peacefully elected and accepted. Therefore, it is not absolutely a matter of faith that he is the true Pope. I respond that there are various opinions on this matter. For some hold that the Pope, in the composite sense of the Pontificate, cannot be a heretic, even secretly, and consequently, from the moment he would cease to be Faithful, he would cease to be the Head of the Church and true Pope; but they deny the possibility of heresy entirely hidden from the Church. Others say that, even if secretly heretical, he would still be the true Pope. Others maintain that even if he were manifestly heretical, he would remain Pope until deposed by the Church through a Council. Still others hold that by the very fact of being manifestly heretical, he would be deposed ipso facto. Which of these opinions I judge to be more correct, perhaps I shall say below. Now, setting aside these opinions, I distinguish the major premise: If the minor premise is true, I deny the major; if the minor premise is false, I concede the major and deny the minor. For it is contradictory to persevere in the state of being promulgated and peacefully accepted by the Church once he is actually deposed from that dignity of true Pope and universal Pastor of the Church. Hence, if secret or manifest heresy is posited as incompatible with that dignity, it must be said that, by virtue of Christ's promise, it cannot happen that a peacefully accepted Pope, in the composite sense, could be secretly heretical, and consequently neither manifestly so. If, however, you contend that such a thing is possible, it must be said that he does not thereby lose that dignity, but actually remains Pope until he is deposed by the Church, or at least until his



heresy is made manifest to the Church. For although there may be differing opinions about this, one thing must be held as certain beyond doubt and opinion, namely, that the Church cannot err, either in proposing or in accepting as true Pope one who is not truly Pope.

**WHETHER IT IS A MATTER OF FAITH THAT the proposition in question is a matter of faith.**

**103.** FINALLY, you may object: If the proposition “Innocent XII is the true Pope” were a matter of faith, the contrary opinion would be heretical, since it is heretical to deny what is a matter of faith. But this cannot be maintained, because very eminent Catholic authors hold the contrary opinion. Therefore, it is not a matter of faith, especially for us. The minor premise is evident because, as can be seen in the Salmanticenses [theologians of Salamanca], *disp. 4, doubt 2, from number 28*, Cardinal Torquemada [Juan de Torquemada], *book 4 of the Summa, part 2, chapter 9, at the end*, Cajetan [Thomas de Vio], *22, question 2, article 3, to the 4th*, [Alfonso de] Castro, *book 1, Against Heresies, chapter 9*, [Melchior] Cano, *book 6, On Theological Loci, chapter 8, in response to the 10th*, Córdoba, *book 1, question 17, § 2*, [Domingo] Báñez, *2.2, question 1, article 10*, Malderus [Jan Malderus], *in the present article 10, disputation 5*, [Juan de] Araujo, *in the preface, doubt 2, volume 2*. The Salmanticenses cite the words of all these authors, from which it is clearly gathered that all these authors maintain, contrary to our opinion, that it is not absolutely and immediately a matter of faith that this man is the true Pope. And this opinion, contrary to ours, is by no means heretical, as held either positively or negatively by all authors who defend our view. Indeed, some positively affirm that it is not heretical, like the Salmanticenses; others admit it as probable, like [Juan] Azor, *book 4, chapter 5, § In this controversy*. Therefore, our opinion is not a matter of faith, nor is the contrary heretical.

**104.** In order to adequately address this argument, these propositions must be distinguished individually. First proposition: Innocent XII is the true Pope. Second proposition: It is immediately of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope. Third proposition: It is of faith that it is of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope. The first is a direct proposition; the second is a first-level reflexive qualification of the direct proposition, because it first reflects upon the direct proposition by designating its qualification, namely, that it is of faith; the third is a second-level reflexive qualification of the first reflexive proposition. The first proposition is the subject of the present first-level reflexive question, because in reflecting first upon it, we debate whether it is of faith. The second proposition represents our position in the first-level reflexive question, which can be proposed as the subject of a second-level reflexive question, inquiring whether it is also of faith. The third proposition is the decision that could correspond to this second-level reflexive question. Likewise, the subject of the first proposition is solely Innocent XII; the subject of the second proposition is the first proposition; the subject of the third proposition is the second proposition. Indeed, one who attentively examines the aforementioned propositions will clearly perceive these distinctions, and I discern them so distinctly because I see that the greatest difficulty of the preceding argument consists in the fact that the one arguing and the one

responding very easily confuse and equivocate one proposition with another. With this distinction now established...

**105.** I respond by distinguishing the major premise: If the contrary opinion—contrary, I say, to our position, which is the second proposition among those enumerated, or the first reflexive one—were heretical, I deny the major premise. If the contrary to the direct proposition, which is the subject of the present question, and which we defend as being a matter of faith, I concede the major premise, because the direct proposition is this: “Innocent XII is the true Pope,” and its contrary is this: “Innocent XII is not the true, but a false Pope.” This latter proposition is heretical and can be pronounced heretical without any inconvenience, because no Catholic has asserted it, nor can one assert it while persevering in the Catholic faith; for what Catholic has ever pronounced concerning the present Pope, peacefully elected and promulgated: “This man is not the true, but a false Pope”? Certainly none. If, however, we speak of the opinion contrary to our position, namely, the first reflexive proposition, it certainly is not heretical, because its contrary is this first reflexive proposition: “It is not immediately a matter of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope.” This proposition is not heretical, since many Catholic doctors teach it, and the Church has not yet condemned or proscribed it. Furthermore, our position, namely the first reflexive one, which the aforementioned proposition contradicts, is not a matter of faith, nor do we defend it as a matter of faith, but only as true. For we are not defending: “That it is a matter of faith that it is a matter of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope,” for this is the third proposition among those enumerated, and the second reflexive one, which we do not now defend, but rather consider false. We defend only the second proposition, not as a matter of faith, but solely as true, for it stands that it can be true without being a matter of faith, as is self-evident.

**106.** It is to say: This direct statement: “*Innocent XII is the true Pope*,” is immediately of faith. This first reflexive statement, however: “*It is immediately of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope*,” is not of faith, but only true with great probability. This second reflexive statement: “*It is of faith that it is of faith that Innocent [XII], etc.*” is neither of faith nor true, but false. Likewise, the contrary of the first direct statement, namely: “*Innocent XII is not the true Pope*,” is heretical. The contrary of the first reflexive statement, namely: “*It is not immediately of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope*,” is false, but not heretical. The contrary of the second reflexive statement, however, namely: “*It is not of faith that it is of faith that Innocent [XII], etc.*” is neither heretical nor false, but true.

**107.** But you will reply: Something cannot be of direct faith, that is, of primary faith, unless it is of faith that it is of faith: Therefore, the solution collapses. The antecedent is proven, first, because it cannot be of direct faith unless it is of faith that it itself has been revealed: But if it is of faith that it has been revealed, it is of faith that it is of faith, since what is of faith consists formally in this, that it is revealed: Therefore. Second, because if it is only probable, albeit with the highest probability, that something is of faith, it will only be probable that it itself has been revealed: But with mere probability concerning whether something has been revealed, it cannot be of faith, since probable knowledge of revelation is not sufficient for something to be of faith, as has already been defined: Therefore. Third.

Because for something to be of faith for us, in which sense the question proceeds, that direct faith, it is necessary that all Catholics be bound to believe it with divine faith, since it is required that it be revealed and sufficiently proposed to the whole Church as revealed: But if it is not of faith that it is of faith, not all are bound to believe it with divine faith, for Catholics could probably consider it not to be of faith, and those who would think this would not be bound to believe it with divine faith, since they would be excused by probable opinion: Therefore.

**108.** I respond by denying the antecedent. To the first proof, I distinguish the major premise: Unless it is of faith *exercite* [in practice] and as that *by which* [*ut quo*] it is revealed, I concede the major premise; unless it is of faith *signate* [explicitly] and as that *which* [*ut quod*] is revealed, I deny the major premise. And having distinguished the minor premise in the same way, I deny the consequence. For in order that a direct singular proposition be revealed as a matter of faith *exercite* and as that *by which* [*ut quo*], it suffices that the subject of that proposition be proposed by the Church with infallible or sufficient certainty as contained in that universal revelation, “everyone who is duly elected,” etc. For by that very fact, that singular proposition is sufficiently proposed as revealed, so that it can be believed with divine faith as divinely revealed, with the revelation obligating and moving as that *by which* [*ut quo*] one comes to divine faith in that singular proposition directly. However, for it to be *signate* [explicitly] and as that *which* [*ut quod*] is of faith to be revealed, a reflexive revelation would be necessary concerning the fact that it was revealed, and that the Church would reflexively propose, with infallible certainty, as something thus revealed, that the singular proposition itself is revealed; but the Church does not propose it in this way, as is self-evident.

**109.** To the second [objection], I say that there is a middle ground between something being of the faith because that particular [proposition] has been revealed, and it being merely probable. For it can be theologically certain, as we say, or morally certain beyond prudent fear of falsehood, as others say. Therefore, it does not follow that merely probable knowledge about whether something has been revealed is sufficient for faith in it. Rather, theological or moral certainty—which exceeds mere probability—regarding the revelation of that particular proposition is sufficient for divine faith concerning it, which up to this point has not been condemned, nor has the opposite been defined.

**110.** But you might say: theological or moral certainty, as described above, is incompatible with the view that the contrary opinion (which denies that such a particular directive has been absolutely revealed) is probable, since true probability cannot exist against such certainty. But the contrary opinion is probable, as it is confirmed by the judgment of so many authors. Therefore, there is neither theological nor moral certainty that this particular proposition is revealed. One can respond first by denying that the contrary opinion is probable, for although those authors may have taught it, now no one would dare to teach it, especially after all theologians have risen up against it, and Clement VIII, as attested by Pedro Hurtado in disputation 37, section 2, imprisoned certain doctors and ordered them to be brought before him as deserving punishment, because they had taught the contrary opinion.

**111.** Nevertheless, this solution does not satisfy, because if, on account of the certainty which we defend—that the direct singular proposition regarding the Pontificate of Innocent is revealed—the opinion of those Doctors were to be rejected as improbable, or as not probable, it should be rejected not only as improbable, but as temerarious, or even erroneous. Indeed, according to the opinion of those Theologians who acknowledge only moral certainty concerning its containment under universal revelation, it would be temerarious, nay, even savoring of heresy, or proximate to error, because whoever dares to assert the contrary against the moral certainty of the whole Church in matters of faith—which excludes prudent fear of falsity—incur not only the mark of temerity, but also the aforementioned censures. But in our opinion, who acknowledge theological certainty that is metaphysically infallible concerning the revelation of that particular case, the opposite view would be erroneous in faith. However, to mark the opinion of so many Illustrious Doctors with these censures, before the Church has expressly proscribed it, is neither permissible nor fitting. Nor does that account of Peter Hurtado prove any censure against the aforementioned opinion, for after Clement VIII, who imprisoned those Theologians, Malderus and Araujo taught the same opinion, without the Church taking action against them. Therefore, as the Salmanticenses Fathers state, there was another and quite different cause for the punishment of those Doctors, which neither do I wish to investigate, nor to publish.

**112.** I respond, therefore, that a great equivocation occurs here, because the opinion of those Authors does not directly deny that the particular proposition, “*Innocent XII is the true Pope,*” is revealed in that universal proposition, “*everyone who is rightly elected,*” etc., since those Authors do not deny that *Innocent is rightly elected*. If they were to deny this, they would certainly deserve the aforementioned censures. Therefore, they only deny the infallible certainty concerning the right election, and consequently concerning the inclusion of that particular proposition within the universal revelation. But regarding whether the particular proposition is itself revealed in the universal, they say, due to this defect of certainty, that the particular proposition is not a matter of faith—not because they believe it is not actually included in the object of universal revelation, but because they believe it is not as certain as is required for divine faith. To deny this kind of certainty, or rather the quality of certainty, regarding what is implicitly revealed is not to deny that it is itself revealed, nor even to leave this under opinion, but only to deny the certainty (required for divine faith) that it is revealed. Given, therefore, that their opinion is probable, it only follows that the certainty, or quality of certainty, regarding the revelation of the particular proposition remains reflexively probable and among probable opinions, but not that the revelation of that particular proposition remains merely probable or disputed among probable opinions. For there exists no probable opinion that the particular proposition is not actually revealed in the universal, but only a probable opinion that this is not as certain as is required for it to be believed by divine faith. Although with knowledge that is only probable regarding the revelation of the particular, there is no faith regarding what is only probably revealed; nevertheless, with theological certainty that is metaphysically infallible concerning revelation, faith stands quite securely regarding a particular proposition that is certainly revealed, even though upon reflection on this certainty, there may be contrary

probable opinions about it, or although reflexively such certainty is only probable. From which...

**113.** To the third proof, I say that those Theologians who have held, or who might hold, that this particular [proposition] is not a matter of divine faith, have held this through a false reflective judgment, supposing that there is not sufficient certainty about the revelation of that particular [proposition], or about the valid election, and therefore they could have believed, with a probable but nonetheless false reflective opinion, that they were not bound to believe it by divine faith. From this, it follows at most that they are excused through probable ignorance and are not formally obligated to believe it, but not that they are not fundamentally obligated, because to be fundamentally obligated means that there actually exists a foundation for the obligation. This foundation actually exists with respect to all, because this foundation is the revelation of that particular [proposition] as proposed by the Church with sufficient certainty. This is, in fact, proposed to all, as has been shown, wherefore all are fundamentally obligated, because the Church, by the manner of presenting the new Pope as peacefully elected with infallible certainty, fundamentally obligates all, although some, through probable ignorance of such certainty, are not formally obligated in a reflective sense. This, however, does not mean that it is not truly a matter of faith with respect to all, but only that not all recognize it to be a matter of faith, because some are probably ignorant of it. And according to this doctrine, one can respond in form by distinguishing the major premise: It is necessary that all be fundamentally bound to believe it by divine faith—I concede the major premise; That all be formally bound—I deny the major premise, and having distinguished the minor premise in the same way, the solution to its proof is evident.

**114.** Or alternatively, the major premise can be distinguished: It is necessary that all are bound directly and from direct motives, I concede the major premise; That all are bound reflexively, from reflexive knowledge, I deny the major premise, and I distinguish the minor premise in the same way. To prove this, I say that those who have probably held the opinion that they are not bound, since this opinion is reflexive, will not be bound by reflexive knowledge; however, this is compatible with the fact that there is presented to them in actual practice the revelation of a certain Pontiff with sufficient direct certainty, so that they are directly bound in actual practice, indeed so that in actual practice they believe it with divine faith, because reflexive knowledge based on probable ignorance often contradicts direct knowledge. And in this way it happens to Authors who deny that it is a matter of faith that this is the true Pope, says John of St. Thomas in the present work, also citing Suárez, in these words: “Not all accept that proposition as a matter of faith in a speculative and figurative sense, yet virtually and in actual practice they accept the Pope together with the whole Church as the supreme rule of faith, and they believe him with divine faith. Hence, only out of ignorance do they think they do not believe what in practice and in act they do believe and accept as the infallible rule of faith, and thus they seem to contradict themselves.” Thus says John of St. Thomas, and rightly so, for we are often deceived in reflexive knowledge, judging the state of the intellect in direct knowledge to be different from what it actually is. From this, the solution to the following objection is clear.

**115.** You will finally object: if it is not a matter of faith that it is a matter of faith that Innocent XII is the true Pope, nor is it a matter of faith that it is a matter of faith that his definition, or the matter defined by him [is true]: But it is a matter of faith that it is a matter of faith that things defined by him are [true], because no one doubts this: Therefore. The consequence is proven because, according to us, no greater certainty can be given regarding the definition of the Pontiff than regarding the truth of the Pontiff who defines; for that reason we prove above that it is a matter of faith that Innocent [XII] is the true Pontiff, because his definition is a matter of faith, and because the definition cannot be a matter of faith unless it is a matter of faith that the one defining is the legitimate Pontiff: Therefore, it cannot be a matter of faith that the definitions of the Pontiff are matters of faith, unless it is a matter of faith that it is a matter of faith that the Pontiff is the true Pontiff. I respond by denying the consequence: Because the fact that Pontifical definitions are matters of faith is proposed by the Church as Catholic Dogma, with sufficient certainty that their being matters of faith is an article to be believed by divine faith, and therefore no Catholic calls this into doubt, nor asserts the opposite, at least concerning the definitions of the Pontiff with a universal Council, and in matters of faith. However, that it is a matter of faith that this particular man who defines is the true Pope is not yet proposed by the Church with such reflexive certainty that would suffice for it to be reflexively a matter of faith, since the Church permits Catholic Theologians to defend the opposite view reflexively. Hence, to the proof of the consequence, I distinguish the antecedent: Greater direct certainty about the definition of the Pontiff than about the truth of the Pontiff cannot be given, I concede; Greater reflexive certainty, I deny the antecedent and the consequence.

**116.** From what has been said, you may first gather, in order to satisfy an unspoken objection, that it is not a matter of faith regarding any individual bishop that he is a true bishop. The reason is, first, because no individual bishop is proposed by the Church as a matter or object of faith, since none is proposed as an infallible rule of faith, as is the Supreme Pontiff. Second, because although it is revealed and a matter of faith that there will be true bishops and pastors in the Church vaguely and indeterminately, nevertheless it is neither revealed nor a matter of faith that any particular bishop or archbishop is truly such; nor does a definition of the Church exist concerning this, as it does regarding the Bishop of Rome. Therefore.

**117.** But you may say, let us suppose a case in which only two Bishops remained in the universal Church of Christ; surely then it would be a matter of faith, just as it is now, that there are true Bishops in the Church: But not vaguely and indeterminately, because there would not be others among whom there might be indifference or vagueness: Therefore it would be determinately a matter of faith that these two are true Bishops. I respond that it is not revealed, nor is it always a matter of faith, that true Bishops in the plural number will remain in the Church without any long interruption, because concerning other Episcopal Sees it is not revealed that the gates of hell will not prevail against them, but only concerning the See and Chair of Peter; therefore, even in that case, it would not be a matter of faith that those two remaining besides the Roman [Bishop] are true Bishops. And likewise, because it would not be infallibly certain that there were not others in the Church, perhaps hidden, in whom the Prophecies and revelations might be verified, because

concerning others, besides the Roman [Bishop], it is not a matter of faith that they visibly persevere in the Church. And finally, because if the Church could come, by force of persecutions, to such a state that only two Bishops would persevere in it, why could it not, by force of persecution, be reduced to only one, namely the Roman [Bishop]; and if this is admitted as possible: Therefore, it is not a matter of faith that true Bishops in the plural number will always exist in the Church without any interval of time. Let us recall the reasons and motives by which we have established the firmness of the Chair of Divine Peter, and from these it will be evident that such firmness does not belong, as a matter of faith, to any other Episcopate.

**118.** Or another response can be given, by granting and conceding that in that metaphysical case where the Church would be reduced to only two Bishops, with certainty of the non-existence of others, it would be a matter of faith that they are true Bishops, just as in the hypothetical case where only two faithful remained, it would be a matter of faith that they are truly faithful, because it is a matter of faith that true Faithful will never be lacking in the Church; and in the case where it would be certain that there exists in the Church only a single consecrated Host, it would be a matter of faith that Christ remains in it by virtue of that revelation: *Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age*. But what follows from this against our position? Truly nothing. Nor do I see what purpose it serves to raise questions about these metaphysical cases, which most certainly will never occur. Thus, to one arguing from parity drawn from these cases, one can respond conditionally by making a distinction: If there is an equally probative reason in those cases as there is now concerning the true Roman Pontiff, I concede that then it would be a matter of faith that those individual Bishops would be true Bishops. If there are not equally probative motives and reasons, I deny it, always refusing absolute disputation about whether there absolutely are or are not reasons proving this in those metaphysical cases; because disputation of this kind seems useful only for sustaining the whims of clever minds and for introducing novelties or new useless questions into the schools.