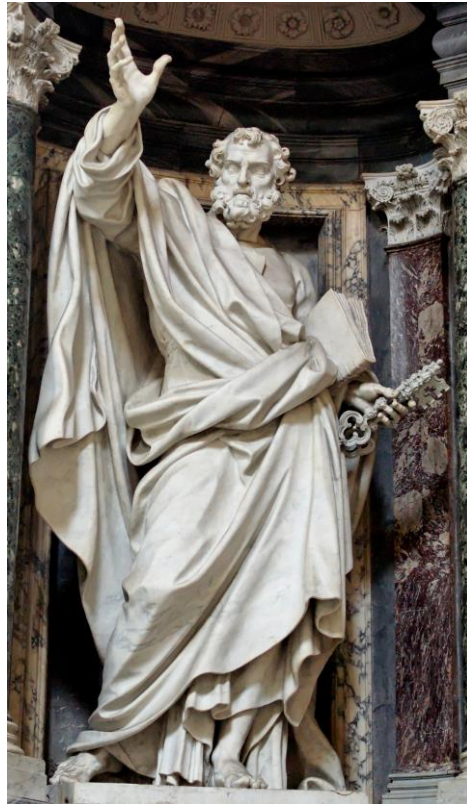


St. Peter As The Rock And His Grace Of Infallibility From Jesus



**Sculpture of Saint Peter Holding “The Keys of Authority”
(Matthew 16:19) by Pierre-Étienne Monnot¹**

Welcome to this Scripture study on St. Peter as the Rock and infallibility.
Let’s begin this study with a word of prayer.

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful;
And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.**

Let Us Pray . . .

**O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice
in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

**Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

¹ Sculpture of Saint Peter in the [Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter#/media/File:Petrus_San_Giovanni_in_Laterano_2006-09-07.jpg) Rome Italy by [Pierre-Étienne Monnot](#).
Peter holds the Keys of Heaven. Public domain. (Photo by Jastro)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter#/media/File:Petrus_San_Giovanni_in_Laterano_2006-09-07.jpg

Notes

MATTHEW 16:13-20 (RSVCE) 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. 19

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Introduction

We will begin by looking catechetically at some features and gifts that St. Peter received from Jesus, especially the gift of infallibility. We will discuss how the people of God are to respond to these gifts.

We will look at the differences between **infallibility** (a negative charism), **inspiration** (a positive charism), **impeccability**, and a couple of other terms.

We will go into the Old Testament and look at the Davidic dynasty (after King David is dead), and see a Steward UNDER the Davidic King, but OVER the people of the kingdom with BINDING authority. And this steward is ALSO described as a “father” or papa (that’s part of where we get the word “Pope”).

We will take a brief look at Jesus’ prophecy where he tells Simon that He is going to re-name him Rock.

We will look at Matthew 16:13-20, and also the common so-called Greek Petros/Petra objection against Simon being re-named Peter (as “Rock”) so you are familiar with it. We will see that patristic evidence shows that St. Matthew wrote his original Gospel in Hebrew/Aramaic and not Greek. We’ll also see here that the “rock” of Matthew 16 is **BOTH** St. Peter’s **faith** AND St. Peter’s **person** (as per CCC 424 & 881).

We will do a brief theoretical exercise on settling disputes authoritatively and see how this assumes and NEEDS an eventual **single-source authority** if the Church is to maintain UNITY.

Then we may (time?) take a closer look at binding and loosing using Matthew 18:12-20 along with Matthew 16:13-20, and if a doctrinal impasse occurs between two bishops (successors to the Apostles) how the Keys **MUST BE** utilized for the sake of that unity. (All the Apostles receive the power to bind and loose. But only ONE Apostle gets the power to bind and loose in the context of the Keys—St. Peter.)

If we have time (or later on your own if not), we may look at some of the Patristic evidence of Peter’s faith AND Peter’s person as the Rock in Table format (Table 2). Then we will close with a prayer.

Basic Catechesis On The Office Of The Pope

The office of Bishops along with ministerial priests as their coworkers’ have three main functions . . . these threefold functions of Jesus’ Messianic mission are to **teach**, **govern** and **sanctify** (see CCC 873).²

We have done a separate study on **Apostolic Succession** so for this study, we will **assume** it due to space and time constraints.

As we study the Office of the Pope we will mostly refrain from comments on this papacy (Pope Francis – written November 2024) but rather look at basic general teachings concerning the **Office** of the Papacy³ (**not** the **person** of Pope Francis).

The Pope’s official office designation is **the Bishop of Rome**.

² Also see CCC 888 (heading).

³ The Office of the Papacy is sometimes referred to as “**The Petrine Office**”. (“Petrine” = Pertains to “Peter”).

The word “Pope” is just a term of affection from the Italian “papa” due to his role of spiritual “**fathering**”⁴. All ministerial priests are in a sense spiritual “fathers” but the Pope exceedingly so.

The official teaching office of the Church is frequently just referred to as “**The Magisterium**”. The Magisterium is “the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him” (CCC 100⁵).

- **Magisterium = Official teaching office = Pope and Bishops united to him (CCC 100)**

The Magisterium’s main task is “to preserve God's people from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error.” (CCC 890).

The Pope and the Bishops in union with him, **teach authoritatively** on faith and morals, handed down from the time of Christ and the Apostles, and under certain circumstances, teach “**infallibly**” (which just means “**protected from error**”).

The people NEED to know somehow that this is being put forth **infallibly**. If a teaching is infallible, the Pope must make his manifest will known to the people on a given teaching. For example, he can invoke Jesus and St. Peter and say: “WE (me and Jesus and Peter) declare, define, and pronounce...”

When the Pope does this (in this “extraordinary” way), it is called speaking “from the Chair” (that is, from the teaching chair of St. Peter) or “ex-cathedra” (“ex-cathedra” is Latin literally for “from the chair”). This gift is in FULFILLMENT of Moses’ “Teaching Chair” or “seat” of teaching authority.⁶

Many popes never teach infallibly using this “extraordinary” manner (“Extraordinary Magisterium”).

Catholic Christians are to give loyal assent to “authentic teaching” made by the Pope even when his official teachings are not infallible.

This doesn’t mean ANYTHING a Pope says at a news Conference or on an airline interview, etc. is to be taken as authoritative. Rather the Pope must make his **manifest intention** known to the people by the way he communicates something.

VATICAN II . . . and sincere assent be given to decisions made by him, **conformably with his manifest mind and intention**, which is made known principally either by the character of **the documents** in question, or by **the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed**, or by **the manner in which the doctrine is formulated**. (LG 25)

⁴ We call **no** man “father” in an ultimate sense, but there are many people who draw **a share from God’s one fatherhood, from which all fatherhood is “derived” (Greek-Ephesians 3:15)** who are legitimately referred to as “fathers” such as when Jesus discusses “father” Abraham (in Luke 16:24). See also 1 Cor. 4:15, etc. and CCC 2214.

⁵ **CCC 100** The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to **the Magisterium** of the Church, that is, to **the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him**. (This doesn’t mean that the laity cannot “interpret”. It means that we as laity cannot interpret CONTRARY to the teaching of the Church - we looked at this in detail in our sola Scriptura Bible study so I won’t re-hash it here).

⁶ **MATTHEW 23:1-3** 1 Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on **Moses' seat**; 3 so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice.

Infallibility And Inspiration (And Some Other Terms)

Infallibility

Let's look at the difference between infallibility and inspiration in the transmitting of Sacred Doctrine.

INFALLIBILITY⁷ Freedom from error in teaching the universal Church in matters of faith and morals.

In an extraordinary manner, the Pope teaches infallibly, WHEN TEACHING to all of the universal Church, and this teaching has to be in the area of **faith and morals** (not the best golf clubs, not vaccinology, not climate science, etc.). This protected infallible teaching has not only to be of **faith and morals** (at least in seed form) but also **from Apostolic times** (the time of Christ and His Apostles on earth). It cannot be a new teaching (CCC 66)! It MAY be development of, or further clarification of an old teaching.

If the Pope is speaking infallibly, he must make it known to the faithful that it is his "manifest" will that he is teaching infallibly.

Bishops "taken **individually**, do not enjoy the privilege of infallibility" (Vatican II L.G. 25), except when teaching **in union** with the Pope under certain circumstances (i.e. an Ecumenical Council). (See CCC 891)

The Pope's task is to SAFEGUARD the area of **Divine Revelation** (Apostolic faith and morals). Not invent. This proverbial package of faith and morals we are to believe is called "**Public Revelation**"⁸ and is sometimes called "**The Sacred Deposit of Faith**" or in Latin, the *fide depositum*.

The Pope has other authoritative functions which are not infallible (i.e. Church governance is not infallible but he still has supreme authority). Studying these, would be beyond the scope of this study.

Again, infallibility is protection AGAINST officially teaching error.⁹

Infallibility is a negative charism ("AGAINST" officially teaching error on *de fide* doctrine (faith and morals directly from Jesus and the Apostles) and it is only exercised under very restricted circumstances.

If "infallibility" were in math for example, the Pope **could** leave a math exam BLANK, and all the **non-answers** would NOT affect the teachings on infallibility.

The Heresy Of Conciliarism

A special note is worth mentioning here along the lines of infallibility: "**Conciliarism.**"

⁷ Page 276. **Modern Catholic Dictionary**. (By the late) John A. Hardon, S.J. Published by Eternal Life Bardstown KY 1999.

⁸ Apparitions of Jesus or Heavenly Saints to a person, if approved, is termed **PRIVATE Revelation**. We're **not bound** to believe even approved private revelation (although I would SUGGEST believing in apparitions like Fatima or Our Lady of Guadalupe).

⁹ In the Old Covenant, the High Priest could utilize the gifts of infallibility using the gifts of the Urim and the Thummim. But John 11:49-52 and Matthew 23:1-3 at least suggest that Urim and Thummim usage was not necessary for infallibility. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into details on that here.

Conciliarism is (approximately) a 1300's A.D. error which falsely taught that the Bishops can exercise this infallibility on their own in a Bishop's **Council** APART from¹⁰ and/or in opposition to, the Pope¹¹.

Inspiration

"**Inspiration**" in a Biblical context literally means "**God-breathed**".

2nd TIMOTHY 3:16 16 **All** scripture is **inspired** (Greek = "Theopneustos" or "God-breathed") by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . .

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION¹² The Special influence of the Holy Spirit on the writers of Sacred Scripture in virtue of which God himself becomes the principal author of the books written and the sacred writer is the subordinate author. . .

So God is the ultimate author of the Sacred Scriptures. The books of Scripture are written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the Church accepts that the books are inspired "WHOLE AND ENTIRE".

The reason I emphasize this point, is some "Catholic" theologians who want to DENY the "**whole and entire**" inspiration of Scripture sometimes will take a Vatican II quote (and elsewhere) where it discusses Scriptures being inspired for our salvation, and pretend it means ONLY THOSE Scripture passages that CONCERN SALVATION are inspired¹³. That is wrong.

CCC 105 *God is the author of Sacred Scripture.* "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁹

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, **accepts as sacred and canonical** the books of the Old and the New Testaments, **whole and entire**, with all their parts, on the grounds that, **written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit**, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."⁷⁰

The charism of **inspiration** therefore has the protective gifts of infallibility, but it has much MORE!

Successors to the Apostles (Popes and bishops) **do not possess the charism of Biblical inspiration**.

If the Apostles had "math inspiration" and took a math test under their gift of inspiration, they would have to answer all the questions AND get all the answers CORRECT AND in the way God wants them to. They could not leave any questions blank. Inspiration is thus a "POSITIVE Charism".

¹⁰ The Pope does not need to be physically present to ratify a Council. i.e. The Councils of Hippo and Carthage.

¹¹ For more details on Conciliarism, see **Handbook of Heresies** which is an excellent source of brief (it is not comprehensive but pretty close) historical analysis of heresies over the last 2000 years. The original has been out of print for about a hundred years but e-copies can be found online and various publishers have reprinted it.

¹² Page 280. **Modern Catholic Dictionary**. (by the late) John A. Hardon, S.J. Published by Eternal Life Bardstown KY 1999

¹³ This actually happened to me in a "Catholic" College-level Scripture class. The denials of Scripture and his denials of the Catholic faith were so frequent and so egregious by my instructor, I finally dropped the class. The "instructor's" excuse was "Well this is a "theology class and NOT a religion class!" An unnamed Catholic seminarian I knew said they had this same problem in their Catholic seminary and it got so bad that the seminarians had to form a consortium among themselves that would meet after classes to sort out truth from error. They called their group: "**The Crap Patrol**".

Impeccability

Impeccability means perfection from sin and **the Popes don't have this**. It is said the very holy Pope John Paul II went to Confession daily! He must have had SOME sins to confess.

And the good Lord knows, we have had some GREAT Popes (the first 33 were martyred for Christ) and we have had some TERRIBLE Popes too—Popes that have had concubines, they have had children out of wedlock, and all other kinds of scandal. We Catholics must be honest and admit such truths.

Yet God can and does work through their office in SPITE of these scandalous men.

Montanism

Montanism was a **heresy** in the early Church from a group of people who thought a man named Montanus was basically the Holy Spirit incarnate. In addition, Montanus taught the error that the Holy Spirit is giving NEW things that all Christians MUST believe (new “public revelation”).

Ultramontanism

Ultramontanism is the error that basically states everything the Popes say is given from the Holy Spirit and infallible in any sphere in all circumstances.

Catholic Christians reject Papal Impeccability, Montanism and Ultramontanism.

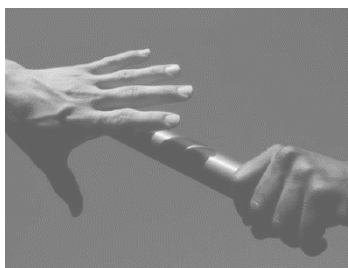
For more catechesis on infallibility and some information on “public revelation” please see Table 3.

The Davidic Dynasty King's Chief Steward And The Authority To Bind And Loose

In about a thousand B.C. King David reigned (specifically 1090 B.C. to 970 B.C.). King David was a historical person, but also a foreshadow of Jesus (Jesus is “The new David”, the new Solomon, etc.).

After King David died, his kingdom fractured, but his Davidic Dynasty (his Kingly successors) still remained in the Southern Kingdom of Judea (where Jerusalem and the Temple was).

Recall, with a “dynasty” there is “dynastic succession” or a proverbial passing on of the baton of authority.



“Dynastic” Succession includes passing on the proverbial “baton” of authority to successors over multiple generations. That’s why it’s called a “dynasty”.

The prophet Isaiah was prophesying in approximately 740 B.C. Isaiah prophesied in the Southern Kingdom—Judea. Other Prophets prophesied in the Northern Kingdom—Israel, and still others prophesied elsewhere i.e. the Prophet Daniel in Babylon.

During Isaiah's time, the Davidic King was **King Hezekiah** (who reigned in Judea from 715 to 686 B.C.).

The Davidic Kings chose not to try to personally tend to all the functions of their kingdom. This was relegated to their chief steward with an office of governmental AUTHORITY.¹⁴

Naturally King Hezekiah likewise had an office of CHIEF steward who had authority OVER the other stewards as well as authority over the people of the Kingdom.

This **authority** when exercised is called "opening and shutting" or the power to bind and loose.

King Hezekiah had a **chief** Steward (the "head honcho" under the King) by the name of Shebna.

Shebna was a "bad guy" getting drunk and making an opulent burial place for himself (ironic because one of his curses was to die in a foreign land). Shebna cared little for the people and used his office for self-gain. Because of that God cursed him and deposed him (see Isaiah 22:15-19). Shebna was an evil man who was "eating flesh"—see Isaiah 22:13 and getting drunk ("**eating flesh**" used figuratively, is a **Hebrew idiom for being deceitful and despising those you should love and care for**¹⁵).

Because of this, Shebna is about to be deposed in favor of a new chief steward.

ISAIAH 22:25 25 In that day, says the LORD of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a sure place (my edit here. That would be **Shebna**) will give way; and it will be cut down and fall, and the burden that was upon it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken."

The REPLACEMENT **Chief Steward's name was Eliakim**, son of Hilkiah under King Hezekiah, and was a good man who cared about the Davidic Kingdom. Eliakim, the Chief Steward, as part of his office receives special AUTHORITY from the King. He even gets a special "robe" signifying his authority.

The Chief Steward is also a "**Father**" ("**papa**" or "**pope**") not only merely locally there in Jerusalem but to the whole existing Davidic Kingdom! ("to the house of Judah". —Isaiah 22:21)

¹⁴ Just as Jesus does fulfilling ALL facets of the Old Testament. Aaron prefigured part of this with **religious** authority and the 70/72 from Moses (see Numbers 11:16-30) during Aaron's priestly dynasty. Jesus fulfilled this too (see Luke 10:1-23). Recall also, the tremendous AUTHORITY Jesus conferred on **His stewards**. (For example see Luke 10:16!) **LUKE 10:16** 16 "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

¹⁵ Shebna was probably doing BOTH—Literally eating excess flesh (gluttony and/or unclean meats) **and** metaphorically "eating flesh". There are other examples of the Hebrew term "**eating flesh**" used in a **metaphorical sense** in Scripture. Psalm 27:2 (you might need to check the footnotes). Other **metaphorical** examples of "**eating flesh**" include Micah 3:3, Ecclesiastes 4:5, Zechariah 11:9, Isaiah 9:18-20, Isaiah 49:26, 2nd Samuel 23:15-17, Revelation 17:6 and 17:16. They are ALL of the same negative quality (which is yet another reason WHY Jesus could **NOT** BE speaking **metaphorically** in John 6 when He commanded us to eat His flesh and drink His blood--See our Bread of Life Discourse Eucharist Bible Study for details on that).

The Chief Steward who again is UNDER the King, gets a figurative **Key** (for **governing**¹⁶) to the Davidic Kingdom of the House of David. This meant the Chief Steward had the power to bind and loose (“open” and “shut”) in the realm of governance those in the Kingdom lower than the King.

The Chief Steward not only has a “Cathedra” (Latin for **seat** or chair), but **he IS a seat** in and of himself in a Governing authoritative sense (a “throne of honor”)!

The King has hung on his Chief Steward “the whole weight of his father’s house”. The chief steward speaks with the “authority” of the king (“your authority”).

Now with that background let’s read the relevant passage in Isaiah 22 for specifics regarding the chief steward ~~Simon Peter~~ Eliakim under King ~~Jesus~~ Hezekiah. . . .

(When reading this keep in mind that this must eventually all be fulfilled by Jesus, “the New David”.)

ISAIAH 22:20-24 20 In that day I will call **my servant** Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 21 and I will **clothe him with your robe**, and will bind your girdle on him, **and will commit your authority** to his hand; and **he shall be a FATHER** (“pope” or “papa”) to the inhabitants **of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah**. 22 And I will place on his shoulder **the key of the house of David**¹⁷; **he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open**. 23 And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and **he will become a throne of honor** to **his father's house**. 24 And they will hang on him **the whole weight of his father's house**, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.

In the next section we will see Jesus fulfilling this Old Covenant paradigm, and now that you know the Old Testament background, you will have a deeper understanding concerning what Jesus is doing with Simon and where Jesus is drawing upon in the Old Testament (from Isaiah 22:20-24) as He fulfills it in Matthew 16:13-20. You’ll then have a greater understanding of the relationship between Jesus and Simon Peter. Now let’s look at Matthew 16 and see this fulfillment . . .

Peter is the “Kepha” (“Cephas”) Or “Rock”

Before we go to Matthew 16, I want to take a look at one of the prophecies of Jesus. But before we even do that, I want you to learn ONE Hebrew/Aramaic word: “Kepha”.

Kepha is the Hebrew/Aramaic word for ROCK. Not “little pebble”. Not “tiny stone”. ROCK.

The Hebrew word Kepha is transliterated into the Greek as “**Cephas**”. Some of the Scripture authors use “Peter” to discuss Simon Peter, others use “Cephas”. They are interchangeable words¹⁸.

¹⁶ St. Peter will get a share of **almost certainly three keys** (Jesus ultimately holds ALL “Keys” of authority—see Matthew 28:18). Peter does not just receive only one key to **govern like Eliakim**, but also keys to **teach**, and **sanctify** too. (Priest/Sanctify, Prophet/Teach, and King/Govern). A deep share in Jesus’ Messiahship. We laity get a share of these Messianic gifts too (See CCC 871), but not as deeply as ministerial priests, and bishops, and deepest of all, St. Peter and his successors who exclusively is given “the Keys” from Jesus.

¹⁷ Recall “David” is dead. The prophet Isaiah is talking about **the HOUSE of David. The Dynasty of David. Dynastic Succession**. In the New Covenant, Jesus gives us **Apostolic Succession in fulfillment of this**.

¹⁸ Like “Messiah” and Christ” are interchangeable words concerning one of Jesus’ titles.

The Prophecy

Simon Peter's brother, **Andrew** was a disciple of St. John the Baptist who later was following Jesus at St. John's urging. Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus.

JOHN 1:40b-42 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You **shall be** called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Jesus does NOT SAY: "You are NOW called "Cephas".

That will come later. This is a subtle prophecy about Simon's name change that "will be" coming.

JOHN 1:42b (NIV) You **will be** called Cephas" (which means Peter).

BEWARE concerning the King James Version (KJV) translation of John 1:42! See footnote!¹⁹

Matthew 16:13-20—The Fulfillment Of Isaiah 22:20-24 & Jesus' Prophecy

As we go into Matthew 16:13-20, we will see Jesus takes them to Caesarea Philippi for a discussion. Caesarea Philippi is a pagan area (dedicated to the false god "pan") with a HUGE ROCK (hint hint). The huge immovable Rock is 200 feet high and 500 feet long! There is also a cave that was believed by the pagans there to have a deep "bottomless" pool that went down to **Hades** ("Hades" = the "abode of the dead"). This is symbolically "**the gates of Hades**" that Jesus is overcoming here (see MT 16:18).

MATTHEW 16:13-17 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of **Caesarea Philippi**, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 **Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

So Simon's profession of faith is extolled here by Jesus, and as a result Peter gets a "blessing". Keep that in mind because some people will say Simon's **profession of faith** is the ROCK.

Catholic Christians have no problem with Peter's profession of faith being the rock. What Catholic Christians take issue with, is that "the Rock" is Simon's profession of faith ONLY and not his person too.

Remember. Nathaniel-Bartholomew has already affirmed Jesus as the **Son of God** ("Rabbi, you are the **Son of God!** You are the King of Israel!"—John 1:49). Lazarus' sister Martha later would ALSO declare Jesus as "**the Christ, the Son of God**" (John 11:27).

¹⁹ BEWARE! The King James Bible translation (KJV) takes license with this passage CHANGING the word "Peter" in THE BIBLE to the phrase: which is by interpretation, "**A stone**". (That has significance too where some try to distort St. Peter as a little "stone" in Matthew 16. Be aware of these subtle translational shenanigans.)

JOHN 1:42 (KJV) 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, **which is by interpretation, A stone.**

But Jesus does not respond to Nathaniel or to Martha anything like He did to Simon in Matthew 16. Clearly something MORE is going on here in Matthew 16.

The Church affirms “the Rock” is Peter in his profession of faith (CCC 424) AND in his PERSON (CCC 881).²⁰

Some people will insist the Rock is Christ because of 1st Corinthians 10:4. But again, we have no problem with that because Peter is not a “Rock” on his own, but because he has a SHARE in Christ’s proverbial “rockness” just like Abraham had **a share** (Isaiah 51:1-2). But Simon has a deeper share (at least in the area of authority) to the point he gets his **name** changed to “Rock”.

The charism of infallibility that Popes are graced with, comes from a SHARE in Christ’s infallibility.

CCC 889a In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her **a share in his own infallibility** . . .

Some people will raise the objection in Matthew 16:18 that Simon is a “little stone” and not the Rock. This is a relatively new objection drawn from a subset of secular Greek literature²¹ that “Petros” can mean “stone” or even pebble, but “Petra” means big massive immovable stone. But in Bible Greek there is no such distinction.

MATTHEW 16:18a 18 And I tell you, you are Peter (Gr. = “**Petros**”), and on this rock (“**Petra**”) I will build my church . . .

The Petros/Petra objection basically means: “And I tell you Simon, and you’re just a little pebble or stone, and on this rock, Me, this massive stone, (“Petra”) I will build my church.”

There are many problems with this invention. First of all, the context doesn’t fit (more on that later).

Also Greek nouns take gender endings and Jesus is not going to give Peter a feminine ending name. Yes “Petra” is used in 1st Cor. 10:4 but **not** for Jesus’ **name** (but for His **function**).

All the other Apostles were lacking in something here (“they said, “Some say John the Baptist, . . . or one of the prophets”) but Simon got it FULLY RIGHT proclaiming Jesus as “the Christ”. So is Jesus going to belittle the CORRECT Simon publicly and leave the others (whose answers were lacking) . . . **alone**?!

Also small stones in koine’ Greek or Bible Greek are referred to as “**lithoi**”, not “Petros” (see Luke 4:3 and John 10:30-31 for just a couple of examples).

And if Simon is such a little stone, WHY in the world would Jesus give him power to bind and loose and give Peter ALONE “The Keys”? And WHY eventually have him write Scripture (1st and 2nd Peter)?

Furthermore, Jesus almost certainly didn’t speak Greek to His Apostles but Hebrew/Aramaic.

²⁰ This is important to know because sometimes people will try to set you up saying the Rock is Simon’s profession (in the sense that the rock is MERELY Simon’s profession), then after you deny that thesis; they trot out CCC 424 and say that you don’t even believe what the Catholic Church teaches. A person who was probably a Seventh-Day Adventist attacking the Church attempted to do this to me recently but that didn’t work as I knew what they were doing.

²¹ “Attic Greek”. Not Koine’ Greek or Bible Greek. Attic Greek is secular pagan Athenian Greek.

Someone might object and say: “Well the Holy Spirit” INSPIRED Matthew to say “little stone”.

But that IGNORES the patristic evidence that says Matthew’s Gospel was originally written in Hebrew (See Table 1).

Q: What difference does it make if the original transcripts were originally in Hebrew instead of Greek?

A: It makes a big difference because it by itself, completely negates any Petros/Petra argument. Why?

Because in Aramaic there is only ONE WORD for “rock” — “Kepha”, so there wouldn’t be any distinction the first time Jesus names Peter rock and the second time when Jesus describes Peter’s function. They would both be the same words used by Jesus **Matthew 16:18** . . .

“And I tell you, you are **Kepha**, and on this **Kepha** I will build my church,
and **the powers of death** (literally “**the gates of Hades**”) shall not prevail against it.”

This also fits with the point that St. Paul and St. John refer to Peter as “**Cephas**” (a transliteration of “**Kepha**”). There is no possibility of a “little stone” meaning if we are going to be honest.

As I said earlier. Peter being the ROCK is a SHARE in Jesus, NOT A DISTINCTION from Him.
Likewise, Peter getting the Keys is a SHARE of Jesus as the ultimate key holder.
Also Peter is the FOUNDATION upon which Jesus builds His Church in one sense (Matthew 16:17).

In another sense Jesus Himself is the foundation (1st Corinthians 3:11).
And in another sense it is Peter AND the other Apostles who are the “foundation” (Revelation 21:14).
And in yet another sense it is Peter AND the other Apostles AND the Prophets who are the “foundation” (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Q: WHICH verse do you believe?

A: Well if you are a Catholic Christian, you are to believe ALL of the Bible verses! (And ALL of the Bible.)
We don’t DENY Scripture because **God who cannot err**, is the ultimate author.

So we see truths in ALL of these. The ONLY WAY ALL of these verses can be harmonized . . .
. . . is if ALL of these examples have some sort of a differing SHARE in Jesus Christ!

Jesus is SHARING or “**associating**” Himself with Simon Peter here in Matthew 16!

CCC 586a Far from having been hostile to the Temple, where he gave the essential part of his teaching, Jesus was willing to pay the Temple-tax, **associating with him Peter, whom he had just made the foundation of his future Church**.³⁵⁹ . . .

There is even more evidence. For example, there is word-play in the text as well:
Peter to Jesus—“YOU are the Christ” and Jesus to Peter—“YOU are the Rock”.

Jesus was already given a title here—“The Christ! The Son of the living God!”

Context Of Matthew 16:17-20

Now let's look at the context of the passage.

We will see the whole context over and over **point directly from Jesus to Simon Peter**. . . .

MATTHEW 16:17-20 17 And Jesus answered him,
Blessed are **YOU**, Simon Bar-Jona!
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to **YOU**,
but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell **YOU**,
YOU are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,
and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.
19 I will give **YOU** the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
and whatever **YOU** bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,
and whatever **YOU** loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

The context here all points from Jesus to Peter.

Infallibility In Matthew 16

**Whatever You Bind On Earth Shall Be Bound In Heaven
Whatever You Loose On Earth Shall Be Loosed In Heaven**

In Matthew 16, we see Isaiah 22 being fulfilled . . .

ISAIAH 22:22 22 And I will place on his shoulder **the KEY²² of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**

MATTHEW 16:19 19 I will give **you the KEYS²³** of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever **you** bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever **you** loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

I want to mention here that Jesus did NOT OK sin on earth and He likewise will NOT ratify sin in Heaven. I want to use that truth to look at St. Peter's infallibility as it pertains to Matthew 16:19.

Looking at Matthew 16:19 there are only THREE POSSIBILITIES of outcomes at least concerning teaching.

- Peter can officially bind/loose ERROR in his TEACHING. In which case God in Heaven MUST ratify that teaching ERROR. **Nope.**
- Peter can officially bind/loose ERROR in his TEACHING. In which case God in Heaven must NOT RATIFY that ERROR and therefore **make Matthew 16:19 wrong. Nope.**

²² I can't prove this, but since the Chief Steward, Eliakim's office had to do with only "**governing**" of the Davidic King ("**the house of David**"), the Chief Steward of "the House of David" gets only **one KEY (GOVERN)** as per Isaiah 22:22.

²³ St. Peter's office (as we saw from the CCC) is a **three-fold office**. St. Peter's office is to **GOVERN, TEACH AND SANCTIFY**. St. Peter therefore gets "the **KEYS**" and not merely "a KEY". St. Peter probably gets "**three** KEYS" (1-teach, 2-govern, 3-sanctify) but I can't say this with absolute certainty.

Or under the last possibility of circumstances (that the Church itself teaches us)

- Peter can bind/loose PROTECTED TRUTH in his official teaching (being PREVENTED FROM ERROR by the grace of JESUS in certain restricted and constrained circumstances that the Church itself teaches us). In which case God in Heaven WILL BE TRUE and ratify these TRUTHS in Heaven making Matthew 16:19 also true. **Yep.**

Religious Doctrinal Dispute Settling—An Exercise

If we have time, do a brief exercise on a doctrinal dispute among two Protestants, two Eastern Orthodox Bishops, and two Catholic Bishops. And see how only **one scenario can result in doctrinal finality.**

The Protestant will appeal to their Bibles ALONE (and prayer to the Holy Spirit) yet come to an impasse. The inevitable result is a church-split. (i.e. **Infant Baptism between a Lutheran and Baptist minister**).

The Eastern Orthodox bishops will appeal to their Bibles, Oral Tradition, Liturgy, and history (and prayer to the Holy Spirit) yet come to an impasse. The unavoidable result is a church-split. (i.e. How many times a married person can get divorced and re-married. In “Orthodoxy” it is typically “three” divorces and re-“marriages” are allowable despite that never being anywhere in Scripture.)

The Catholic bishops in disagreement over anything, will appeal to their Bibles, Oral Tradition, Liturgy, and history (and prayer to the Holy Spirit) yet sometimes come to an impasse. The certain result is an appeal to the one with the Keys to objectively settle the matter.

This authority to bind and loose is given to ALL the Apostles (See Matthew 18:18 on fraternal correction) but in the context of a “brother” for THEM (not only a fellow Christian but a fellow bishop a successor to the Apostles) needing correction, HOW can they settle disputes on for example faith and morals?

MATTHEW 18:15-18 15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen EVEN TO THE CHURCH, (my note here. Just listen to HOW Jesus assumes the **authority of the Church**. If this foolish guy refuses “to listen **EVEN to the Church**”!! . . .) let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 **Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

What about “fraternal correction” between brother bishops? A correction to settle a difference between two brother bishops, is only POSSIBLE if you have someone to appeal to. And THAT is where the authority of the Keys is necessary in doctrinal disputes. And that’s WHY ONE MAN, ONLY Peter is entrusted with “the Keys”. That’s WHY **the Pope is a living visible sign of unity in the Church.**

Pope St. Leo the Great in the mid-400’s A.D. puts it this way

POPE ST. LEO "Whatever Christ has willed to be shared in common by Peter and the other leaders of the Church, it is only through Peter that He (Jesus) has given to others what He has not refused to bestow on them." Blessed Peter is therefore told: To you I will give **the keys**

of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth is also bound in heaven. Whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. The authority vested in this power passed also to the other apostles, and the institution established by this decree has been continued in all the leaders of the Church. **But it is not without good reason that what is bestowed on all is entrusted to one.**

In Conclusion

We reviewed some catechesis about Papal authority so we knew what to look for when we got into Scripture.

We saw the differences between **infallibility** (a negative charism), **inspiration** (a positive charism), and **impeccability**, and reviewed some other quasi-related terms too.

We saw in the Old Testament that the Davidic dynasty was set up with a steward UNDER the King, but OVER the people of the kingdom. And this steward had BINDING authority. And this steward is ALSO described as a “father” or papa (that’s where we get the word “Pope”). And we saw sometimes stewards of the King (like Shebna) are NOT GOOD men.

We reviewed Jesus’ prophecy where he tells Simon that He is going to re-name him Rock.

We looked at Matthew 16:13-20. We saw the relatively new (in history) Greek Petros/Petra objection against Simon being re-named Rock. But pointed out its impossibility given that Matthew’s Gospel was originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic, as well as some other reasons (Greek nouns having gender endings, context, etc.).

We did an exercise on settling of religious disputes while maintaining UNITY. (But it only works if you submissively TRUST Jesus’ promise to safeguard the faith through St. Peter. At 2000 years into this, I would think it would be easy to TRUST but that is not the case.) We saw how disputes are only settled with higher authority (In Protestantism, anyone and their Bible is the highest authority and how that leads to church-splits. Also in “Orthodoxy”, anyone and their Bible, Tradition, History, Liturgy and a Bishop is of the highest authority results in the same splitting albeit with less propensity. These splits tend along **political** lines (**Greek** Orthodox, **Russian** Orthodox, **Coptic** [**Egyptian**] Orthodox, etc. etc.).

We saw in the context of Matthew 18 where ALL the Apostles are given the power to bind and loose. But we also saw how only ONE Apostle gets the power to bind and loose **in the context of the Keys of authority—St. Peter**. And we saw how “the Keys” at times, MUST BE UTILIZED for the sake of unity, when doctrinal disputes arise among the Bishops themselves. This fits perfect with the Biblical formula given for “dispute-settling” and taking the dispute “**to the Church**”.

On your own in Table 2, you may look at some Patristic evidence of Peter’s person as the Rock. And Table 3 some more catechesis on your own if you are interested.

Since there is so much MORE that we couldn’t even begin to touch, in the future, we will soon do a complimentary study to this subject entitled: “**The Primacy of St. Peter**”.

Let’s close with a prayer.

Table 1

Patristic Evidence For Original Hebrew In St. Matthew's Gospel Authorship

Scholars agree that **most** of the New Testament *was* written in Greek originally. Matthew's Gospel is the exception though.

St. Matthew's Gospel was originally written in a Hebrew language variant called Aramaic. This is the language that Jesus and His Apostles would have spoken from day to day commonly. Let's look at some ancient Church Fathers writings to get more insight into this issue. We will see that **St. Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew**.

St. Hippolytus of Rome, writing in the 200's A.D., tells us St. Matthew died in the town of Parthia, but also tells us what the original language of St. Matthew's gospel was. Let's read on and find out (extended quote due to fascinating history). . . .

ST. HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME Peter preached the Gospel in Pontus, and Galatia, and Cappadocia, and Betania, and Italy, and Asia, and was afterwards crucified by Nero in Rome with his head downward, as he had himself desired to suffer in that manner. Andrew preached to the Scythians and Thracians, and was crucified, suspended on an olive tree, at Patrae, a town of Achaia; and there too he was buried. John, again, in Asia, was banished by Domitian the king to the isle of Patmos, in which also he wrote his Gospel and saw the apocalyptic vision; and in Trajan's time he fell asleep at Ephesus, where his remains were sought for, but could not be found. James, his brother, when preaching in Judea, was cut off with the sword by Herod the tetrarch, and was buried there. Philip preached in Phrygia, and was crucified in Hierapolis with his head downward in the time of Domitian, and was buried there. Bartholomew, again, preached to the Indians, to whom he also gave the Gospel according to Matthew, and was crucified with his head downward, and was buried in Allanum, a town of the great Armenia. And **Matthew wrote the Gospel in the Hebrew tongue, and published it at Jerusalem**, and fell asleep at Hieres, a town of Parthia. . . .

— St. Hippolytus of Rome
St. Hippolytus of Rome Died in 235 A.D. Again very ancient writings!

Let's listen to **Origen** writing on this topic in the 200's A.D. . . .

ORIGEN Concerning the four Gospels which alone are uncontroverted in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that **the Gospel according to Matthew**, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; and **that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue** and published it for the converts from Judaism. The second written was that according to Mark, who wrote it according to the instruction of Peter, who, in his General Epistle, acknowledged him as a son, saying, "The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son." And third, was that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, which he composed for the converts from the Gentiles. Last of all, that according to John. — Origen. "The Unity and Harmony of Scripture; Second Book." (Origen Died in 253 A.D. These are ancient writings.)

St. Cyril of Jerusalem is appealing here to unbelieving Hebrews . . .

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM . . . "They were Hebrews who wrote that history; so were all the Apostles Hebrews: why then do ye disbelieve the Jews? **Matthew who wrote the Gospel wrote it in the Hebrew tongue**; and Paul the preacher was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and the twelve Apostles were all of Hebrew race: then fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were appointed in succession from among the Hebrews. What then is your reason for allowing your own accounts, and rejecting ours, though these also are written by Hebrews from among yourselves." . . . —St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lectures #14 (St. Cyril of Jerusalem Died in 386 A.D.)

St. Papias of Hierapolis—Consider the early Church historian Eusebius writing in the 300's and quoting Bishop and Saint Papias of Hierapolis (Papias' writings are no longer available except in quotes from other ancient Church Fathers and fragments). **Papias wrote in the about 120 A.D.**

St. Irenaeus called Papias "a hearer of John and a companion to Polycarp, a man of old time." Polycarp himself incidentally, was ordained by the beloved disciple John. What did Papias himself think was the original language of St. Matthew's Gospel?

Let's find out . . .

ST. PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS . . . "So then **Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language**, and every one of them interpreted them as he was able." And the same writer uses testimonies from the first Epistle of John and from that of Peter likewise. And he relates another story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. These things we have thought it necessary to observe in addition to what has already been stated

—**St. Papias of Hierapolis; writing in approximately 120 A.D.!**

(Ancient Historian Eusebius of Caesarea quoting St. Papias in Eusebius' "Church History," Book III, Chapter XXXIX "The Writings of Papias." Eusebius himself died in 341 A.D.)

Here is St. Jerome.

ST. JEROME . . . **Matthew, also called Levi**, apostle and aforesaid publican, **composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew** for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but **this was afterwards translated into Greek** though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. . . .

— St. Jerome. "The Lives of Illustrious Men. Chapter 3."

St. Jerome Died in 420 A.D.

There is NOT ONE ancient Church Father that I could find that asserts St. Matthew's Gospel was **originally written in Greek!** There are no ancient manuscripts that suggest this either that I could find.

Table 2

Some Patristic Evidence For Peter As Rock In His Person

Catholics affirm Peter is Rock in his profession too. But since some deny Peter as Rock in his person, I will present just a few quotes on that here.

CCC 424b . . . On **the rock of this faith** confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church.

CCC 881 The Lord made Simon ALONE, whom **he named Peter, the rock of his Church**. He gave him **the keys** of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock. The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head. This pastoral office of Peter and the apostles belongs to the Church's very foundation and is continued by the bishops under **the primacy of the Pope**.

Catholics believe BOTH CCC 424 AND 881. Keeping that in mind, let's look at some historical vignettes regarding Peter's role as "Rock". The quotes are from a book entitled "**Jesus, Peter and the Keys**"; Queenship Publishing. You can go there for the citations or many places online. This book has MANY insightful Patristic quotes. So does Baptist Protestant convert-to-Catholicism Steven Ray in his book "**Upon This Rock**." And Pat Madrid's "**Pope Fiction**" is also very good but less historically inclined than the other books.

There are many other good books also—too numerous to mention and too many quotes to list here. The following is but a sample:

St. Gregory of Nazienzen (The Greek speaking Catholic Bishop of Constantinople in the late 300s A.D.) has this to say speaking about St. Peter

ST. GREGORY OF NAZIENZEN (. . . Seest thou that of the disciples of Christ, all of whom were great and deserving of the choice, one is called a **Rock** and is entrusted with the Foundations of the Church . . .

St. Ambrose of Milan a Latin-speaking Archbishop who brought St. Augustine out of the Manichean heresy and into the Catholic Church, writing in the late 300s states . . .

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN . . . It is that same Peter to whom He said ,
Thou art **Peter, and upon this Rock** I will **build** my Church. Therefore **where Peter is, there is the Church**; where the Church is, there death is not, but life eternal . . .

St. Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage in north Africa from 248-257 A.D. and martyred for the faith in 258 A.D.) says this . . .

ST. CYPRIAN . . . The Lord says **to Peter**: I say to you, He says, that **you are Peter**,
and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever things you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. And again He says to him after His resurrection:
feed my sheep. On him he builds the Church, and to him He gives the command to feed the sheep; and although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles, yet He founded a single chair, and He established His own authority
a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also what Peter was; but
a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is **made clear** that there is but **one Church and one chair**. . .

St. Gregory of Nyssa who lived in the late 300s, was Bishop of Nyssa in 371 A.D. (the Arian heretics deposed and banished him eventually), and played a prominent role at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. states the following . . .

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA . . . Peter, with his whole soul, associates himself with the lamb;
and, **by means of the change of his name**, he is changed by the Lord into **something more divine** . . .

(Notice St. Gregory **doesn't** say: "**by means of the change of his name to pebble**, he is changed by the Lord into **something quite insignificant**"). Again, St. Gregory of Nyssa:

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA. . . The memory of **Peter**, the **Head of the Apostles**, is celebrated;
and magnified indeed with him are the other members of the Church;
but **upon him is the Church of God firmly established**. For he is, agreeably to the gift conferred upon him by the lord,
that unbroken and most firm Rock upon which the Lord built His Church.

We see just a sampling of the patristic evidence for St. Peter as the Rock.

I found absolutely no patristic evidence that this "little pebble" argument was an ancient thought or belief. I guarantee that if there were evidence of this, it would be constantly rubbed into Catholics faces figuratively speaking.

Table 3

More Catechesis on Infallibility

Infallibility does NOT mean the Popes WILL teach what should be taught. A given Pope might be too fearful to teach some hard truths in certain ages. Infallibility does NOT mean the Popes WILL teach in the best way possible. Infallibility doesn't mean the Pope's timing will be correct, or to teach something in the most excellent manner. Infallibility doesn't mean the Pope's don't have to study. Infallibility does NOT mean the Popes WILL be moral paragons of virtue—infallibility is NOT IMPECCABILITY. Table 3 here is only in PART (to save paper as it is lengthy). If you want all of it just ask Joan and it will be sent to you electronically. Or reading (on your own) CCC 85-88, 888-896, 2034-2037, and 91-93 would be a good start.

All the faithful ('from the bishops to the last of the **faithful**' — see Donum Veritatis 4—the faith-FULL or the "faithful", **NOT** a mere "poll" that includes dissenting, unbelieving, **unfaithful** Catholics, but the **faithful in UNION with the Pope**) even has a **SHARE** in this charism of infallibility.

The supernatural sense of faith

CCC 91 All the faithful share in understanding and handing on revealed truth. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who instructs them⁵³ and guides them into all truth.⁵⁴

CCC 92 "The whole body of the faithful. . . cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals."⁵⁵

CCC 93 "By this appreciation of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred teaching authority (*Magisterium*), . . . receives. . . the faith, once for all delivered to the saints. . . The People unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply with right judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life."⁵⁶

Beware! I have seen so-called Catholics use this to support things like abortion and contraception.

The way they do this is they substitute public "polls" which include faith~~less~~ Catholics and falsely label this as the "sense of the faith-FULL (faithful)". The faith~~less~~ Catholics REFUSE to be "guided by the sacred teaching authority (*Magisterium*)" (CCC 93).

The Church Christ founded is indestructible and indefectible. Christ Himself Christ governs the Church through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors (CCC 869).

CCC 85 "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."⁴⁷ This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

CCC 86 "Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith."⁴⁸

CCC 87 Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me",⁴⁹ the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms.

The Bishops do not have this infallibility as individuals. The Bishops DO share in this charism of infallibility when they teach together, especially in Councils, and are united with St. Peter's successor (the Popes) either directly by him being there, or the Pope ratifying the Bishops teaching remotely (signing-off on the documents for example).

* The teaching office

CCC 888 Bishops, with priests as co-workers, have as their first task "to preach the Gospel of God to all men," in keeping with the Lord's command.⁴¹⁵ They are "heralds of faith, who draw new disciples to Christ; they are authentic teachers" of the apostolic faith "endowed with the authority of Christ."⁴¹⁶

889 In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a "supernatural sense of faith" the People of God, under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, "unfailingly adheres to this faith."⁴¹⁷

890 The mission of the Magisterium is linked to the definitive nature of the covenant established by God with his people in Christ. It is this Magisterium's task to preserve God's people from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error. Thus, the pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates. To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. The exercise of this charism takes several forms:

891 "The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. . . . The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council.⁴¹⁸ When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed,"⁴¹⁹ and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions "must be adhered to with the obedience of faith."⁴²⁰ This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.⁴²¹

892 Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a "definitive manner," they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful "are to adhere to it with religious assent"⁴²² which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

The sanctifying office

893 The bishop is "the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood,"⁴²³ especially in the Eucharist which he offers personally or whose offering he assures through the priests, his co-workers. The Eucharist is the center of the life of the particular Church. The bishop and priests sanctify the Church by their prayer and work, by their ministry of the word and of the sacraments. They sanctify her by their example, "not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock."⁴²⁴ Thus, "together with the flock entrusted to them, they may attain to eternal life."⁴²⁵

The governing office

894 "The bishops, as vicars and legates of Christ, govern the particular Churches assigned to them by their counsels, exhortations, and example, but over and above that also by the authority and sacred power" which indeed they ought to exercise so as to edify, in the spirit of service which is that of their Master.⁴²⁶

895 "The power which they exercise personally in the name of Christ, is proper, ordinary, and immediate, although its exercise is ultimately controlled by the supreme authority of the Church."⁴²⁷ But the bishops should not be thought of as vicars of the Pope. His ordinary and immediate authority over the whole Church does not annul, but on the contrary confirms and defends that of the bishops. Their authority must be exercised in communion with the whole Church under the guidance of the Pope.

896 The Good Shepherd ought to be the model and "form" of the bishop's pastoral office. Conscious of his own weaknesses, "the bishop . . . can have compassion for those who are ignorant and erring. He should not refuse to listen to his subjects whose welfare he promotes as of his very own children. . . . The faithful . . . should be closely attached to the bishop as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father".⁴²⁸

Let all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows his Father, and the college of presbyters as the apostles; respect the deacons as you do God's law. Let no one do anything concerning the Church in separation from the bishop.⁴²⁹

2034 The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are "authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice."⁷⁶ The *ordinary* and universal *Magisterium* of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for.

2035 The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of *infallibility*. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed.⁷⁷

2036 The authority of the Magisterium extends also to the specific precepts of the *natural law*, because their observance, demanded by the Creator, is necessary for salvation. In recalling the prescriptions of the natural law, the Magisterium of the Church exercises an essential part of its prophetic office of proclaiming to men what they truly are and reminding them of what they should be before God.⁷⁸

2037 The law of God entrusted to the Church is taught to the faithful as the way of life and truth. The faithful therefore have the *right* to be instructed in the divine saving precepts that purify judgment and, with grace, heal wounded human reason.⁷⁹ They have the *duty* of observing the constitutions and decrees conveyed by the legitimate authority of the Church. Even if they concern disciplinary matters, these determinations call for docility in charity.