



## FROM THE PREACHER

By: Blake Hudson

### Roman Catholicism: Papal Infallibility

The Roman Catholic teaching on the infallibility of the pope is often misunderstood by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. For that reason, it's especially important for us to have a correct understanding of what the Roman Church actually teaches about papal infallibility.

Papal infallibility was not made an official dogma of the Roman Church until 1870, at the First Vatican Council (a.k.a., Vatican I). Before 1870, many Roman Catholics did believe that the pope possessed some level of infallibility; however – and importantly – many Roman Catholics did *not* believe in papal infallibility. Before papal infallibility was defined dogmatically, debate and disagreement on the topic was allowed within the Roman Church. After 1870, however, to be a Roman Catholic one must necessarily affirm papal infallibility. The decision to affirm papal infallibility was met with intense debate within the Roman Church, and there were many Roman Catholics who disagreed so strongly with the dogma adopted in 1870 that they split from the Roman Catholic Church and formed what is called the Old Catholic Church.

The official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on papal infallibility is found in *The First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*. The most important statement is the following:

“we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church. But if any one—which may God avert—presume to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema” (translation from Philip Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom* Vol. 2, 270–271)

Things to note from this statement: First, it is *dogma* and to disagree with it is to be anathema (i.e., cursed / excommunicated). Second, when a pope speaks infallibly, he does so from his own authority, does not need approval from a council, and cannot be second-guessed or corrected. But third, the pope's infallibility is *not* universal. The pope saying “Pepsi is better than Dr. Pepper” is not an infallible statement, nor are any off-the-cuff remarks. The pope is infallible only when 1) he is deliberately speaking from his authoritative position and 2) he is defining a doctrine related to faith or morals that is applicable to the whole Church.

The claim of the Roman Church, even with the limitations in mind, is quite bold (some would even say, audacious), but here's where things get especially interesting: the Roman Church today actually *downplays* the dogma of papal infallibility. The plain reading of the text from Vatican I is that the pope is only *and always* infallible when the necessary conditions are met. But many of the authoritative statements of popes throughout history put the Roman Church in a very difficult, if not impossible position – one reason the Old Catholics broke away from Rome. The Roman Church knows this too, which is why they insist that popes have spoken infallibly only twice in history: the defining of the dogmas of The Immaculate Conception of Mary and The Assumption of Mary.

Adult Bible Study  
**Sunday morning's Adult Bible class will be covering... Acts 20: 1-16**

**Our annual corporate meeting is scheduled for this Sunday, 1/18/2026, immediately following morning service.**

**Sweetheart Banquet**  
February 8, 2026  
Following our morning services.  
RSVP to Mandie Faycosh  
979-236-5435  
For members 55+

WITH DEEPEST  
**Sympathy** We want to express our love and sympathy to the family and friends of James Davis, Joe Davis's dad, who passed from this life on Thursday, January 8, 2026. Services are to be held this Saturday in Round Rock, Texas at 2pm.

**Congrats** Congratulations to both Lily McGrath and Eva Gentry!  
•Lily has a new grandson, Nash Randell Baker, born Friday, January 9th.  
•Eva has a new granddaughter, Maya Hazel San Miguel, born Saturday, January 10th.

 Randy, Julie and Joe Kingrey placed membership with us Sunday morning, January 11, 2026. If you have not had the opportunity to meet them please make sure to introduce yourself. We look forward to working with them.

 We rejoice with Holly Fox in her decision to be baptized into Christ on Thursday, January 1, 2026. Welcome to God's family Holly!

## Please Pray

Rick Arnold is struggling with some health issues...Deena Damron is home...Nita Fry is home...Tomitria Dixon, niece of Anita English, is in congestive heart failure and needs a new heart...John Shaw, brother-in-law of Tammy Sanford, has been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and is very ill...Steven Shriver, co-worker of Randy Wilkinson, has improved following a stroke but, still has a long recovery...Johnny Toone, Karen Lowe's son, has been hospitalized due to a seizure and other complications

**PLEASE REMEMBER:**  
Len Boling, Dorothy Booth, Shirley Brown, Robert Gautney, Jeanie Granger, Mona Higgins, Erin West Janik, Dorothy King, Marie Leblanc, JoAnne Maywald, Charm Moser, Wayne Satchell, Karen Smith, Paul Stallberg, Andy Tilley, Charles and Elizabeth Street, Ceasar Vereen, Maggie Walker, John Ward