

WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CHURCH

Vatican 1 declared that the infallible definitions of the pope are correct and therefore irreformable and that the consent of the Church does not make them infallible. The pope is infallible without the consent of the Church.

If the pope can make a dogma without the consent of the Church can he make one against the consent of the Church? Kung says Church tradition says that would make the pope a heretic and a schismatic and his decision wouldn't bind the Church (page 88, Infallible?). But surely if tradition says that birth control is immoral, the pope can infallibly declare birth control wrong even if most of the Church is against him. The Church council infallibly declared that Jesus was God without the consent of the huge majority professed members of the Church. At the time nearly the whole Church took the Arian view that Jesus was not God. The tradition is wrong. The pope can make a dogma in the face of opposition from the Church. The pope is the rock so the pope can expel as many people from the Church as he feels like.

Many are worried how there is a dispute among Catholic theologians about what doctrines are supposed to be infallible. The lists of papal infallibly proclaimed doctrines differ from theologian to theologian. For a pope such as Paul VI and John Paul II to have banned contraception and declared this ban binding on the basis of the obedience due to papal authority was criminal when such disputes were and are happening. It is as if they didn't care if they were wrong but cared more about being thought to be right. So many deaths have happened due to the papal teaching. Many women have been infected by HIV from their husbands because of the belief that it is wrong to protect yourself with condoms. The popes are claiming an unjust right to kill through their teachings. The only way out is to say that they were using their infallibility - their extreme attitude seems to show they intended to be fully infallible.

The Church through keeping the clergy away from the laity as a separate caste and clothing them in strange robes and involving them in secrecy and arcane rituals and using them as the usual teachers of the people is able to put an aura of divine authority around them. They seem like speakers of the oracles of God. The Church likes to use a little ditty, "Jesus never said hear the Bible but hear the Church". This gives Catholics a fear of contradicting the Church or a reluctance to think for themselves. That is what it is intended to do for the Catholics are the sheep and the priests are the shepherds. To often then when a Catholic opposes contraception or abortion or whatever, it has less to do with having good reasons and more to do with the priests saying those things are wrong. The Gestapo were made to feel the same way. Its dangerous and lazy and immature. If you are confident in your arguments against or for something you are showing your insecurity by appealing to authority. Those Catholics who principally believe that birth control or euthanasia are wrong for the pope say so are showing that they aren't as sure as they pretend and are trying to hurt you.

The Church teaches that even if her teaching is wrong, God still uses the Church to represent him and to guide the world and won't discredit it. So if she wrongly forbids contraception, God will ensure that that this ban will not do harm, will be good and certainly no worse than it would be if the Church allowed contraception. Obedience is a duty for the Catholic even if the Church is wrong. Disobeying is a mark of disobedience to God. Needless to say, the Church holds that it is impossible for her to be wrong about the immorality of birth control.

If infallibility is inferred from the idea that the true Church cannot err in its official teaching and because Christ promised that the gates of Hell would never prevail over his Church, then to say a papal definition can be ignored despite claiming to be infallible is just saying that Catholics can pick and choose what they want out of their faith. If you want to call yourself a Catholic then you must believe whatever the Church stands for. If you don't, start your own Church or look for a Church that suits you. You cannot be a Democrat while believing in communism.

The genuine Catholic will believe that the pope is still right when he makes an infallible definition even if it is a rule that he must have the consent of the Church and he breaks that rule. Infallibility, in Catholic teaching, does not mean that the pope's research or motives or procedure will be right.

The pope can make a dogma without the consent of the Church for a number of reasons.

One, who is to say that the opponents are genuine Catholics? The Church is burdened by fakes and insincere believers. A Catholic who teaches knowingly something that differs from authentic Catholic doctrine is automatically excommunicated and is not a true Catholic. You will find few so-called Catholics who are not under suspicion for that sin. The popes infallibility is supposed to be a gift to the genuine Catholics not to those who merely say they are Catholics.

Two, the pope making the dogma would mean that some will side for him and others against. So which side then is right? If the pope can be ignored then what is the point of having a pope if you can break away? Catholics are urged to believe that

Jesus made the popes infallible so that they might use it to keep the Church clear on what the faith and God said and keep the Church one in that truth and to drive out anybody that disputed the truth. The pope is the focus of unity. He cannot appear to use his infallibility wrongly without ceasing to be the rock the Church is built on. It would mean the Church ceases to be the true Church for it has added in alien elements to the gospel as if they were the gospel. What use would papal infallibility be or the papacy be if the pope can be ignored when declaring a doctrine to be revealed by God and unchangeable and official Catholicism in the fullest sense?

Three, the Church has loads of doctrines that are considered infallible without any concern for seeking the consent of most of the Church. Were most Catholics and clerics consulted when confession was introduced?

Four, infallibility is used when the Church starts to adopt false doctrine. It was used to correct the Catholics believing in the Arian heresy who comprised the majority at the time. Infallibility is no use if the consent of the Church is asked for. Also all Catholics in the past believed that birth control was a sin. Today nearly all believe that it is not. Consent of the Church cannot be reduced to the idea that it is about what the majority of Catholics believe. What about the minority of disagreeers? Are they not the Church as well? Consent of the Church means the consent of the true Catholics who know what they are consenting to.

Five, tradition was speaking of popes who were not using their infallibility. A pope could give infallible doctrine before 1870 according to Roman Catholic doctrine. If so, then it could not be recognised as such until 1870 when papal infallibility and its boundaries were proclaimed. So it is infallible teaching in itself but nobody can see that so the pope cannot bind the Church then without its consent.

Six, the Church says that defining a doctrine as revealed by God means that doctrine is in the tradition that is revealed by God. Defining is used to determine which traditions are from God. So if tradition disagrees with the "not from the consent of the Church" dogma that is part of the papal infallibility doctrine then tradition reflects incorrect teaching and the definition is right and identifies the correct understanding.

Seven, the Church was proclaiming dogmas without considering what the people believed. Father Richard McBrien refers to the fact that the need for reception of the doctrine as revealed by God by the people, the criterion of reception, has only recently been recovered a part of Catholic tradition (page 65, Catholicism). But when the Church was making so many dogmas while ignoring it that proves that it is not essential after all. If it is and it wasn't considered then the Church has declared teachings infallible that are not infallible at all. Infallibility is only nonsense.

Eight, Mc Brien writes in Catholicism that when the definition of papal infallibility declared that the definitions of the pope are infallible and therefore cannot be changed or abrogated it said that the definitions are infallible by themselves and not by reason of the agreement of the Church. He interpreted this to be saying that this was to silence believers who were saying the pope's definitions were not infallible in themselves but only infallible when he was speaking for the Church so that the consent of the Church was what was making them infallible. In this view, the pope has no personal infallibility but the Church is infallible and he proclaims infallible doctrine only with its approval.

So we choose one these interpretations,

1, "The pope is only infallible when he defines what the Church has indicated to him what it believes and when he proclaims that faith. The pope has no infallibility of his own but is merely the voice of the infallibility of the Church".

2, "The pope has infallibility of his own but can only use it if the Church approves of his definition. But it is not the Church approval that is making him infallible for he has infallibility of his own".

So one is saying the pope does have his own infallibility and the other says he does not.

Nobody disputed that the pope proclaiming infallible dogma was a problem. The only dispute was if this infallibility was from the Church or from him personally. The fact that the definition of papal infallibility was considered necessary shows that it wanted to define that the pope has personal infallibility. But if he can give infallible definitions of dogma in the way we have seen without having infallibility in himself then clearly personal papal infallibility is unnecessary. To say God gives the pope the charism of infallibility is to declare that God wastes miracles and charisms.

Also Rome admits that the consent of the Church is a problem for there are bishops and priests and many laypeople who use the Catholic name but who are not real Catholics. From this it would conclude that if the consent of the Church is unclear, making an infallible doctrine means that the consent of the real Catholics must be assumed. It cannot be proven. Infallibility then cannot be obtained by looking for the consent of the Church first. Rather when infallibility is used, you also know automatically that the real Catholics have already believed your dogma. Consent is not used to make dogmas, rather dogmas show that it is there. This is the correct understanding of the teaching of the Church.

Vatican 1 meant that the pope can proclaim a dogma by himself without being in error and that the consent of the real Church not just the Church made up of real and false and undecided Catholics doesn't need to be asked for. But since the beliefs of the real Church and papal infallibility go together, it follows that when the pope makes a definition in opposition to the vast majority of professed Catholics, it follows that God wouldn't let this happen unless he saw that the real Catholics believed in the definition. Infallible definitions are intended after all to please only the real Catholics.

Conclusion: The pope according to Vatican 1 can proclaim a dogma and it is binding on us even if the whole Church is against him. After all, infallibility was given so that the Church might correct false doctrine among its members so what can one expect?