

# Baptism of Desire, Blood, and Water (The Threefold Baptism)

Last updated: July 2015

## Introduction

The Sacrament of Baptism, which was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, imprints a "character" on the soul, admitting the recipient to membership in the Catholic Church. The matter of Baptism is natural water poured over the head of the person to be baptized. Throughout the history of the Catholic Church it has been unanimously taught that both Baptism of Desire and Baptism of Blood, while not Sacraments in themselves, can supply the grace of the Sacrament, when Baptism of Water becomes a physical or moral impossibility.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a Jesuit priest named Father Leonard Feeney was known to publicly oppose the doctrine on the threefold Baptism, where he accepted only water Baptism. His doctrinal position came to be known as *Feeneyism*, and those supporting his position came to be known as *Feeneyites*. Since Father Feeney passed away in 1978, Feeneyism has become an epidemic among Catholics today. The main reason this epidemic exists is because Catholics do not understand the concept of the Magisterium of the Church. This website was created to set the record straight, showing that Baptism of Desire, Baptism of Blood, and Baptism of Water (the three-fold Baptism) is a Catholic doctrine taught since the earliest days of the Catholic Church. Read below for an explanation of why Catholics MUST believe this doctrine. *Note this PDF document consists of the core of the website [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com) with the exception of its photos, diagrams, and additional articles. Please go to the website itself for the full content.*

## The Magisterium of the Church

In order to understand Baptism of Desire and Blood, Catholics must first understand what the Magisterium of the Church is, which is defined as "*the Church's divinely appointed authority to teach the truths of religion*". In other words, Our Lord gave His Church the authority to teach the faithful about what is expected of them. The Magisterium of Catholic Church teaches the faithful in two ways;

**1. Solemn Magisterium:** Defined as Church teaching "*which is exercised only rarely by formal and authentic definitions of councils or Popes. Its matter comprises dogmatic definitions of ecumenical councils or Popes teaching "ex cathedra."* (Definition from "A Catholic Dictionary", 1951)

Examples of the Solemn Magisterium would be decisions of any General Councils of the Church, or certain papal encyclicals, such as that defining the Dogma of the Assumption in 1950. Note that it is only in extraordinary circumstances that the Catholic Church teaches in this manner, which historically has been to combat heresy. For this reason it is sometimes referred to as the "extraordinary magisterium". For examples of the Solemn Magisterium, here is a list of all solemn teaching during the first 7 centuries of the Catholic Church:

- Council of Nicaea I (325): condemned the heresy of Arius, and defined the Divinity of the Son of God and the Nicene Creed.
- Council of Constantinople I (381): condemned the heresy of Macedonius, and defined the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, confirmed and extended the Nicene Creed.

- Council of Ephesus (431): condemned the heresy of Nestorius, and defined that there was one person in Christ, and defended the Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- Council of Chalcedon (451): condemned the heresy of Eutyches (Monophysitism); declared Christ had two natures, human and divine.
- Council of Constantinople II (553): condemned, as savoring of Nestorianism, the so-called Three Chapters, the erroneous books of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the teaching of Theodoret of Cyrrihus and Ibas of Edessa.
- Council of Constantinople III (680-681): declared against the Monothelites, who taught one will in Christ, by defining that Christ had two wills, human and divine.

Here we can clearly see that in the first 7 centuries of the Church, the Solemn Magisterium was not used often, and very little was solemnly defined. So at least 7 generations of Catholics lived and died during this time with very little solemn teaching by the Church. This is because the majority of what Catholics believe comes from the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church (see next).

**2. Ordinary Magisterium:** this second form of Church teaching is *“continually exercised by the Church especially in her universal practices connected with faith and morals, in the unanimous consent of the Fathers and theologians, in the decisions of the Roman Congregations concerning faith and morals, in the common sense of the Faithful, and various historical documents, in which the faith is declared.”* (Definition from “A Catholic Dictionary”, 1951)

So, according to this definition, the Ordinary Magisterium (also referred to as the Universal Ordinary Magisterium) is Church teaching that is continuous and unanimously consented to throughout the Church.

"A Commentary on Canon Law" (Augustine, 1918, Canon 1323, pg 327) states: *"The universal and ordinary magisterium consists of the entire episcopate, according to the constitution and order defined by Christ, i.e., all the bishops of the universal Church, dependently on the Roman Pontiff"*. It also states, *"What the universal and approved practice and discipline proposes as connected with faith and morals must be believed. And what the Holy Fathers and the theologians hold unanimously as a matter of faith and morals, is also de fide."*

The Ordinary Magisterium is where the majority of Catholic beliefs are taught and learned; through unanimous teaching by preaching, by any written means, the approval of catechisms, the approval of textbooks for use in seminaries, etc.

Some examples of the Ordinary Magisterium would be that of Guardian Angels, or the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (before 1950). While neither were solemnly defined by the Church (before 1950), they were always universally taught and believed, and it would be considered heresy to deny them.

For example, Arius was considered a heretic before his condemnation at the Council of Nicaea in 325, because the Divinity of Christ (which he denied) was part of the teaching of the Ordinary Magisterium before that Council. The same applies to Nestorius regarding his denial of the Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, where he was later declared a heretic by the Solemn Magisterium at the Council of Ephesus.

So in a nutshell, the Solemn Magisterium (used rarely) plus the Ordinary Magisterium (used continuously) equals the complete infallible teaching of the Catholic Church. The article "Science and the Church" from the Catholic Encyclopedia (1917) states it well: *"The official activity of teaching may be exercised either in the*

*ordinary, or daily, magisterium, or by occasional solemn decisions. The former goes on uninterruptedly; the latter are called forth in times of great danger, especially of growing heresies."*

Finally, the most frequent reason why the Solemn Magisterium is used is in order to confirm a doctrine which already belongs to the Ordinary Magisterium, but which has come under attack, usually by heretics.

## The Dogma of Infallibility

It is a dogma of the Catholic Church that the Church is divinely kept from the possibility of error in her definitive teaching on faith and morals.

Definition of "Infallibility" from "A Catholic Dictionary", 1951: *"This infallibility resides (A) in the pope personally and alone; (B) in an ecumenical Council subject to papal confirmation (these infallibilities are distinct but correlative); (C) in the bishops of the Church, dispersed throughout the world, teaching definitively in union with the pope. This is not a different infallibility from (B) but is the ordinary exercise of a prerogative (hence called the "ordinary magisterium") which is manifested in a striking manner in an ecumenical Council. This ordinary magisterium is exercised by pastoral letters, preaching, catechisms, the censorship of publications dealing with faith and morals, the reprobation of doctrines and books: it is thus in continuous function and embraces the whole deposit of faith."*

The Catholic Encyclopedia (1917) in the article on Infallibility, states the same: *"Three Organs of Infallibility: 1. the bishops dispersed throughout the world in union with the Holy See (exercised by what theologians describe as the ordinarium magisterium, i. e. the common or everyday teaching authority of the Church), 2. ecumenical councils under the headship of the pope; and 3. the pope himself separately.*

So these definitions coincide with the magisterium definitions above.

In other words, teaching from the Ordinary Magisterium continually occurs throughout the Church century after century, and the decisions of Popes and Councils (Solemn Magisterium) confine what is taught through the ordinary teaching. Both solemn and ordinary teaching of the Church are considered infallible by this definition. The infallibility of both Solemn and Ordinary Magisterium was solemnly defined by the First Vatican Council (1870) when it stated the following:

*"All those things are to be believed by divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the written Word of God or in Tradition, and which are proposed by the Church, either in solemn judgment or in its ordinary and universal teaching office, as divinely revealed truths which must be believed."*

In other words, both forms of the Magisterium of the Church (Solemn or Ordinary) are infallible and must be believed, according to this General Council. So if a teaching in the Church is universal, and allowed to propagate without condemnation from the Solemn Magisterium, it is considered infallible by the First Vatican Council. Next we provide examples of such teaching from both solemn and ordinary teaching of the Church on the subject of the threefold Baptism.

## Examples of Church Teaching on Baptism of Desire, Blood and Water

- St. Cyprian, Church Father (3<sup>rd</sup> Century): *The Epistles of Cyprian, Epistle LXXII: "Let men of this kind, who are aiders and favourers of heretics, know therefore, first, that those catechumens hold the sound faith and truth of the Church, and advance from the divine camp to do battle with the devil, with a full and sincere acknowledgment of God the Father, and of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; then, that they certainly are not deprived of the sacrament of baptism who are baptized with the most glorious and greatest baptism of blood".*

*Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics: "Let men of this kind, who are aiders and favourers of heretics, know therefore, first, that those catechumens hold the sound faith and truth of the Church, and advance from the divine camp to do battle with the devil, with a full and sincere acknowledgment of God the Father, and of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; then, that they certainly are not deprived of the sacrament of baptism who are baptized with the most glorious and greatest baptism of blood, concerning which the Lord also said, that He had "another baptism to be baptized with."*

*The Treatises Of Cyprian, Treatise XI, Exhortation to Martyrdom, Addressed to Fortunatus: "In the baptism of water is received the remission of sins, in the baptism of blood the crown of virtues. This thing is to be embraced and desired, and to be asked for in all the entreaties of our petitions, that we who are God's servants should be also His friends."*

- Tertullian, Church Father (3<sup>rd</sup> Century): *On Baptism, Chapter XVI, Of the Second Baptism - With Blood: "We have indeed, likewise, a second font, (itself withal one with the former,) of blood, to wit; concerning which the Lord said, "I have to be baptized with a baptism,"when He had been baptized already. For He had come "by means of water and blood,"just as John has written; that He might be baptized by the water, glorified by the blood; to make us, in like manner, called by water, chosen by blood. These two baptisms He sent out from the wound in His pierced side, in order that they who believed in His blood might be bathed with the water; they who had been bathed in the water might likewise drink the blood. This is the baptism which both stands in lieu of the fontal bathing when that has not been received, and restores it when lost."*

*Scorpiace: Antidote for the Scorpion's Sting, Ch VI: "He therefore appointed as second supplies of comfort, and the last means of succour, the fight of martyrdom and the baptism--thereafter free from danger--of blood. And concerning the happiness of the man who has partaken of these, David says: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." For, strictly speaking, there cannot any longer be reckoned ought against the martyrs, by whom in the baptism (of blood) life itself is laid down. Thus, "love covers the multitude of sins;" and loving God, to wit, with all its strength (by which in the endurance of martyrdom it maintains the fight), with all its life (which it lays down for God), it makes of man a martyr."*

- St. Hippolytus of Rome (3rd century): *Canons of Hypolytus, Can. XIX: Concerning Catechumens: "Catechumens, who by the unbelievers are arrested and killed by martyrdom, before they received baptism, are to be buried with the other martyrs, for they are baptized in their own blood."*
- Constitutions of the Holy Apostles. Book V, Sec I, Concerning the Martyrs, para 6: (3rd-4th Century): *(A compilation of writings from the Apostles and their immediate successors) "But let him who is*

*vouchsafed the honour of martyrdom rejoice with joy in the Lord, as obtaining thereby so great a crown, and departing out of this life by his confession. Nay, though he be trot a catechumen, let him depart without trouble; for his suffering for Christ will be to him a more genuine baptism, because he does really die with Christ, but the rest only in a figure."*

- St. John Chrystostome, Church Father and Doctor of the Church (4th Century): Panegyric on St. Lucianus, "Do not be surprised that I should equate martyrdom with baptism; for here too the spirit blows with much fruitfulness, and a marvellous and astonishing remission of sins and cleansing of the soul is effected; and just as those who are baptized by water, so, too, those who suffer martyrdom are cleansed with their own blood."

*Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles, Homily I: "But why does Christ say, "Ye shall be baptized," when in fact there was no water in the upper room? Because the more essential part of Baptism is the Spirit, through Whom indeed the water has its operation; in the same manner our Lord also is said to be anointed, not that He had ever been anointed with oil, but because He had received the Spirit. Besides, we do in fact find them receiving a baptism with water [and a baptism with the Spirit], and these at different moments. In our case both take place under one act, but then they were divided."*

- St. Basil, Church Father and Doctor of the Church (4th Century): Treatise De Spiritu Sancto, Chapter XV: "And ere now there have been some who in their championship of true religion have undergone the death for Christ's sake, not in mere similitude, but in actual fact, and so have needed none of the outward signs of water for their salvation, because they were baptized in their own blood. Thus I write not to disparage the baptism by water, but to overthrow the arguments of those who exalt themselves against the Spirit; who confound things that are distinct from one another, and compare those which admit of no comparison."

- Eusebius of Caesarea, Church Father (4th Century): The Church History of Eusebius, Book VI, Chapter IV: "And of women, Herais died while yet a catechumen, receiving baptism by fire, as Origen himself somewhere says."

- St. Victor of Braga, (4th Century): From the Roman Martyrology: "Saint Victor: At Braga in Portugal, of Saint Victor, Martyr, who while still a catechumen refused to worship an idol, and confessed Christ Jesus with great constancy; wherefore after many torments, he merited to be baptized in his own blood, his head being cut off. Victor of Braga Martyr (Red Martyr): Died c. 300. In his chronicle, Vasaeus records that Saint Victor was baptized by blood. The catechumen was beheaded at Braga, Portugal, under Diocletian for refusing to sacrifice to idols (Benedictines, Husenbeth)."

- St. Genesis of Arles, (4th Century): As noted in the Catholic Encyclopedia: "A notary martyred under Maximianus in 303 or 308. Feast, 25 Aug. He is honoured as patron of notaries, and invoked against chilblains and scurf. The Acts (Acta SS., Aug., V, 123, and Ruinart, 559), attributed to St. Paulinus of Nola, state: Genesis, native of Arles, at first a soldier became known for his proficiency in writing, and was made secretary to the magistrate of Arles. While performing the duties of his office the decree of persecution against the Christians was read in his presence. Outraged in his ideas of justice, the young catechumen cast his tablets at the feet of the magistrate and fled. He was captured and executed, and thus received baptism in his own blood. His veneration must be very old, as his name is found in the ancient martyrology ascribed to St. Jerome. A church and altar dedicated to him at Arles were known in the fourth century."

- Rufinus, Church Father (4th Century): A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed: *"It is written that when the side of Jesus was pierced "He shed thereout blood and water." This has a mystical meaning. For Himself had said, "Out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water." But He shed forth blood also, of which the Jews sought that it might be upon themselves and upon their children. He shed forth water, therefore, which might wash believers; He shed forth blood also which might condemn unbelievers. Yet it might be understood also as prefiguring the twofold grace of baptism, one that which is given by the baptism of water, the other that which is sought through martyrdom in the outpouring of blood, for both are called baptism."*
- St. Gregory Nazianzen, Church Father and Doctor of the Church (4th Century): Oration XXXIX, Oration on the Holy Lights: *"I know also a Fourth Baptism--that by Martyrdom and blood, which also Christ himself underwent; and this one is far more august than all the others, inasmuch as it cannot be defiled by after-stains."*
- St. Pope Siricius (4th Century): Letter to Himerius, 385: *"As we maintain that the observance of the holy Paschal time should in no way be relaxed, in the same way we desire that infants who, on account of their age, cannot yet speak, or those who, in any necessity, are in want of the water of holy baptism, be succored with all possible speed, for fear that, if those who leave this world should be deprived of the life of the Kingdom for having been refused the source of salvation which they desired, this may lead to the ruin of our souls. If those threatened with shipwreck, or the attack of enemies, or the uncertainties of a siege, or those put in a hopeless condition due to some bodily sickness, ask for what in their faith is their only help, let them receive at the very moment of their request the reward of regeneration they beg for. Enough of past mistakes! From now on, let all the priests observe the aforesaid rule if they do not want to be separated from the solid apostolic rock on which Christ has built his universal Church."*
- St. Ambrose, Church Father and Doctor of the Church (4th Century): From his writing "De obitu Valentiniani consolatio": *"But I hear that you are distressed because he did not receive the sacrament of baptism. Tell me, what attribute do we have besides our will, our intention? Yet, a short time ago he had this desire that before he came to Italy he should be initiated [baptized], and he indicated that he wanted to be baptized as soon as possible by myself. Did he not, therefore, have that grace which he desired? Did he not have what he asked for? Undoubtedly because he asked for it he received it."*
- St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church (4th Century): First Catechetical Lecture Of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, To Those Who Are to Be Enlightened, Delivered Extempore at Jerusalem, As an Introductory Lecture To Those Who Had Come Forward for Baptism, Lecture III on Baptism: *"If any man receive not Baptism, he hath not salvation; except only Martyrs, who even without the water receive the kingdom. For when the Saviour, in redeeming the world by His Cross, was pierced in the side, He shed forth blood and water; that men, living in times of peace, might be baptized in water, and, in times of persecution, in their own blood. For martyrdom also the Saviour is wont to call a baptism, saying, Can ye drink rite cup which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"*

*Lecture XIII: "For since in the Gospels the power of salutary Baptism is twofold, one which is granted by means of water to the illuminated, and a second to holy martyrs, in persecutions, through their own*

blood, there came out of that saving Side blood and water, to confirm the grace of the confession made for Christ, whether in baptism, or on occasions of martyrdom."

· St. Augustine, Church Father and Doctor of the Church (4th-5th Century): The Seven Books of Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Book IV, Ch 22: "That the place of baptism is sometimes supplied by martyrdom is supported by an argument by no means trivial, which the blessed Cyprian adduces from the thief, to whom, though he was not baptized, it was yet said, "To-day shall thou be with me in Paradise." On considering which, again and again, I find that not only martyrdom for the sake of Christ may supply what was wanting of baptism, but also faith and conversion of heart, if recourse may not be had to the celebration of the mystery of baptism for want of time. For neither was that thief crucified for the name of Christ, but as the reward of his own deeds; nor did he suffer because he believed, but he believed while suffering. It was shown, therefore, in the case of that thief, how great is the power even without the visible sacrament of baptism, of what the apostle says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But the want is supplied invisibly only when the administration of baptism is prevented, not by contempt for religion, but by the necessity of the moment."  
Ch23: "But as in the thief, to whom the material administration of the sacrament was necessarily wanting, the salvation was complete, because it was spiritually present through his piety, so, when the sacrament itself is present, salvation is complete, if what the thief possessed be unavoidably wanting."  
Ch24: "And as in the thief the gracious goodness of the Almighty supplied what had been wanting in the sacrament of baptism, because it had been missing not from pride or contempt, but from want of opportunity..."  
Ch25: "By all these considerations it is proved that the sacrament of baptism is one thing, the conversion of the heart another; but that man's salvation is made complete through the two together. Nor are we to suppose that, if one of these be wanting, it necessarily follows that the other is wanting also; because the sacrament may exist in the infant without the conversion of the heart; and this was found to be possible without the sacrament in the case of the thief, God in either case filling up what was involuntarily wanting. But when either of these requisites is wanting intentionally, then the man is responsible for the omission. And baptism may exist when the conversion of the heart is wanting; but, with respect to such conversion, it may indeed be found when baptism has not been received, but never when it has been despised."

From City of God, Book XIII, Chapter 7: "Of the Death Which the Unbaptized Suffer for the Confession of Christ: For whatever unbaptized persons die confessing Christ, this confession is of the same efficacy for the remission of sins as if they were washed in the sacred font of baptism. For He who said, "Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John 3:5 made also an exception in their favor, in that other sentence where He no less absolutely said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;" Matthew 10:32 and in another place, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." Matthew 16:25"

A Treatise on the Soul and Its Origin, Book II, Ch17, Disobedient Compassion and Compassionate Disobedience Reprobated and Martyrdom In Lieu Of Baptism: "Truth, by the mouth of Itself incarnate, proclaims as if in a voice of thunder: "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And in order to except martyrs from this sentence, to whose lot it has fallen to be slain for the name of Christ before being washed in the baptism of Christ, He says in another passage, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

*A Treatise On the Soul and Its Origin, by Aurelius Augustin, Bishop of Hippo; In Four Books, 419, Book 1, CH 11, Title Of Chapter 11: "Martyrdom for Christ Supplies the Place of Baptism. The Faith of the Thief Who Was Crucified Along with Christ Taken As Martyrdom And Hence for Baptism".*

*On the Soul and Its Origin, Book 1, Ch 10: "Moreover, from the time when He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and again, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it; " no one becomes a member of Christ except it be either by baptism in Christ, or death for Christ."*

- St. Prosper of Aquitaine (5th century): *Sentent. Ex S. Aug. n. exlix. col 564 (Quoted in "The Faith of Catholics" (Berington and Kirk) 1846): "They who, without even having received the laver of regeneration, die for the confession of Christ, it avails them as much for the doing away of sins, as if they were washed in the font of baptism."*
- St. Fulgentius (6th Century): *Enchiridion Patristicum 2269: "From the time when Our Saviour said 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' without the sacrament of baptism, apart from those who pour forth their blood for Christ in the Catholic Church without baptism, no one can receive the kingdom of Heaven, nor eternal life."*
- St. John of Damascus, Doctor of the Church (7th-8th Century): *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: "The seventh is baptism by blood and martyrdom, which baptism Christ Himself underwent in our behalf, He Who was too august and blessed to be defiled with any later stains."*
- St. Bede, Doctor of the Church (8th century): *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People, Book 1, Ch.7, The Passion of St. Albanus and his companions, p.24: "Then and there also that soldier was beheaded, who being before restrained by the beck of the Highest, refused to inflict the stroke on the holy confessor of God; concerning whom indeed it is manifest that, albeit he was not washed in the font of baptism, yet was he cleansed by the libation of his own blood, and made worthy to enter into the heavenly kingdom."*
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church (12th century): *Letter No.77, Letter to Hugh of St. Victor, On Baptism: "If an adult...wish and seek to be baptized, but is unable to obtain it because death intervenes, then where there is no lack of right faith, devout hope, sincere charity, may God be gracious to me, because I cannot completely despair of salvation for such a one solely on account of water, if it be lacking, and cannot believe that faith will be rendered empty, hope confounded and charity lost, provided only that he is not contemptuous of the water, but as I said merely kept from it by lack of opportunity..."*
- Pope Innocent II (12th Century): *From his letter "Apostolicam Sedem" to the Bishop of Cremona, "We assert without hesitation (on the authority of the holy Fathers Augustine and Ambrose) that the 'priest' whom you indicated (in your letter) had died without the water of baptism, because he persevered in the Faith of Holy Mother Church and in the confession of the name of Christ, was freed from original sin and attained the joys of the heavenly fatherland. Read [brother] in the eighth book of Augustine's City of God where among other things it is written: 'Baptism is administered invisibly to one whom not contempt of religion, but death excludes.' Read again the book also of the blessed Ambrose concerning the death of Valentinian where he says the same thing. Therefore, to questions concerning the dead,*

*you should hold the opinions of the learned Fathers, and in your church you should join in prayers and you should have sacrifices offered to God for the 'priest' mentioned." (Denzinger 388)*

- St. Bonaventure, Doctor of the Church (13<sup>th</sup> century): *In Sent. IV, d.4,P.2,a.1,q.1: "God obliges no one to do the impossible and therefore it must be admitted that the baptism of desire without the baptism of water is sufficient, provided the person in question has the will to receive the baptism of water, but is prevented from doing so before he dies."*

*Centiloquij, Tertia pars and De Sacramentorum virtute, Lib. VI: "There are three distinct forms of Baptism, namely that of fire, that of water and that of blood. Baptism of fire is that provided by repentance and the grace of the Holy Spirit, and purifies from sin. In Baptism of water we are both purified from sin and absolved of all temporal punishment due to sin. In Baptism of blood we are purified from all misery."*

- St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church (13<sup>th</sup> century): *Summa Theologica, Whether there are two ways to be distinguished of eating Christ's body?*  
*"Consequently, just as some are baptized with the Baptism of desire, through their desire of baptism, before being baptized in the Baptism of water; so likewise some eat this sacrament spiritually ere they receive it sacramentally."*

*Whether a man can be saved without Baptism?*

*"Secondly, the sacrament of Baptism may be wanting to anyone in reality but not in desire: for instance, when a man wishes to be baptized, but by some ill-chance he is forestalled by death before receiving Baptism. And such a man can obtain salvation without being actually baptized, on account of his desire for Baptism, which desire is the outcome of "faith that worketh by charity," whereby God, Whose power is not tied to visible sacraments, sanctifies man inwardly. Hence Ambrose says of Valentinian, who died while yet a catechumen: "I lost him whom I was to regenerate: but he did not lose the grace he prayed for."*

*Whether grace and virtues are bestowed on man by Baptism?*

*Reply to Objection 2. As stated above (1, ad 2; 68, 2) man receives the forgiveness of sins before Baptism in so far as he has Baptism of desire, explicitly or implicitly; and yet when he actually receives Baptism, he receives a fuller remission, as to the remission of the entire punishment. So also before Baptism Cornelius and others like him receive grace and virtues through their faith in Christ and their desire for Baptism, implicit or explicit: but afterwards when baptized, they receive a yet greater fulness of grace and virtues. Hence in Ps. 22:2, "He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment," a gloss says: "He has brought us up by an increase of virtue and good deeds in Baptism."*

*Whether the Baptism of Blood is the most excellent of these?*

*"The shedding of blood for Christ's sake, and the inward operation of the Holy Ghost, are called baptisms, in so far as they produce the effect of the Baptism of Water. Now the Baptism of Water derives its efficacy from Christ's Passion and from the Holy Ghost, as already stated. These two causes act in each of these three Baptisms; most excellently, however, in the Baptism of Blood. For Christ's Passion acts in the Baptism of Water by way of a figurative representation; in the Baptism of the Spirit or of Repentance, by way of desire. but in the Baptism of Blood, by way of imitating the (Divine) act."*

*Whether three kinds of Baptism are fittingly described--viz. Baptism of Water, of Blood, and of the*

Spirit?

Consequently, a man may, without Baptism of Water, receive the sacramental effect from Christ's Passion, in so far as he is conformed to Christ by suffering for Him. Hence it is written (Apoc. 7:14): "These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In like manner a man receives the effect of Baptism by the power of the Holy Ghost, not only without Baptism of Water, but also without Baptism of Blood: forasmuch as his heart is moved by the Holy Ghost to believe in and love God and to repent of his sins: wherefore this is also called Baptism of Repentance. Of this it is written (Is. 4:4): "If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall wash away the blood of Jerusalem out of the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Thus, therefore, each of these other Baptisms is called Baptism, forasmuch as it takes the place of Baptism. Wherefore Augustine says (De Unico Baptismo Parvulorum iv): "The Blessed Cyprian argues with considerable reason from the thief to whom, though not baptized, it was said: 'Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' that suffering can take the place of Baptism. Having weighed this in my mind again and again, I perceive that not only can suffering for the name of Christ supply for what was lacking in Baptism, but even faith and conversion of heart, if perchance on account of the stress of the times the celebration of the mystery of Baptism is not practicable."

- Pope Innocent III (13<sup>th</sup> century): From the letter "Debitum pastoralis officii" to Berthold, the Bishop of Metz, Aug. 28, 1206: "You have, to be sure, intimated that a certain Jew, when at the point of death, since he lived only among Jews, immersed himself in water while saying: 'I baptize myself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.' We respond that, since there should be a distinction between the one baptizing and the one baptized, as is clearly gathered from the words of the Lord, when He says to the Apostles: 'Go, baptize all nations in the name etc.," the Jew mentioned must be baptized again by another, that it may be shown that he who is baptized is one person, and he who baptizes another...If, however, such a one had died immediately, he would have rushed to his heavenly home without delay because of the faith of the sacrament, although not because of the sacrament of faith."
- St. Catherine of Sienna (14th Century): Dialogue of St. Catherine: Baptisms: "I wished thee to see the secret of the Heart, showing it to thee open, so that you mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite pain. I poured from it Blood and Water, to show thee the baptism of water which is received in virtue of the Blood. I also showed the baptism of love in two ways, first in those who are baptized in their blood shed for Me which has virtue through My Blood, even if they have not been able to have Holy Baptism, and also those who are baptized in fire, not being able to have Holy Baptism, but desiring it with the affection of love. There is no baptism of desire without the Blood, because Blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of Divine charity, because through love was it shed. There is yet another way by which the soul receives the baptism of Blood, speaking, as it were, under a figure, and this way the Divine charity provided, knowing the infirmity and fragility of an, through which he offends, not that he is obliged, through his fragility and infirmity, to commit sin, unless he wish to do so; by falling, as he will, into the guild of mortal sin, by which he loses the grace which he drew from Holy Baptism in virtue of the Blood, it was necessary to leave a continual baptism of blood. This the Divine charity provided in the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the soul receiving the Baptism of blood, with contrition of heart, confessing, when able, to My ministers, who hold the keys of the Blood, sprinkling It, in absolution, upon the face of the soul. But if the soul is unable to confess, contrition of heart is sufficient for this baptism, the hand of My clemency giving you the fruit of this precious Blood... Thou seest then that these Baptisms, which you should all receive until the last

*moment, are continual, and though My works, that is the pains of the Cross were finite, the fruit of them which you receive in Baptism, through Me, are infinite..."*

- Council of Trent (16<sup>th</sup> century): Decree on Justification, Session VI, Chapter 4: *"And this translation, since the promulgation of the Gospel, cannot be effected, without the laver of regeneration, or the desire thereof, as it is written; unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."*

*Session VII, Concerning the Sacraments in General, Canon 4 (Denz 847): "If anyone shall say that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation, but are superfluous, and that, although all are not necessary for every individual, without them or without the desire of them, through faith alone men obtain from God the grace of justification; let him be anathema."*

- Catechism of the Council of Trent (16<sup>th</sup> century): The Sacraments, Baptism: *"...should any unforeseen accident make it impossible for adults to be washed in the salutary waters, their intention and determination to receive Baptism and their repentance for past sins, will avail them to grace and righteousness."*
- The New Testament, translated to English at the College of Rheims, 1582 (16<sup>th</sup> century): Annotations for John Chapter 3: *"Though in this case, God which hath not bound his grace, in respect of his own freedom, to any Sacrament, may and doth accept them as baptized, which either are martyred before they could be baptized, or else depart this life with vow and desire to have that Sacrament, but by some remediless necessity could not obtain it."*
- St. Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church (16<sup>th</sup> century): De Sacramento Baptismi, cap. 6: *"...among the ancients this proposition was not so certain at first as later on: that perfect conversion and repentance is rightly called the Baptism of Desire and supplies for Baptism of water, at least in case of necessity"....."it is certainly to be believed that true conversion supplies for Baptism of water when it is not from contempt but through necessity that persons die without Baptism of water."*

*The Church Militant (De Ecclesia Militante), c. 3: "I answer therefore that, when it is said outside the Church no one is saved, it must be understood of those who belong to her neither in actual fact nor in desire [desiderio], as theologians commonly speak on baptism. Because the catechumens are in the Church, though not in actual fact, yet at least in resolution [voto], therefore they can be saved."*

*The Church Militant De Ecclesia Militante, c. 3: "Concerning catechumens there is a greater difficulty, because they are faithful [have the faith] and can be saved if they die in this state, and yet outside the Church no one is saved, as outside the ark of Noah..."*

*The Church Militant (De Ecclesia Militante), c. 2: "Others, however, are of the soul but not of the body (of the Church), as Catechumens and those who have been excommunicated, who may have faith and charity which is possible."*

*De Controversiis, "De Baptismo," Lib. I, Cap. VI: "But without doubt it must be believed that true conversion supplies for Baptism of water when one dies without Baptism of water not out of contempt but out of necessity... For it is expressly said in Ezechiel: If the wicked shall do penance from his sins, I*

*will no more remember his iniquities...Thus also the Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 4, says that Baptism is necessary in fact or in desire (in re vel in voto)".*

- The Douay Catechism (17<sup>th</sup> century): "Q. 610. Can a man be saved without baptism? A. He cannot, unless he have it either actual or in desire, with contrition, or to be baptized in his blood as the holy Innocents were, which suffered for Christ."
- Roman Breviary (17th century): *St. Emerentiana, Jan 23, p.805: "A Roman virgin, step-sister of the blessed Agnes, while still a catechumen, burning with faith and charity, when she vehemently rebuked idol-worshippers who were stealing from Christians, was stoned and struck down by the crowd which she had angered. Praying in her agony at the tomb of holy Agnes, baptized by her own blood which she poured forth unflinchingly for Christ, she gave up her soul to God."*

*St. Recipicius, Nov 10, p. 1095: "During the reign of the emperor Decius, as Tryphon was preaching the faith of Jesus Christ and striving to persuade all men to worship the Lord, he was arrested by the henchmen of Decius. First, he was tortured on the rack, his flesh torn with iron hooks, then hung head downward, his feet pierced with red hot nails. He was beaten by clubs, scorched by burning torches held against his body. As a result of seeing him endure all these tortures so courageously, the tribune Respicius was converted to the faith of Christ the Lord. Upon the spot he publicly declared himself to be a Christian. Respicius was then tortured in various ways, and together with Tryphon, dragged to a statue of Jupiter. As Tryphon prayed, the statue fell down. After this occurred both were mercilessly beaten with leaden tipped whips and thus attained to glorious martyrdom."*

- St. Alphonsus Liguori, Doctor of the Church (18<sup>th</sup> century): *Moral Theology, Book 6, Section II (About Baptism and Confirmation), Chapter 1 (On Baptism), page 310, no. 96: "Baptism of desire is perfect conversion to God by contrition or love of God above all things accompanied by an explicit or implicit desire for true baptism of water, the place of which it takes as to the remission of guilt, but not as to the impression of the [baptismal] character or as to the removal of all debt of punishment. It is called "of wind" ["flaminis"] because it takes place by the impulse of the Holy Ghost who is called a wind ["flamen"]. Now it is "de fide" that men are also saved by Baptism of desire, by virtue of the Canon Apostolicam, "de presbytero non baptizato" and of the Council of Trent, session 6, Chapter 4 where it is said that no one can be saved 'without the laver of regeneration or the desire for it.'" (Note: Unbelievers can see the original book in Latin at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com).)*

*Moral Theology, Bk. 6, nn. 95-97: "Baptism of blood is the shedding of one's blood, i.e. death, suffered for the faith or for some other Christian virtue. Now this Baptism is comparable to true baptism because, like true Baptism, it remits both guilt and punishment as it were ex opere operato... Hence martyrdom avails also for infants seeing that the Church venerates the Holy Innocents as true martyrs. That is why Suarez rightly teaches that the opposing view is at least temerarious."*

*On the Council of Trent, 1846, Pg. 128-129 (Duffy): "Who can deny that the act of perfect love of God, which is sufficient for justification, includes an implicit desire of Baptism, of Penance, and of the Eucharist. He who wishes the whole wishes the every part of that whole and all the means necessary for its attainment. In order to be justified without baptism, an infidel must love God above all things, and must have an universal will to observe all the divine precepts, among which the first is to receive baptism: and therefore in order to be justified it is necessary for him to have at least an implicit desire*

of that sacrament."

- Pope Pius IX (19<sup>th</sup> century): *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*, 1863: "There are, of course, those who are struggling with invincible ignorance about our most holy religion. Sincerely observing the natural law and its precepts inscribed by God on all hearts and ready to obey God, they live honest lives and are able to attain eternal life by the efficacious virtue of divine light and grace. Because God knows, searches and clearly understands the minds, hearts, thoughts, and nature of all, his supreme kindness and clemency do not permit anyone at all who is not guilty of deliberate sin to suffer eternal punishments."

*Singulari Quadam*, December 9, 1854: "For, it must be held by faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no one can be saved; that this is the only ark of salvation; that he who shall not have entered therein will perish in the flood; but, on the other hand, it is necessary to hold for certain that they who labor in ignorance of the true religion, if this ignorance is invincible, are not stained by any guilt in this matter in the eyes of God."

- Baltimore Catechism (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries): Q. 653. *Is Baptism of desire or of blood sufficient to produce the effects of Baptism of water? A. Baptism of desire or of blood is sufficient to produce the effects of the Baptism of water, if it is impossible to receive the Baptism of water.*

Q. 512. *How are such persons said to belong to the Church? A. Such persons are said to belong to the "soul of the church"; that is, they are really members of the Church without knowing it. Those who share in its Sacraments and worship are said to belong to the body or visible part of the Church.*

[Note: The Baltimore Catechism was issued by the Third Council of Baltimore in 1884, and was approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1885 as the standard for Catholic schools in the United States, where it remained the standard for nearly a century. Even after extreme scrutiny and corrections after being published, the content on the threefold baptism has remained in the catechism to this day.]

- St. Pope Pius X (early 20<sup>th</sup> century): *Catechism of Christian Doctrine (Catechism of St. Pius X)*:

*The Creed, Ninth Article, The Church in Particular: 29 Q. But if a man through no fault of his own is outside the Church, can he be saved? A. If he is outside the Church through no fault of his, that is, if he is in good faith, and if he has received Baptism, or at least has the implicit desire of Baptism; and if, moreover, he sincerely seeks the truth and does God's will as best he can such a man is indeed separated from the body of the Church, but is united to the soul of the Church and consequently is on the way of salvation*

*Baptism, Necessity of Baptism and Obligations of the Baptized: 17 Q. Can the absence of Baptism be supplied in any other way? A. The absence of Baptism can be supplied by martyrdom, which is called Baptism of Blood, or by an act of perfect love of God, or of contrition, along with the desire, at least implicit, of Baptism, and this is called Baptism of Desire.*

- Catholic Encyclopedia (~1913): *Baptism: Substitutes for the Sacrament*: "The Fathers and theologians frequently divide baptism into three kinds: the baptism of water (*aquæ* or *fluminis*), the baptism of desire (*flaminis*), and the baptism of blood (*sanguinis*). However, only the first is a real sacrament. The latter two are denominated baptism only analogically, inasmuch as they supply the principal effect of

*baptism, namely, the grace which remits sins. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that when the baptism of water becomes a physical or moral impossibility, eternal life may be obtained by the baptism of desire or the baptism of blood."*

*Baptism: The Baptism of Desire: "This doctrine is set forth clearly by the Council of Trent. In the fourteenth session (cap. iv) the council teaches that contrition is sometimes perfected by charity, and reconciles man to God, before the Sacrament of Penance is received. In the fourth chapter of the sixth session, in speaking of the necessity of baptism, it says that men can not obtain original justice "except by the washing of regeneration or its desire" (voto).*

*The Church: "Thus, even in the case in which God Saves men apart from the Church, He does so through the Church's graces. They are joined to the Church in spiritual communion, though not in visible and external communion. In the expression of theologians, they belong to the soul of the Church, though not to its body."*

- Canon Law (1917): Canon 737: *"Baptism, the door and foundation of the Sacraments, in fact or at least in desire necessary unto salvation for all, is not validly conferred except through the ablution of true and natural water with the prescribed form of words."*

*Canon 1239: "Those who have died without baptism are not to be given ecclesiastical burial. Catechumens who die without baptism through no fault of their own are to be counted among the baptized."*

- A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law (Augustine, 1918): Canon 737: *"The Church has ever taught that Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation, - either really or by desire - and that consequently no other sacrament can be validly received without it."*  
Canon 1239: *"Baptism may be received by desire - baptismus flaminis - and this is generally supposed in those who had received instructions in the faith (catechumens)." [Note: "baptismus flaminis" is Latin for "baptism of desire"]*

*Canon 2258: "The relation of the individual Catholic to the body of the Church is sometimes styled external communion, whilst his connection with the soul of the Church is called internal communion. This latter communion is not per se severed by excommunication, as grace and charity can not be taken away by the penal sword of the Church, but are lost only through grievous personal guilt. And as this guilt can be repaired by perfect contrition, it may happen that one is excommunicated and yet lives in the friendship of God. Besides, faith and hope may coexist with mortal sin."*

- A Catholic Dictionary (~1931-1958): *Baptism, The Sacrament of: "Baptism by water, blood, or desire is necessary to salvation".*

*The Soul of the Church: "The Holy Ghost is the soul of the mystical body of Christ, the Church, as Pope Pius XII declares in *Mystici Corporis Christi*. But the expression "soul of the Church" has often been used in a metaphorical sense to designate all those who actually are in a state of grace in dependence on the merits of Christ and of the sanctifying action of the Holy Ghost; many of these persons who are not seen to be members of the visible body of the Church. But to say that such persons belonging to the "soul of the Church" is not altogether free from objection. It is better to say of the non-Catholic in good faith*

that "he belongs invisibly to the Church," as being "related to the mystical Body of the Redeemer by some unconscious reaching out and desire" (Pope Pius XII).

- Letter of the Holy Office to Archbishop Cushing of Boston (Directly approved by Pope Pius XII, August 8, 1949): Canon Law Digest, 1953, pg 525, Canon 1324 (Dangers to the Faith) (Excerpts): "In His infinite mercy God has willed that the effects, necessary for one to be saved, of those helps to salvation which are directed toward man's final end, not by intrinsic necessity, but only by divine institution, can also be obtained in certain circumstances when those helps are used only in desire and longing. This we see clearly stated in the Sacred Council of Trent, both in reference to the sacrament of regeneration and in reference to the sacrament of penance (<Denzinger>, nn. 797, 807). The same in its own degree must be asserted of the Church, in as far as she is the general help to salvation. Therefore, that one may obtain eternal salvation, it is not always required that he be incorporated into the Church actually as a member, but it is necessary that at least he be united to her by desire and longing. However, this desire need not always be explicit, as it is in catechumens; but when a person is involved in invincible ignorance God accepts also an implicit desire, so called because it is included in that good disposition of soul whereby a person wishes his will to be conformed to the will of God. These things are clearly taught in that dogmatic letter which was issued by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Pius XII, on June 29, 1943, <On the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ> (AAS, Vol. 35, an. 1943, p. 193 ff.). For in this letter the Sovereign Pontiff clearly distinguishes between those who are actually incorporated into the Church as members, and those who are united to the Church only by desire. But it must not be thought that any kind of desire of entering the Church suffices that one may be saved. It is necessary that the desire by which one is related to the Church be animated by perfect charity. Nor can an implicit desire produce its effect, unless a person has supernatural faith: "For he who comes to God must believe that God exists and is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6)."

Note: Three years after this letter was sent from the Holy Office to Archbishop Cushing of Boston in 1949, the Holy See ordered the full letter be published for the benefit of the faithful. This puts the matter to rest. See [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com) for the full letter from the Holy Office.

- Pope Pius XII (Oct. 29, 1951): Address to the Congress of the Italian Catholic Association of Midwives: "If what We have said up to now deals with the protection and the care of natural life, it should hold all the more in regard to the supernatural life which the newly born infant receives with Baptism. In the present economy there is no other way of communicating this life to the child who has not yet the use of reason. But, nevertheless, the state of grace at the moment of death is absolutely necessary for salvation. Without it, it is not possible to attain supernatural happiness, the beatific vision of God. An act of love can suffice for an adult to obtain sanctifying grace and supply for the absence of Baptism; for the unborn child or for the newly born, this way is not open..."

## Summary

Above we have examples of Church teaching on the three-fold Baptism spanning 1800+ years of the Catholic Church; examples from the early Church Fathers, Saints, Doctors of the Church, Popes, General Councils, papal encyclicals, Canon Law, catechisms, and other references, all openly and unanimously teaching the faithful the doctrine of Baptism of Desire and Blood. This includes both solemn and ordinary teaching. Yet we do not see the Church condemn a single one of these sources or their writings on the subject throughout the entire history of the Church. It is a universal and unanimous doctrine.

To see the reality of this, let us look at one example from the references above. In the Summa Theologica in the 13th century, St. Thomas Aquinas is seen teaching baptism of desire and blood numerous times. A century later, in the 14th century, St. Thomas' writings were thoroughly scrutinized during his canonization process, and he was not shown to be in error on this teaching, and Pope John XXII still chose to canonize him. Two centuries after this, in the 16th century, St. Thomas' writings were again thoroughly scrutinized during the process to make him a Doctor of the Church. Again, St. Thomas was not found to be in error on this teaching, and Pope St. Pius V chose to make him a Doctor of the Church. These processes never would have completed if St. Thomas were teaching heresy. In addition, since the days of St. Thomas Aquinas, there have since been roughly 70 Popes and countless bishops that have certainly read the Summa Theologica, as it is one of the most trusted references in the history of the Catholic Church next to Scripture itself. None of those 70+ Popes and countless bishops ever declared St. Thomas to be in error on this teaching, and none of them have ever challenged his canonization or Doctor of the Church status, nor have any of them ever declared St. Thomas to be a heretic.

These same arguments we apply to St. Thomas can also be applied to the other references above who taught baptism of desire and/or blood. The fact remains, Baptism of Desire, Blood and Water are CLEARLY a unanimous teaching of the Magisterium of the Church (both Solemn and Ordinary), and therefore we MUST believe them.

## Common Arguments

### 1. *The Council of Trent did not speak about Baptism of Desire.*

Some have tried to argue that the Council of Trent did not speak of Baptism of Desire, so as to try and remove the only example of solemn teaching on the subject, leaving all other examples above as ordinary teaching. First, you'll notice in the quotes above that St. Robert Bellarmine states, "...the Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 4, says that Baptism is necessary in fact or in desire". St. Alphonsus Liguori also states above, "Now it is "de fide" that men are also saved by Baptism of desire, by virtue of the Canon Apostolicam, "de presbytero non baptizato" and of the Council of Trent, session 6, Chapter 4...". The quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia above also states, "This doctrine (baptism of desire) is set forth clearly by the Council of Trent". And the quote from the Letter of the Holy Office above also states, "This (Sacrament through desire) we see clearly stated in the Sacred Council of Trent..." So it is obvious the Holy Office, these two Doctors of the Church, and the Catholic Encyclopedia state otherwise. As for those who try to discredit the Catholic Encyclopedia; over 1500 clergy, professors, authors etc. from around the world contributed to its compilation, in addition to it containing an imprimatur, so it's accuracy is not in question.

Regardless of these facts, we can clearly see from the definitions of the Magisterium above, that whether the Council of Trent spoke of this doctrine or not is irrelevant, since we can see the Ordinary magisterium (also infallible) has also taught it repeatedly century after century.

### 2. *Baptism and Desire and/or Blood were never solemnly defined.*

The Council of Trent clearly refers to Baptism of Desire in the example above, yet there are some that still attempt to argue the meaning of what the Council of Trent meant. For those that try to argue whether or not this doctrine was solemnly defined, it is irrelevant, since the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church (also infallible) has taught this doctrine throughout the history of the Church, without a single condemnation from the Solemn Magisterium. For more information on whether doctrines actually need to be defined, see our menu option at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com) labeled, "Must Doctrines Be Defined?"

3. *Church Fathers, Saints, and the other examples above are "not infallible".*

This argument is also in vain as we can clearly see from the definitions of the Magisterium above that when a teaching of the Church is unanimous, it is part of the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church, which is itself infallible, according to the solemn teaching of the First Vatican Council. Certainly, when a theologian speaks or writes on a doctrine, that in itself is not an infallible statement; it is when that doctrine is unanimously taught elsewhere in the Church without condemnation that it becomes part of the infallible Ordinary Magisterium.

Furthermore, to say any of the sources above are "not infallible" is to directly imply that they have been in error for all the years or centuries since they were allowed to propagate, and that the Solemn Magisterium did nothing to correct it. This is to say that the Catholic Church can propagate error and heresy, which is a denial of the dogma of the Infallibility of the Church. It is blasphemy to say the One, Holy, Universal, and Apostolic Catholic Church can introduce anything harmful to the faithful.

Church teaching on the subject: Pope Pius VI in *Auctorem Fidei*, 1794, condemns: "*the Church, governed by the Holy Spirit, could impose a disciplinary law that would be not only useless and more burdensome for the faithful than Christian liberty allows, but also dangerous and harmful*" (again, this was condemned). Also, Pope Gregory XVI in *Quo Graviora* (1833) states, "*The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth, all of which truth is taught by the Holy Spirit. Should the church be able to order, yield to, or permit those things which tend toward the destruction of souls and the disgrace and detriment of the sacrament instituted by Christ?*"

4. *Your information on the Ordinary Magisterium is incorrect.*

In our explanation of the magisterium and infallibility above, we have presented quotes from the First Vatican Council, "A Commentary on Canon Law", Catholic Encyclopedia, and "A Catholic Dictionary" to support our definitions. The first reference is obviously an infallible General Council, while the latter three are trusted Catholic references, each with their own imprimatur. For those who insist on stating these trusted Catholic sources are erroneous, we ask you to present something more trustworthy from the Church that trumps these references we have used. So far no one has responded to this request.

5. *The Church may have taught explicit baptism of desire, but it did not teach implicit baptism of desire.*

This is incorrect. As we see in the quotes above, St. Thomas Aquinas writes in his *Summa* in the 13th century, "*Man receives the forgiveness of sins before Baptism in so far as he has Baptism of desire,*

*explicitly or implicitly*". St. Alphonsus Liguori writes in his manual on Moral Theology in the 18th century, "...accompanied by an *explicit or implicit* desire for true baptism of water". St. Pope Pius X writes in the Catechism of St. Pius X in the 20th century, "...along with the desire, *at least implicit, of Baptism*". The Holy Office writes in 1949 (approved by Pope Pius XII), "...when a person is involved in invincible ignorance, *God accepts also an implicit desire*". Numerous other detailed examples on explicit versus implicit faith can be found in the Summa Theologica.

6. *Baptism of desire and blood is a modernist error.*

Looking at the quotes from Church teaching on baptism of desire and blood above, the quotes span nearly the entire history of the Church. Modernism originated in the 19th century, so it is obvious that baptism of desire and blood have nothing to do with Modernism.

7. *Pope St. Pius X did not write, or had nothing to do with, the Catechism of Pope St. Pius X.*

Incorrect. In the first English translation of Pope Saint Pius X's catechism ("A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction" published by Reverend Monsignor John Hagan in 1910, viewable at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com)), it states in the Introduction: "*During the sitting of the first Catechetical Congress in 1880, the then Bishop of Mantua (later St. Pius X) proposed that the Holy Father be petitioned to arrange for the compilation of a simple, plain, brief, and popular Catechism for uniform use all over the world. Shortly after his elevation to the Chair of Peter, Pius X at once set about realizing, within certain limits, his own proposal of 1880, by prescribing a uniform Catechism — the Compendium of Christian Doctrine — for use in the dioceses of the ecclesiastical province of Rome, at the same time indicating that it was his earnest desire to have the same manual adopted all over Italy.*"

On October 18, 1912, Pope Pius X also wrote a letter to Cardinal Pietro Respighi approving his Catechism of Christian Doctrine for use in the ecclesiastical province of Rome. Photocopies of that letter on pages 3–4 of the original Catechism published in 1912 are available at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com).

8. *You are using a bad translation of the Catechism of Pope Saint Pius X (the implication being that Pope Saint Pius X supposedly didn't teach baptism of desire and baptism of blood).*

Incorrect. If we look at the original catechism of Pope Saint Pius X published in 1912, we can clearly see Pope Saint Pius X teaching not only baptism of desire and baptism of blood, but also on the soul of the Church. Photocopies of the appropriate pages in the original Catechism published in 1912 are available at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com).

Page 25 contains Question 132 which contains the text, "*132. Chi è fuori della Chiesa si salva? Chi è fuori della Chiesa per propria colpa e muore senza dolore perfetto, non si salva; ma chi ci si trovi senza propria colpa e viva bene, può salvarsi con l'amor di carità, che unisce a Dio, e, in spirito, anche alla Chiesa, cioè all'anima di lei.*"

This is the same exact Italian text easily found through Google searches. While the authors at [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com) do not speak Italian, even a broken Google translation of the above text

clearly shows Pope Saint Pius X teaching that one can be saved in the soul of the Church through perfect contrition. Google translation: "132. *Who is outside the Church is saved? Who is outside the Church through their own fault and die without pain perfect, you do not save it, but whoever you are find no fault of their own and live well, can be saved with the love of charity, which unites with God, and, spirit, even in the Church, that her soul.*"

Pages 48-49 contain Question 280 which contains the text, "280. *Se il Battesimo necessario a tutti, può salvarsi nessuno senza Battesimo? Senza Battesimo nessuno può salvarsi, quando però non si possa ricevere il Battesimo di acqua, basta il Battesimo di sangue, cioè il martirio sofferto per Gesù Cristo, oppure il Battesimo di desiderio che é l'amor di carità, desideroso dei mezzi di salute istituiti da Dio.*"

Again, this is the same exact Italian text easily found through Google searches. Even a broken Google translation of the above text clearly shows Pope Saint Pius X teaching both baptism of desire and baptism of blood. Google translation: "280. *If the Baptism necessary at all, no one can be saved without Baptism? Nobody can be saved without baptism, but when we can not receive Baptism of water, just the baptism of blood, that the martyrdom suffered for Jesus Christ, or the Baptism of desire that is the love of charity, willing the means of health instituted by God.*"

9. *The Church Fathers taught Baptism of blood, but they did not teach Baptism of desire.*

Incorrect. See the quotes from St. Augustine and St. Ambrose above, which clearly speak of Baptism of desire.

10. *Baptism of desire and/or blood only apply to catechumens.*

Incorrect. Only a small percentage of the quotes from the Church that we present above refer to catechumens specifically, while the majority do not. The letter from the Holy Office in 1949, referenced above, clarifies this.

11. *Pope Pius XII did not approve, or did not know about the letter from the Holy Office in 1949.*

Incorrect. Looking at the letter from the Holy Office (see [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com)), the introductory letter from Archbishop Cushing clearly states, "*The Supreme Pontiff, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has given full approval to this decision*". Still, some have actually tried to argue that it is not certain Pope Pius XII approved of the original letter since it was only signed by two Cardinals who worked for Pope Pius XII. This argument is beyond absurdity; imagine two executives publishing a letter for all the world to see, stating that their CEO approved of the letter, when in actuality he did not. What would happen? The CEO would very quickly find out about the letter published in his name, the executives who sent the letter fraudulently would most likely be terminated (or at least seriously reprimanded), and the letter would be retracted. Of course nothing of the sort happened with the letter from the Holy office in 1949; the letter was published in 1952 in several well-known Catholic references with imprimatur, including Canon Law Digest, The Church Teaches, the Catholic Mind, and the American Ecclesiastical Review, and Pope Pius XII reigned for another 6 years without saying a word.

12. *The letter from the Holy Office in 1949 was never documented in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis (and never assigned an AAS number), therefore the letter is not an official teaching of the Church and can be ignored.*

This is incorrect. The Acta Apostolicae Sedis (Latin for "Acts of the Apostolic See"), often cited as AAS, is the official gazette of the Holy See, appearing about twelve times a year. It was established under this name by Pope Pius X in 1908. It replaced a similar publication that had existed since 1865, under the title of Acta Sanctae Sedis.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law clearly states under Canon 9, "Laws laid down by the Apostolic See are promulgated by publication in the official commentary Acta Apostolicae Sedis [Acts of the Apostolic See], *unless in particular cases another mode of promulgation has been prescribed.*" A Commentary on Canon Law (Augustine, 1918) states the same under Canon 9: "The laws enacted by the Apostolic See are promulgated by being published in the official Acta Apostolicae Sedis, *unless some other mode of promulgation is prescribed in particular cases...*".

The Catholic Encyclopedia concurs with this where it states this monthly Roman publication contains the "*principal* public documents issued by the Pope, directly or through the Roman Congregations."

13. *Father Leonard Feeney was excommunicated only for disobedience, not for going against the faith.*

Incorrect. The letter from the Holy Office in 1949 to the Archbishop of Boston (see [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com)) clearly states, "*Furthermore, it is beyond understanding how a member of a religious Institute, namely Father Feeney, presents himself as a "Defender of the Faith," and at the same time does not hesitate to attack the catechetical instruction proposed by lawful authorities...*". After Father Feeney refused to retract his belief, he was summoned to Rome for a hearing with the Holy Office. Clearly this meeting was to be about Father Feeney's denial of a Catholic doctrine, but when he did not show for the hearing, this was the final straw.

14. *The teaching on "Soul of the Church" is a heresy.*

The definition of "Soul of the Church" in the "New Catholic Dictionary" (1929) provides an explanation for the origins of this term:

*Soul of the Church: "From the 16th century, the Catholic theologians expressed more definitely the theological doctrine of the distinction between the Soul and Body of the Church. . . This distinction. . . is formally expressed by Bellarmine in his study on the members of the Church. According to him, men belong to the Body of the Church by virtue of external profession of the faith, and participation in the sacraments; and to the Soul of the Church through the internal gifts of the Holy Ghost, faith, hope, and charity. He draws three general conclusions relative to the members of the Church. There are those: (a) Who belong always to both the Body and Soul of the Church; (b) Who belong to the Soul without belonging to the Body; (c) Who belong to the Body but not to the Soul. This teaching has generally been followed by Catholic theologians."*

In our list of quotes above, we present a quote from St. Robert Bellarmine on the Soul of the Church. As we all know, St. Bellarmine was later beatified, canonized, and given Doctor of the Church honors by Pope Pius XI (processes which never would have occurred had his teaching on the subject been considered heresy). The same teaching on "Soul of the Church" was also taught by St. Pope Pius X, Baltimore Catechism, Canon Law, Catholic Encyclopedia, A Catholic Dictionary, and the Holy Office in 1949 (see above for quotes on each).

So to say the teaching on "Soul of the Church" is a heresy, we would also logically have to declare as heretical St. Robert Bellarmine for teaching it, Pope Leo XIII for approving of it in the Baltimore Catechism, St. Pope Pius X for including it in his catechism, Pope Pius XII for approving the letter from the Holy Office in 1949, and to condemn the other Catholic references mentioned as well. Yet there has not been a single condemnation of any of these sources. And let's not forget, there has been over 25 popes since St. Robert Bellarmine was alive, all of which could have condemned him if he had taught heresy, but they did not.

#### 15. *Baptism of desire was condemned by the Church.*

Incorrect. If we look back through the history of the General Councils where heresies were condemned, we can clearly see that with each condemnation, the Church has always been very specific in naming the heresy, explaining what it was about, and at the same time condemning those who taught the heresy. For example:

*Council of Nicaea in 325 AD: "First of all the affair of the impiety and lawlessness of Arius and his followers was discussed in the presence of the most pious emperor Constantine. It was unanimously agreed that anathemas should be pronounced against his impious opinion and his blasphemous terms and expressions which he has blasphemously applied to the Son of God"*

*Council of Ephesus 431 AD: "The holy synod said: As, in addition to all else, the excellent Nestorius has declined to obey our summons and has not received the holy and God-fearing bishops we sent to him, we have of necessity started upon an investigation of his impieties. We have found him out thinking and speaking in an impious fashion, from his letters, from his writings that have been read out, and from the things that he has recently said in this metropolis which have been witnessed to by others; and as a result we have been compelled of necessity both by the canons and by the letter of our most holy father and fellow servant Celestine, bishop of the church of the Romans, to issue this sad condemnation against him..."*

*Council of Constantinople III in 680 AD: "To make an end of the Monothelite controversy, Emperor Constantine IV asked Pope Donus in 678 to send twelve bishops and four western Greek monastic superiors to represent the pope at an assembly of eastern and western theologians. Pope Agatho, who meanwhile had succeeded Donus, ordered consultation in the west on this important matter. Around Easter 680 a synod in Rome of 125 Italian bishops, with Pope Agatho presiding, assessed the replies of the regional synods of the west and composed a profession of faith in which Monothelitism was condemned."*

Similar references can be found in the other General Councils where heresies were condemned, such that there was no confusion as to what was being condemned, and who was involved in spreading the

erroneous teachings. Yet on [www.baptismofdesire.com](http://www.baptismofdesire.com), we provide quotes teaching baptism of desire and/or blood from St. Pope Siricius, Pope Innocent II, Pope Innocent III, Pope Pius IX, St. Pope Pius X, Pope Pius XII, St. Cyprian, Tertullian, St. Hippolytus, John Chryostome, St. Basil, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Victor of Braga, St. Genesius of Arles, Rufinus, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Augustine, St. Prosper, St. Fulgentius, St. John of Damascus, St. Bede, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Robert Bellarmine, and St. Alphonsus Liguori. Nowhere in any General Councils or other documents throughout the history of the Church do we see a single condemnation of any of these Popes, Church Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and Saints, nor do we see a condemnation of baptism of desire or blood. If there were a condemnation, it would be very specific, naming "baptism of desire" and/or "baptism of blood", and naming at least some of those who taught it. There are no such condemnations that exist throughout the history of the Church. The Feeneyites have been continually asked to provide even *one* example of a specific condemnation, and never have we received a response.

If the Church has openly taught the three-fold Baptism throughout it's entire history, and never declared it to be heresy, why are lay people doing so today?