

Pope 101

The Hook: What is ‘the pope’ and why is he important?

This Episode will help you:

1. Learn what the pope is all about
2. Understand the importance of the pope for the Church

Key Points

1. What is the pope?
 - 1.1. Office of Peter
 - 1.2. Vicar of Jesus Christ
 - 1.3. Shepherd of the whole Church & Servant of the Servants of God

2. Can the pope ‘do wrong’ and ‘be wrong’?

- 2.1. Some important distinctions (impeccable, indefectible, and infallible)
- 2.2. What do Catholics mean by the ‘infallibility’ of the Magisterium exercised by him?
- 2.3. The ‘ultimate guarantor’ of the Office of Peter: Christ’s *prayer*.

Optional

3. What’s Rome got to do with it?
 - 3.1. The place of Peter’s martyrdom and of Peter’s first successors
 - 3.2. Rome therefore as the place of Peter’s successors (aka, Peter’s ‘Chair’)
 - 3.3. The question of the Pope’s secular power
4. Rejoicing in the gift of the papacy today
 - 4.1. “*Habemus Papam!*”— How is the pope chosen?
 - 4.2. What’s a short summary of the pope’s ‘job description’?
 - 4.3. How does the pope serve unity and put us in touch with Jesus?

Post-Script Bonus: *advice on how to avoid misleading ways of talking about the pope.*

Key Terms:

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| – Pope | – Magisterium | <u>Additional Terms</u> |
| – College of Bishops | – Roman See | – “ <i>Ex opere operato</i> ” |
| – Apostolic Succession | – Bishop of Rome | – Successor of the Prince of the Apostles |
| – Papacy | – Servant of the Servants of God | – Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church |
| – Office | – Immaculate | – Primate of Italy |
| – Prerogatives | – Impeccable | – Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province |
| – Vicar of Jesus Christ | – Indefectible | – Sovereign of the State of Vatican City |
| – Cardinal | – Infallible | |
| – Papal Conclave | – Servant of the Servants of God | |
| – “ <i>Habemus Papam!</i> ” | | |
| – “ <i>Ex cathedra</i> ” | | |

1. WHAT IS THE POPE?

The word *pope* actually comes from the affectionate Latin (*papa*) and Greek (*pappas*) words for ‘father.’ Sometimes we hear people say—‘*Holy Father*,’ ‘*Sancta Papa*’—that’s basically what the word means. It’s a colloquial and familiar term for the ‘papa,’ the ‘dear father,’ of us all, that is, of the whole Church.¹

1.1. “Office of Peter”

The best way to understand the pope is to say that he is the successor to the apostle Peter. He holds the “Office of Peter.”² Jesus had gathered around himself twelve disciples and renamed them “apostles” (which is Greek for ‘*those who have been sent*’), and he gave them a special share in his own mission of proclaiming the Father’s love and reconciling the world with God. In the Bible, when God renames someone, he is giving them a ‘mission.’ Asides from renaming the twelve disciples ‘apostles,’ Jesus did not change the name of any disciple, except one: Simon, calling him ‘Cephas,’ which is Aramaic for ‘rock.’ Today, we read about ‘Peter,’ not ‘Cephas,’ because it was later translated into Greek (*Petros*) and Latin (*Petrus*), in order to show that it was not merely a name but also a mandate: he is, and shall be, the ‘rock.’ That’s his ‘mission.’ Let’s turn to three key episodes to understand what this means.

1.1.1. Peter’s Confession of Faith³

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he posed an odd question to his disciples: ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answers on behalf of the Twelve: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’ (Mt 16:15-16). It is upon this confession that the Church lives today. This is the *essence* of Peter’s role: to always say, ‘Jesus is Lord!’ We likewise see this when Jesus, saddened by the crowd’s misunderstanding of his Bread of Life discourse (John 6), asks: ‘Will you also go away?’ Peter’s answer is decisive: ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’ (cf. Jn 6:67-69).⁴

1.1.2. Peter, the Rock, and the keys

Jesus responded by pronouncing the main declaration of Peter’s role in the Church once and for all: “And I tell you: you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church. ... I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 16:18-19). “In themselves,” remarks Pope Benedict XVI, commenting on this passage, “the three metaphors that Jesus uses are crystal clear: [1] Peter will be the *rocky foundation* on which he will build the edifice of the Church; [2] he will have *the keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven to open or close it to people as he sees fit; [3] lastly, he will be able to *bind* and to *loose*, in the sense of establishing or prohibiting whatever he deems necessary for the life of the Church. It is always Christ’s Church, not Peter’s” (Benedict XVI, *Jesus, The Apostles, and the Early Church*, p. 52).

1.1.3. Peter, the Shepherd

After Jesus’ Resurrection, he entrusts Peter with the mandate of shepherding the Church. Jesus tells him, “Feed my lambs” (Jn 20:15), referring to Peter’s fellow apostles, recalling the ministry of strengthening his ‘brethren’ which Jesus conferred upon Peter during the Last Supper (cf. Lk 22:31ff). Jesus also gives Peter the mandates: ‘Tend to my sheep’ (Jn 21:16) and ‘Feed my sheep’ (Jn 21:16).⁵

[Other titles that one might come across in more official or older documents which refer to the pope as the one who holds the “Office of Peter” are: “Successor of the Prince of the Apostles” (= fancy medieval talk for Successor to Peter

who was entrusted to be the head of the apostles); “Vicar of Peter” (= basically, this just means the one who Peter talks through, the one who presents to us a face, through which Peter can still speak, i.e. the authority and role that Christ entrusted to Peter)].

1.2. “Vicar of Jesus Christ”

1.2.1. **Explanation and Confusion.** Early in the Christian tradition, bishops—who are the successors to the apostles—were called ‘vicars of Jesus Christ’ or ‘vicars of God.’ A ‘vicar’—from the Latin *vicarious*, broadly meaning ‘to represent,’ to ‘stand in the place of’—is ‘one who stands in for someone and as someone.’ By the eleventh century, we see this title being used more specifically, though not exclusively, to refer to the one who holds the ‘Office of Peter.’⁶ This title is commonly confusing, giving the impression that the pope is claiming to ‘replace’ Christ. But, let’s look back at Peter. The mandates and role that Christ gave Peter are impossible for any man; Christ extended to Simon titles and mandates that are only appropriate for God, or God in the flesh (i.e. Christ). Take a brief look at these two examples as representative:

1.2.1.1. **Peter as ‘the rock’ and/or ‘foundation.’** In the Bible, it is clear that the ‘rock’ refers to God (See Ps. 18:2; 18:31; Deut. 32:4; cf. Ps. 31:3-4 and Is. 30:29). And in the NT, it refers to Christ specifically: ‘the Rock was Christ’ (1 Cor. 10:4); and it is upon Jesus that the Church is built: ‘For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor 3:11).

1.2.1.2. **Peter as ‘shepherd.’** Once again, in the OT the image of shepherd is a common way of describing God (cf. Num 27:17; 2 Sam 5:2; Is 40:9-11; Jer 31:10; Ez 34:23-4; Zech 10:2). In the NT, the image of shepherd is notably associated with Jesus himself and the purpose of his mission: ‘I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep’ (Jn 10:11; cf. 10:14-16). Jesus remains the ‘Chief Shepherd’ (1 Pet 5:4); as the one who ‘holds the keys’ (Rev. 1:18; Rev. 3:7).

1.2.2. **Clarification.** What emerges is the true clearer picture of what ‘vicar’ means, and therefore, a deeper understanding of what the ‘Office of Peter’ means. It is never to ‘take the place of’ in the sense of ‘to replace’ Christ, but to ‘stand in for’ so as to allow Christ to shine through him and work through him. The Apostolic Office in general, and the Office of Peter in particular, are shares in Christ’s own mission, freely bestowed by Christ, and guaranteed *by him*, by the gift of his own blood, and not on anything else; nothing else could guarantee it, simply because promises of this proportion can’t be guaranteed by anything else! (Upon this ‘rock’ *I* shall build *my* church, and the gates of hell *shall never* prevail against it — who can keep such a promise? Who is the, as it were, ‘guarantor’?). To summarize: I think the best way to translate ‘vicar’ would be: ‘one appointed by Christ in order that, by means of that very office, Christ may continue his mission through them.’⁷ All of this is perfectly summed up by Augustine:

*“Jesus himself is the Shepherd who pastures through his shepherds. He can say ‘I feed them’ because it is his voice that is heard through those who manifest his love. That is why he wanted to unite Peter—to whom he entrusted his lambs as man to man—so closely to himself that, despite having transferred the flock, he remained the Head. Peter is made the representative (figura) of the body, i.e., of the Church, and both become one flesh like Bride and Bridegroom. What did Jesus say, therefore, before transferring the flock, so that the transaction should not be like one between strangers? ‘Peter, do you love me?’ ... He confirms the love to strengthen the unity. ... Hence the shepherds may boast, but only in the Lord” (Augustine, *Sermo* 46. 13, 20).*

[Shepherd of the whole Church & Servants of the Servant of God are two popular (and official) titles for the pope. The first, ‘Shepherd of the whole Church,’ as we have already seen, derives from Jn 21 and Lk 22. The title ‘Servants of the Servants of God’ was originally used more widely (for example, Augustine uses it to describe himself, *Ep.* 217); but it began to be used by popes with Gregory I (d. 604) and by the ninth century, was used exclusively of the popes].

[Skipped 2. “Optional.” It’s in another document. If you wish to include it, I suggest ‘inserting it’ here, as #2. I explain in the other document why I placed this as “optional.”].

3. WHAT’S ROME GOT TO DO WITH IT?

One of the pope’s names is the “Bishop of Rome.” And we oftentimes hear people talk about the *Roman* Catholic Church (though, that’s technically a mistake).⁸ Typically, people associate this with the Roman Empire, without asking how it is the case that the successors of Peter ended up in Rome, when Peter himself was a Jew in Palestine, following another Jew in Palestine who was crucified and risen. How did we go from there to Rome?

3.1. The place of Peter’s martyrdom and of Peter’s first successors

After serving in Jerusalem for a period, Peter decided to proclaim the Gospel in Rome. At the time, Christianity was not a legal religion; and so Peter was captured, and put to death in Rome between 64 and 67 AD, under the Emperor Nero. There are a few beautiful accounts of his martyrdom. Some of them tell us that he requested to be hung upside down because he didn’t feel worthy to be crucified in the same way as his Lord.⁹ An imaginative version of this story from the 2nd century tells us the story of Peter fleeing the city of Rome to avoid martyrdom, and he sees Jesus in a vision, walking towards Rome. And he says, “Lord, where are you going?” and Jesus tells him, “I go into Rome ... to be crucified again” (The Apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, §35). After his death, the Church Fathers tell us that Christians would gather the burial site of the ‘rock,’ upon which the Church was built. Caius, for example, around 198 AD, says: ‘I can point out the trophies of the apostles. ... the trophies of those who founded this Church.’¹⁰ Jerome, writing in 392 AD, tells us: ‘Peter was buried at Rome in the Vatican near the triumphal way where he is venerated by the whole world’ (*De Viris Illustribus*, §1). Rome becomes the ‘seat’ of the apostle Peter, because it is where he gave his life in following Christ and where his successors—from the time of his death with Linus, then Anacletus, and then Clement, up to our time with St John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis (266 consecutive popes)—have continued the “Office of Peter.” Thus, the Bishop of Rome is another name for this officeholder.

According to this great tradition, if you were to visit St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome today, and were to go down beneath, you would find the remains of Peter himself—the ‘rock’ upon which Christ will build his Church.¹¹

3.2. Rome therefore as the place of Peter’s successors

[In historical or official documents, you’ll sometimes see things written like ‘the primacy of the see of Rome,’ etc., which basically is jargon for expressing the special status that the Office of Peter has in relation to other bishops and the whole Church, but in juridical terms].

3.3. The question of the Pope’s secular power

Initially, the pope did not have any secular power, but only spiritual authority to shepherd the Church. In the early Middle Ages, the popes began seeing the need to have political autonomy

from the surrounding governing bodies so that they could have the freedom necessary to perform their universal mission. The question of ‘secular power’ arose after Christianity became legalized (311 AD) and after the fall of Rome (410 AD), when invading Germanic tribes threatened the free practice of the Catholic religion. Pope Gelasius I (d. 496) opened this pathway with a “theology of the ‘two powers’; the next step was Gregory VII and Innocent III’s claiming monarchical status of their office; and the claim of secular power reached its max point with Boniface VIII who insisted on the pope’s “absolute power over the whole world, temporal as well as religious.” As Pope Benedict XVI said, reflecting on these expansions of papal authority, the pope’s status in secular power is not a direct result of Peter’s mandate, but it became a necessary condition to fulfill that mandate. We can see this still today, where the Vatican is a “city-state” — a sovereign entity in the international community, so that the pope can have the necessary freedom to shepherd the universal church. The precise form of secular power the pope has is not essential, and thus, can change, as long as it preserves the freedom needed for him to fulfill his Office. The downside to this is that mingling sacred and secular affairs this way proved to be a ‘stumbling block’ for the holiness of many a medieval and renaissance pope.

[It is in this capacity, as sovereign of a secular power, in order to preserve the freedom necessary to fulfill the Petrine “Office” that we hear of such titles as: Primate of Italy; Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province; Sovereign of the State of Vatican City].

4. **“*Habemus Papam!*”— How is the pope chosen?**

When a pope dies or resigns, the governance of the Catholic Church passes to the College of Cardinals. Cardinals are bishops and Vatican officials from all over the world, personally chosen by the pope, recognizable by their distinctive red vestments. Their primary responsibility is to elect a new pope. Following a vacancy in the papacy, the cardinals hold a series of meetings at the Vatican called general congregations. They discuss the needs and the challenges facing the Catholic Church globally. They will also prepare for the upcoming papal election, called a conclave. Decisions that only the pope can make, such as appointing a bishop or convening the Synod of Bishops, must wait till after the election. In the past, they made arrangements for the funeral and burial of the deceased pope.

In the past, 15 to 20 days after a papal vacancy, the cardinals gathered in St. Peter’s Basilica for a Mass invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in electing a new pope. Only cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote in a conclave. They are known as the cardinal electors, and their number is limited to 120. For the conclave itself, the cardinal electors process to the Sistine Chapel and take an oath of absolute secrecy before sealing the doors. The cardinals vote by secret ballot, processing one by one up to Michelangelo’s fresco of the Last Judgment, saying a prayer and dropping the twice-folded ballot in a large chalice. Four rounds of balloting are taken every day until a candidate receives two-thirds of the vote. The result of each ballot are counted aloud and recorded by three cardinals designated as recorders. If no one receives the necessary two-thirds of the vote, the ballots are burned in a stove near the chapel with a mixture of chemicals to produce black smoke.

When a cardinal receives the necessary two-thirds vote, the dean of the College of Cardinals asks him if he accepts his election. If he accepts, he chooses a papal name and is dressed in papal vestments before processing out to the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica. The ballots of the final round are burned with chemicals producing white smoke to signal to the world the election of a new pope. The senior cardinal deacon, currently French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, announces from the balcony of St. Peter’s

“*Habemus Papam*” (“We have a pope”) before the new pope processes out and imparts his blessing on the city of Rome and the entire world. [Taken from www.usccb.org].

5. What’s the pope’s ‘job description’?

The pope wakes up every morning to find himself wearing Peter’s shoes, which is a role and mandate, to continue confessing “Jesus is Lord!” The pope’s ‘job description’ (i.e., his mission) could be summed up in this way: (1) to ensure unity of faith among Christians; (2) to see to the lasting good of the Church; and (3) to make sure all the world’s bishops are in harmony.

5.1. The Mission of Unity: The pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter’s successor, “is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of unity both of the bishops of the whole company of the faithful” (*Lumen Gentium* 23; CCC 882). During Jesus’ earthly life, he gathered around himself the twelve and his other followers, with himself standing at the center, as the source of unity. When he ascended to the right hand of the Father so that he could be poured out into the Church and into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, he entrusted this ‘standing in the center’ role to Peter, so that he can continue holding his faithful in the unity of his love. Peter’s Office is the ‘visible sign’ of unity in Christ; Peter is the ‘visible sign’ because the ‘invisible reality’ working through that ‘visible sign’ is Christ himself. (See below for more).

5.2. Office of Teaching: The pope’s job is to continue clinging to Peter’s confession of faith, and guiding the Church in that faith, as the chief shepherd of all entrusted to his care. (See CCC, 888-892). [→ teaching authoritatively in matters of faith and morals, and guiding the Church]

5.3. Office of Governing: The pope governs the universal Church as the successor to Peter. (See CCC, 893). [→ governing]

5.4. Office of Sanctifying: through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christ imparts his own holiness to the Church through the life of prayer, worship, and the Sacraments. The Church’s unity under the pope is a sign of unity with Christ from whom holiness flows (See CCC, 894-896). [→ sanctifying by providing unity in Christ’s love, which alone transforms us and makes us holy].

6. How does the pope put us in touch with Jesus?

In John 17, Jesus prays that all of his followers may be one, even as he and the Father are one. The Church always has Jesus Christ at the center. It is Christ who gathered his disciples and followers around him; it is he, himself, who serves as their unifying center. Christ gave Peter the unique share in the ‘centering’ part of his mission, so that, even after he ascends to the right hand of the Father, we can continue to encounter Jesus Christ ‘at the center,’ through an “Office” that he established to ‘hold that place’ for him, so that he can continue having a ‘visible center’ in our midst.

Without this visible center, there would be no Church unity. We see this today where every other attempt to provide an alternative center ends up breaking into endless fragmentation and disunity. The ‘center’ of ‘faith alone,’ or a ‘democratic’ kind of center of collegiality among Church leaders, have all shown the fruits of their labors: fragmentation. Why? Because only a center *in* Christ and which is established *by* Christ can provide a true unity in *his* love, peace, and truth. In Jesus’ earthly ministry, he provided a ‘visible sign’ of unity in himself, and he provided the ‘invisible reality’ of unity through himself, too. When he ascended to the right hand of the Father, he placed Peter as

the ‘visible sign’ of unity, so that he can continue working through that ‘visible sign’ even as he continues being our ‘invisible reality’ of unity. The ‘visible sign’ is essential, because it reflects the fact that Jesus is not an ‘idea’ or a ‘sentiment.’ The ‘visible sign’ of his love was his *real* blood poured out for us. And thus, ‘visible signs’ truly *effect* what they signify; in this case, the pope truly *effects* unity among Christians, and in doing so, he allows us to continue living in the ‘unity’ of Jesus’s love, the *unity* that *is* our communion.

[HERE ENDS THE OUTLINE]

Post-Script Bonus: *advice on how to avoid misleading ways of talking about the pope.*

Two things: (1) the papacy, throughout history, has been described in a variety of *registers*. All of these registers interpenetrate and mutually reinforce one another, but we should be attentive to which *register* is most appropriate for our audience. Thus, for example, to speak of ‘primacy of jurisdiction,’ is to speak in a *Canonical register*, as distinct from, say, ‘the primacy of St Peter,’ which is to speak more in a *theological register*. For the purposes of talking about the papacy, I suggest emphasizing the theological register, since the other registers will be easily misunderstood and are somewhat ‘dry.’

(2) I would highly discourage any pompousness about ‘papal authority’ or the use of terms like ‘prerogatives.’ While these have valid theological use, they are somewhat misleading, and have been *heavily* abused by Catholics (early on with respect to secular authorities; and later on with respect to anti-Protestant polemics). The ‘authority’ bestowed on the pope is a share in Christ’s own ‘foolishness,’ which is nothing other than the ‘foolishness’ of God who, out of love for us, poured himself into our ‘nothingness’ so that we can become ‘something’ in Him. We must never forget that the ‘power’ which the pope received a share of was *made most manifest at the moment of Christ’s glory*, that is, on the Cross itself. That is the meaning of power, when we speak of the pope being given ‘power.’ But that’s not how the world understands power. And too often, we are quick to collapse the theological and profane meanings of power. Yves Congar once said: ‘A Church that lays such stress on her plenary authority—arrogantly, as some would say—is open to stricter criticism. And here lies the deepest reason for the well-known ‘anti-Roman attitude....’ (Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église*. Paris: Cerf, 1950. Pgs: 69-70).

The solution, I think, is to emphasize how the Church—the pope, the Church’s structures, all of it—is not an arrogant ‘grabbing’ of God’s power and mercy, but it is God’s graceful ‘reaching down’ to us. Only then can the Church be transparent to the love from which she is born. Only God’s love in Jesus Christ makes Christianity persuasive; and the credibility of the Church rests with the extent to which we allow that love to shine through and illumine all of her structures, institutions, and offices as nothing other than embodiments of that very love.

EXTRA NOTES FOR REFERENCE

¹ Both Greek and Latin have more formal words for “Father” (*pater*, *πατήρ*). This is the specific use for a “papa,” the word that infants call their dad (and which, in Latin just like in modern day Spanish, they use for food!). In the early Church, we find two common uses for the term: in the East, it was used to designate simple priests, as a term of endearment; in the West, it was first used for “bishops” (Tertullian, *On Modesty*, 13). By the fourth century, it became a title more clearly associated with the Bishop of Rome (specifically, in the papacies of Siricius and Symmachus), though it wasn’t until the papacy of Gregory VII (d. 1085) that the term was confined to the successor of Peter, that is, the Bishop of Rome. Thus, today, the term is exclusively used to refer to the Bishop of Rome as “papa,” “dear father,” of us all, that is, of the whole Church.

² We can see this in the early Church, for example, when Pope Leo I (d. 461 AD) sent word to the council fathers (bishops from around the world) at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), and, upon reading his message out, they cried out: “This is the faith of our fathers ... Peter has spoken thus through Leo” (Acts of the Council of Chalcedon (Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. IV., col. 368.).

³ “[In the Church], the Successor of Peter has a special task. It was Peter who, on the Apostles’ behalf, made the first profession of faith: ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God’ (Mt. 16:16). This is the task of all Peter’s Successors: to be the guide in the profession of faith in Christ, Son of the living God. The Chair of Rome is above all the Seat of this belief. From high up on this Chair, the Bishop of Rome is constantly bound to repeat: *Dominus Iesus* — ‘Jesus is Lord’ ...” (Pope Benedict XVI, *The Faith*, p. 139).

⁴ Similar to this episode, cf. John 6.

⁵ Here we see the ultimate meaning of Peter’s special place: “Peter must be the custodian of communion with Christ for all time. He must guide people to communion with Christ; he must ensure that the net [of the Church] does not break and, consequently, that universal communion endures. Only together can we be with Christ, who is Lord of all” (Benedict XVI, *Jesus, the Apostles, and the Early Church*, p. 53).

⁶ (The CCC, following Vat. 2, states that Bishops are ‘vicars of Christ’ to their local churches, and the Bishop of Rome, i.e. the one who holds the ‘Office of Peter’ is ‘vicar of Christ’ to the whole Church; though, not in such a way that the Bishops are his ‘vassals’ or ‘representatives,’ rather, each bishop has a vicariousness proper to that Bishop, even if the pope has a unique vicariousness that allows the officeholder to be ‘vicar of Christ’ to the whole Church.).

⁷ Ambrose (385 AD) has a beautiful quote that is along similar lines: ‘Him whom, as He is about to be raised to heaven, He was leaving to us, as it were, the Vicar of His love. For thus you have it: ‘Simon, son of John, Do you love me? ... Feed My sheep. ... Because he alone out of all makes this profession (of love), he is preferred before all. ... And now he is not ordered, as at first, to ‘feed His lambs,’ ... but ‘His sheep,’ that the more perfect [Peter] might govern the more perfect [sheep].’” (*In Lucam*, lib. X. p. 1848, tom. ii). Another Church Father, St. Epiphanius (ca. 385 AD) writes: ‘He heard from that same God, ‘Peter, feed My lambs;’ to him was intrusted the flock; he leads the way admirably in the power of his own Master’ (Epiphanius, Tom. ii. *In Anchorat*. n. 9).

⁸ In a technical sense: we are the ‘Catholic Church.’ Period. We are the ‘universal’ Church, the Church that is ‘according to the whole,’ i.e. ‘Catholic.’ We also follow the ‘Roman rite.’ The ‘Roman Rite’ is the manner of celebrating Mass, administering the Sacraments, reciting the Divine Office, and other things, as used in the Diocese of Rome. Most of the West follows the “Roman Rite.” But there are other “Rites,” such as the Maronite Rite, Armenian Rite, Slavonic Rite, the Byzantine Rite, etc., of churches which are Catholic and in communion with the pope. The reason this clarification is important is because calling the Catholic Church “*Roman Catholic*” sometimes carries with it left over polemical connotations from the Reformation period, during which time there was the attempt to identify the Catholic Church with “Rome” to the effect of claiming that it lost its true universality, its true Catholicity. “*Roman Catholic*” is therefore treated as a ‘denomination,’ rather than as the truly *Catholic* Church in its universality.

⁹ In all likelihood, we have no idea if this is historical. It is known that the Romans oftentimes hung people different ways as a ‘spectator sport,’ as it were. But the early account of this is apocryphal, and it is uncertain if the other accounts are dependent on that account, or if there is an independent tradition. In any case, it’s made a huge impact on artistic depictions of Peter, and it describes a beautiful sentiment regarding Peter’s relation to Christ and his willingness to “follow him” to the very end.

¹⁰ Cf. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, II.26:6-7.

¹¹ Pope Paul VI in 1968 announced the relics which had at that time been recently exhumed and examined to be most likely the relics of the Apostle Peter. Upon examination, they belonged to the bones of a male person of about 61 years of age from the 1st century. There are a good amount of historical sources that reference an ongoing tradition of veneration at that site for Peter’s remains.