

# Dear Padre,

## What does it mean to call the pope infallible?

Jesus established the Church, gave Peter a special place in it, and promised that the powers of evil would never overcome the Church (see Matthew 16:13–19). This promise indicates that Jesus would not allow the Church to be misled in essential matters of faith or morals. In these matters, Jesus grants the gift of infallibility...not only to the pope, but to the bishops and the faithful in union with the pope.

The pope speaks infallibly when he teaches *ex cathedra* (“from the chair”) as the leader of the whole Church, expressly defining doctrine as a matter of faith or morals (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 891). The pope has done this only once in the past one hundred years, when he declared the dogma of the Assumption of Mary.

The Church’s understanding of infallibility reflects our Catholic belief that God will not allow evil to lead the Church astray. It helps us to distinguish what is essential from what is not. A clear understanding of infallibility and its limits may be seen as a safeguard against the misuse of authority. Understood in this manner, infallibility is another gift the Lord gave to the Church. ●



*The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org*

## Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

### Monday

July 22  
St. Mary  
Magdalene  
Sg 3:1–4b or  
2 Cor 5:14–17  
Jn 20:1–2,  
11–18

### Tuesday

July 23  
Weekday  
Mi 7:14–15,  
18–20  
Mt 12:46–50

### Wednesday

July 24  
Weekday  
Jer 1:1, 4–10  
Mt 13:1–9

### Thursday

July 25  
St. James,  
Apostle  
2 Cor 4:7–15  
Mt 20:20–28

### Friday

July 26  
Sts. Joachim and  
Anne, Parents  
of the Blessed  
Virgin Mary  
Jer 3:14–17  
Mt 13:18–23

### Saturday

July 27  
Weekday  
Jer 7:1–11  
Mt 13:24–30

### Sunday

July 28  
Seventeenth  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time  
2 Kgs 4:42–44  
Eph 4:1–6  
Jn 6:1–15



## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

*[Jesus’] tender invitation—rest a while—should accompany us. Let us beware...of efficiency, let us put a halt to the frantic running around dictated by our agendas. Let us learn how to take a break, to turn off the mobile phone, to contemplate nature, to regenerate ourselves in dialogue with God.*

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 18, 2021