



# News Release

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## What is needed in the next Bishop of Rome?

As Cardinals meet to elect the next Roman Catholic Bishop of Rome what should we expect of the new occupant of this high profile office?

The backdrop to the present appointment is that the Papacy has established itself as a world political power, has claimed supreme spiritual authority and has asserted a degree of authority throughout the world. It is astonishing that so many world leaders have appeared to collude with this deception.

The political aspirations of the Roman See are deeply unspiritual and antithetical to the teaching of Christ. (Jesus told his disciples not to lord it over others, but that they should be the servants of one another – Mark chapter 10 verse 42ff.) A new Bishop of Rome must renounce these political aspirations and all claims to jurisdiction beyond the See and of Rome.

The doctrine of Papal infallibility, largely a 19<sup>th</sup> Century innovation, has been part of the way in which the Roman See has propped up and spread its own authority. Whilst the Second Vatican Council did water down the doctrine slightly, it is a claim that has done great damage.

Papal infallibility is intimately connected to the Roman Catholic teaching regarding Mary because its primary purpose has been to make the two 'Marian dogmas' infallible statements, which it is apparently heretical to deny. These two teachings, concerning the Immaculate Conception (that Mary was conceived without sin) and the Bodily Assumption (that Mary was taken bodily into heaven), were both late inventions with no authority in Scripture nor precedent in early Christianity.

The practical outworking of this is a devotion to Mary, now endemic in the Roman Church, which was encouraged by Bishop John Paul II, and was evidently the focus of his own faith. This contrasts sharply with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ who, when the crowds spoke to him about how blessed his mother was responded by saying '*Blessed rather are they who hear the word of God and obey it.*' (Luke chapter 11 verse 28). From early days Christians have been marked by their exclusive devotion to Christ.

These matters are not academic or theoretical, they concern the heart of religion, how we come to God and how we should live as His people today. We learn from the Bible that it is through faith in Christ alone that we can stand before God. Though we are far from perfect, through faith we can have a righteousness which is not our own, but His (Philippians chapter 3 verse 9 & Romans chapter 10 verse 9). Therefore Christians have assurance and confidence that dying in faith we depart to be with Christ (Philippians chapter 1 verse 23). The Roman Church has deprived people of this confidence and instead made them dependent upon its own practices and priests. The

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doctrine of purgatory, another invention of the Church, is part of this system, and alongside it go the widespread practices of prayer to the saints, masses for the dead and even indulgences. The assumption of all these things is that they will help to speed the dead to heaven. They all pander to the deep-rooted human desire to want to make ourselves right with God by our own strength, they therefore lead people away from the simple gospel call of faith in Christ alone.

In view of these errors it has been with great sadness that we have witnessed so much lack of discernment in recent days from religious and political leaders.

As loyal Anglicans we unreservedly affirm the official teaching of the Church of England which our Bishops and Monarch have sworn under God to uphold. In particular:

- We affirm that salvation is to be found in Christ alone (Article 11).
- We denounce the doctrine of Purgatory, and all that goes with it, as a gross deception which leads people away for simple faith in Christ (Article 22).
- We affirm that the Church of Rome has erred (Article 19).
- We declare that the Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in this realm of England (Article 37).

Our sincere hope is that the Roman Church would be reformed, renounce its gross errors and past deceptions, and accept the plain teaching of God's Word written.

*The Articles referred to are the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.*

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*See also :*

*[http://www.churchsociety.org/issues/ecumenical/iss\\_romanerror\\_intro.htm](http://www.churchsociety.org/issues/ecumenical/iss_romanerror_intro.htm)*

*Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church.*

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