



Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices

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August 4, 2000

Mr. Ronald C. Loeffler *
7103 Cloverfield
San Antonio, Texas 78227

Dear Mr. Loeffler:

Thank you for your inquiry of July 17, 2000. We were fortunate in receiving the assistance of an eminent theologian who provided the following.

“Following Raymond Brown, I would think that a case could be made that the Church has defined something about the correct interpretation of the following seven passages:

- John 3:5 - sacramental baptism (Trent)
- John 20:23 - sacrament of penance (Trent)
- James 5:14-15 - anointing of the sick (Trent)
- Matthew 16:16-19 - Primacy of Peter (Vatican I)
- John 21:15-17 - Primacy of Peter (Vatican I)
- Genesis 3:15 - Immaculate Conception (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* and Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*)

“Whether the intention was to define the sense of Scripture in these passages is a difficult question[s]. It is difficult, also, to say exactly what was defined—was the intention only to exclude a particular false interpretation, and if the intention was to say something positive, did the Pope or Council mean that this was the only meaning of the text?”

“For further details, see R.E. Brown, “Hermeneutics,” *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1146-65, at 1163-64.”

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Reverend J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P.
Executive Director