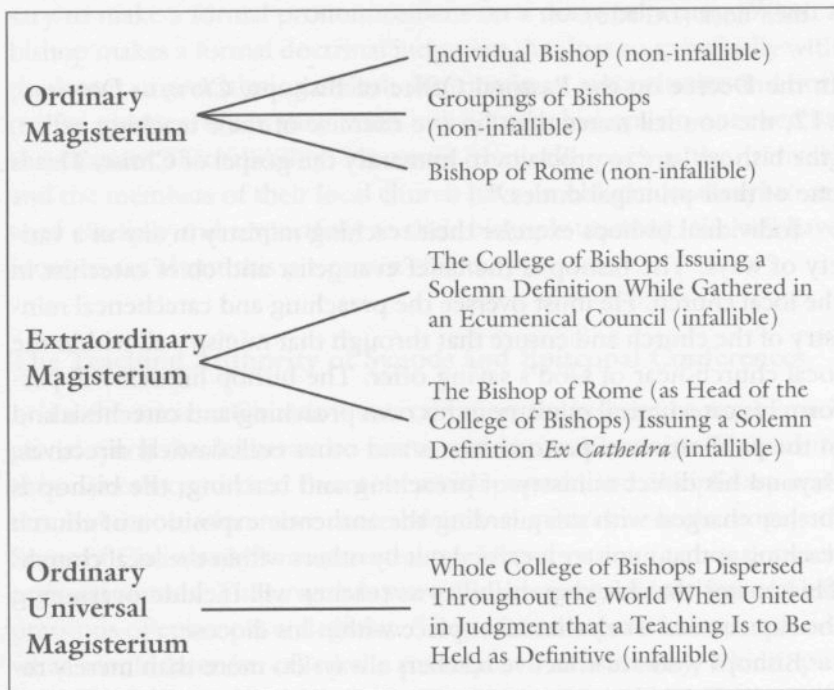


*A dogma is any propositional formulation which is (1) divinely revealed and (2) proposed as such by the magisterium, either through a solemn definition of a pope or council, or by the teaching of the college of bishops in their ordinary and universal magisterium.*

Although the term “doctrine” is sometimes used as a synonym for dogma, its field of meaning is much broader.

*A doctrine is any authoritative or normative formulation of a belief of the Church, whether revealed or not. A church doctrine is intended to articulate a formal belief of the Church that it draws in some fashion from its reflection on divine revelation even if it may not itself be divinely revealed.*

## THE EXERCISE OF THE MAGISTERIUM



*Encyclical Letter:* Documents offered by the pope as part of his ordinary magisterium and addressed to: (a) the whole college of bishops, (b) the whole Church or (c) the whole world. Encyclicals frequently address doctrinal/theological matters, but are not normally used to define dogma

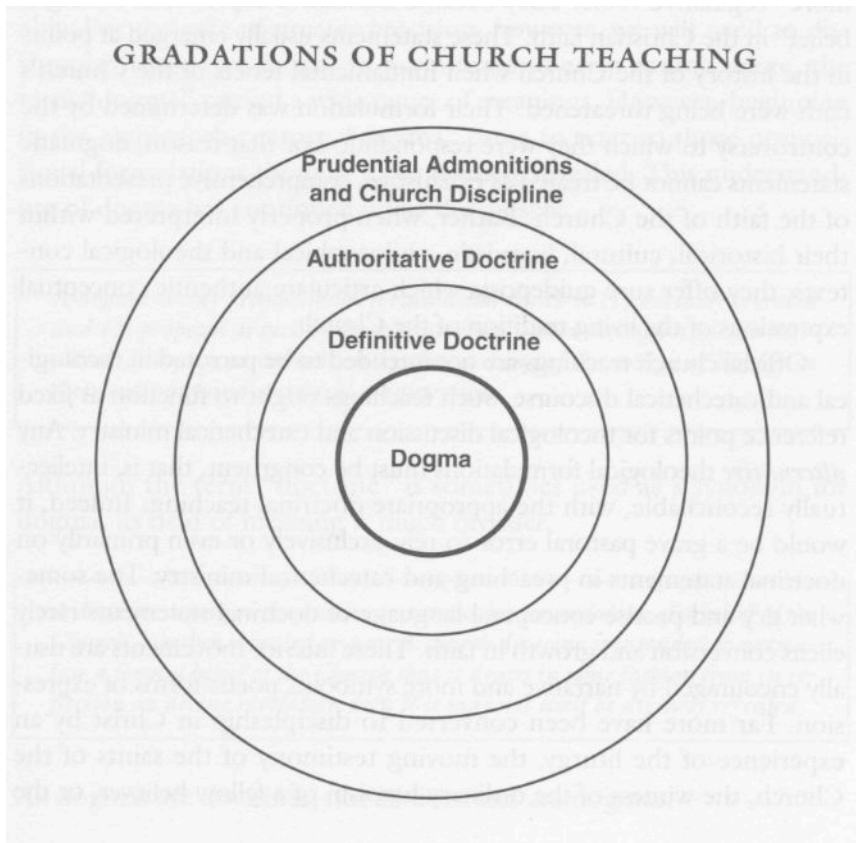
*Apostolic Letter:* Papal letters usually sent to some particular category of persons, e.g., a group of bishops

*Apostolic Exhortation:* Documents issued by the pope in response to the deliberations of an episcopal synod

*Occasional Papal Addresses:* Speeches given to various groups who are received by the pope in the Vatican as well as speeches the pope gives on his travels

responses demanded toward church teaching in the following chart:

<b>LEVELS OF CHURCH TEACHING</b>	<b>RESPONSE OF THE BELIEVER</b>
<b>Dogma</b>	<b>Assent of Faith</b> [The believer makes an act of faith, trusting that this teaching is revealed by God.]
<b>Definitive Doctrine</b>	<b>Firm Acceptance</b> [The believer "accepts and holds" these teachings to be true.]
<b>Authoritative Doctrine</b>	<b>"A Religious Docility of Will and Intellect"</b> [The believer strives to assimilate a teaching of the Church into their religious stance, while recognizing the remote possibility of church error.]
<b>Provisional Applications of Church Doctrine, Church Discipline and Prudential Admonitions</b>	<b>Conscientious Obedience</b> [The believer obeys (the spirit of) any church law or disciplinary action which does not lead to sin, even when questioning the ultimate value or wisdom of the law or action.]



Reference:

**Richard R. Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?: Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful*, Liturgical Press, 2003.**