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Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • **January 2008**
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On July 7, 2007, Benedict XVI promulgated an Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* on the liturgy entitled *Summorum Pontificum Cura*. In the introduction, he acknowledges that after the promulgation of Pope Paul VI's reform (1970), "in some regions, no small numbers of faithful...continue to adhere with great love and affection to the earlier liturgical forms." Then in twelve articles he gives the rules for its application. We shall give the rules below, first highlighting the positive points they contain, then showing the negative. Lastly, we shall address the perplexities raised by Pope Benedict XVI's letter presenting *Summorum Pontificum* to the Bishops.

The Positive

- "Art. 1. ...the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V...must be given due honour for its venerable and ancient usage....*It is, therefore, permissible to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass following the typical edition of the Roman Missal* promulgated by Bl. John XXIII in 1962 and *never abrogated*[1]....The conditions for the use of this Missal as laid down by earlier documents 'Quattuor abhinc annis' [Indult] and 'Ecclesia Dei,' are substituted as follows."
- "Art. 2. In Masses celebrated without the people, *each Catholic priest...may use the Roman Missal published by Bl. Pope John XXIII in 1962...and may do so on any day with the exception of the Easter Triduum* [an exception that only concerns the *Missa sine populo*, which, moreover, is not allowed to be celebrated during the Sacred Triduum according to the new rite]. For such celebrations...the priest has no need for permission from the Apostolic See or from his Ordinary."
- "Art. 3. Communities of Institutes of consecrated life...wishing to celebrate Mass in accordance with the edition of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1962, for conventual or 'community' celebration in their oratories, may do so."
- "Art. 4. Celebrations of Mass as mentioned above in Art. 2 may...also be attended by faithful who, of their own free will, ask to be admitted."
- "Art. 5. §1. In parishes, where there is *a stable group of faithful who adhere to the earlier liturgical tradition*, the pastor should willingly accept their requests to celebrate the Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962.... §2. Celebration in accordance with the Missal of Bl. John XXIII may take place on working days; while on Sundays and

Pope Benedict XVI's MOTU PROPRIO *Summorum Pontificum*

feast days one such celebration may also be held. §3. For faithful and priests who request it, the pastor should also allow celebrations in this...form for special circumstances such as *marriages*, *funerals* or occasional celebrations, e.g. pilgrimages."

- "Art. 7. If a group of lay faithful...has not obtained satisfaction to their requests from the pastor, they should inform the diocesan bishop. The bishop is strongly requested to satisfy their wishes...."
- "Art. 9. §1. The pastor...may also grant permission to use *the earlier ritual* for the administration of the Sacraments of *Baptism, Marriage, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick*..... §2. Ordinaries are given the right to celebrate *the Sacrament of Confirmation using the earlier Roman Pontifical*.... §3. Clerics ordained "*in sacris constitutis*" may use *the Roman Breviary promulgated by Bl. John XXIII in 1962*."

Pope Benedict XVI concludes: "We order that everything We have *established* with these Apostolic Letters issued as Motu Proprio be considered as "established and decreed," and to be observed from 14 September of this year, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, whatever there may be to the contrary."

The Negative

A distinction must be made between the Motu Proprio and the Apostolic Letter addressed to the Bishops to dispel their "fears." It is clear that the two documents are not of equal force. It is the Motu Proprio, and not the Letter to the Bishops, that is the "juridical norm" which, beginning September 14th, 2007, replaced the conditions laid down by earlier documents (cf. Art. 1). In reality, more than a replacement, it is an annulment of the previous conditions for the simple reason that the traditional Roman rite was never "abrogated," so that, for the celebration of this rite, "the priest has no need for permission from the Apostolic See or from his Ordinary" (Art. 2).

It is on this point, in our opinion, that *Summorum Pontificum* essentially differs from the Indult. Because it explicitly made usage of the traditional rite contingent on the uncritical acceptance of the Council, as well as the acknowledgement of the orthodoxy of the *Novus Ordo Missae*, the Indult was *per se* unacceptable. The Motu Proprio, on the contrary, is *per se*, objectively, the general (for all and not just Archbishop Lefebvre's SSPX) and unconditional liberalization of the traditional Roman rite. In the Letter to Bishops, Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the conditions that made the Indult unacceptable, and explains why he does not share the "fears" manifested by certain bishops; in this regard, the Letter to the Bishops confirms the unconditional liberalization ratified by the Motu Proprio.

But there is in the Motu Proprio one unacceptable affirmation, which also appears in the Letter to the Bishops: We read in Article 1:

> The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is the ordinary expression of the "*Lex orandi*" (Law of prayer) of the Catholic Church of the Latin rite. Nonetheless, the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V and reissued by Bl. John XXIII is to be considered as an extraordinary expression of that same "*Lex orandi*"....These two expressions....are, in *fact two usages of the one Roman rite*.

And in the Letter to the Bishops, he reaffirms that

> the Missal published by Paul VI...obviously is and continues to be the normal Form–the *Forma ordinaria*–of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were "two Rites." Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.

It ought to be noted that the recognition of continuity, and even of the identity of the *Novus Ordo Missae* (NOM) and the Roman rite, and in some sense the superiority of the former since the NOM remains the normal form–"*ordinaria*"–of the Eucharistic celebration, is not a condition impeding celebration using the earlier rite (the conditions, or more precisely, the substitutive rules follow this preliminary affirmation); consequently, acceptance of the Motu Proprio *does not imply acceptance of its theological presuppositions* ("a twofold use of one and the same rite") on the basis of which the Pope proceeded to the liberalization of the Roman Missal.

Perplexing Points in the Letter to the Bishops

In the letter of presentation addressed to the Bishops, which, we repeat, is of no legal force, two affirmations leave us perplexed. Firstly:

> For that matter, the two Forms of the usage of the Roman Rite can be mutually enriching: new Saints and some of the new Prefaces can and should be inserted in the old Missal.

Thus, as Pope Benedict XVI "liberalizes" usage of the traditional Roman rite, he already anticipates a "reform," even if it merely regards secondary matters. Secondly:

> [I]n order to experience full communion, the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage *cannot, **as a matter of principle**, exclude celebrating according to the new books*. The ***total*** exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.

We ask: what is meant by "as a matter of principle"? That *de facto* the non-acceptance of the NOM is licit or tolerated? Moreover, the refusal cannot be "total." Does this mean that a "partial" refusal of the NOM is licit or tolerable? It would seem so.[2]

But Cardinal Camillo Ruini interpreted it this way: "Celebration according to the new Missal cannot be excluded as a matter of principle, thereby manifesting concretely acceptance of the Council" (*Avvenire*, July 8, 2007, p.1). Cardinal Ruini's reading is very narrow, and allows us to surmise that once again complete and

unconditional acceptance of Vatican II might be asked as a condition.[3] But this interpretation is not confirmed by the Motu Proprio, in which neither acceptance of the Council nor "recognition of [the NOM's] value and holiness" is mentioned. In the Letter to the Bishops, the non-exclusion "as a matter of principle" of the new rite is only mentioned as a condition "in order to experience full communion," so that we might say that those who totally exclude it "as a matter of principle" have been promoted from a position considered to be schismatic to one considered to be "not in full" communion!

As for the Council, let us recall that when Pope Benedict XVI erected the Institute of the Good Shepherd, he granted it the right to engage in "constructive criticism" of Vatican II.

Fidelity to Antiquity

Resistance to Unjust Laws

Cardinals Alfredo Ottaviani (September 13, 1969) and Antonio Bacci (September 28) signed the letter (dated September 3, 1969, and presented to Pope Paul VI on October 21, 1969) of introduction to the *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass* in which they wrote that "the *Novus Ordo Missae*...represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session 22 of the Council of Trent," and they concluded: "The subject for whose benefit a law is made have always had the right, nay the duty, to ask the legislator to abrogate the law, should it prove to be harmful." This is what we continue to do, in spite of *Summorum Pontificum.*

A positive human law (the NOM, "religious freedom," *etc.*) that contradicts the divine law (natural or positive) has no force of law; it cannot oblige in conscience. On the contrary, it is licit, if not necessary, to resist it, on condition that this resistance not exceed the bounds of preserving the common good, which must always prevail over the individual good. Consequently, in certain particular cases, to avoid scandals or serious disturbances, or to avoid falling into an abiding spirit of revolt[4] and anarchy, one may refrain from active resistance.[5] Unjust laws (tyranny in practice) transgress the order willed by God and right reason. Hence, in case of conflict between an unjust human law and the divine law, we must "obey God rather than men." This principle is reconcilable with the obligation to respect habitually the established order: for actual resistance against an unjust law does not inherently imply an habitual negation of the authority.

The Criteria of St. Vincent of Lerins

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius writes (No. 318)[6] that in a period of distress we are not to alter anything, but continue to act as before, "for the devil fishes in troubled waters." Consequently, in cases of obscurity, aridity, desolation, of night of the senses and spirit, we must continue as before even without seeing; we must even rejoice at lacking light since God permits this night to purify the souls of His servants by pushing them to greater trust in Him and to "hope against hope." St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross teach the same doctrine, which is the common teaching in ascetical and mystical theology. Similarly, in the present crisis, we must continue to do what the Church has always done without venturing into potentially dangerous novelties. St. Vincent of Lerins in his *Commonitory*, writes that, "if some novel contagion seeks to infect not merely an insignificant portion of the Church, but the whole," then the faithful must "cleave to antiquity, which at this day cannot possibly be seduced by any fraud of novelty" (Chap.3). This is the principal rule the Church has always followed. Nor should we pretend to see the solution to the current crisis clearly as if darkness had not fallen. Darkness is the absence of light, but what enables us to see the objects surrounding us is light. If it has been extinguished, I remain in the dark; I cannot see anything. Thus during this terrible and "obscure" crisis of Vatican II, it is not possible to see with clarity (Pope Paul VI himself spoke of the "smoke of Satan" in the Church of God).

Having reaffirmed these two central points which cannot be renounced (abrogation of the NOM and "fidelity to antiquity") we must recognize that the Motu Proprio is objectively, independently of intentions and theological motivations, a first step in the right direction. We hope that [the Sovereign Pontiff] will continue in this direction, but without wishing to delude ourselves and while awaiting confirmation by the events: neither outright refusal nor elation, the harbinger of disillusions or, worse, a swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction.

Besides, we must admit realistically that, in the current situation, it would be impossible, *de facto*, even should it be desired, to abrogate the NOM immediately, considering the tempest raised in several episcopates by the Motu Proprio, and the practical problem of millions of faithful Catholics accustomed, without fault of their own, to the New Mass. How could they adjust to the Tridentine Roman rite from one day to the next without a preparatory formation? In his Letter to the Bishops, Pope Benedict XVI seems to be conscious of this when he writes that "the use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation" which is "not found very often," so that the new Missal will remain the ordinary form of the rite "not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful."

Nonetheless, the problem of the abrogation of the new rite remains *de jure* and will have to be resolved when the circumstances allow it. This is true as regards not only Pope Paul's New Mass, but also the Second Vatican Council, for, just as it is impossible to admit a homogeneous continuity or development between the Roman Mass and the NOM, so also it is impossible to reconcile the ecumenism, "religious freedom,"

collegiality, *etc.*, of Vatican II with the Church's perennial teaching. It is with good reason that Bishop Fellay wrote (Menzingen, July 7, 2007) that, "we must continue the combat for the *lex credendi*, the combat for the Faith, with the same firmness." Benedict XVI seems to be aware of the seriousness of the question when, in the Letter to the Bishops, he writes that "the reasons for the break which arose over [the Mass], however, were at a deeper level."

Cardinal Siri said that it would take a hundred years to repair the disaster of Vatican II. Forty years have passed, and perhaps the first step has just been taken on the (still long) road of the liturgical question. It may take another sixty years to "see the light." Acknowledgment of the legitimacy of "constructive criticism" of Vatican II and the declaration that the Tridentine Mass was never abrogated do constitute a first step. Ω

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[1] This was also the opinion of the *ad hoc* commission of Cardinals convened by Pope John Paul II. In reality, in his allocution to the consistory of May 24, 1976, Pope Paul VI declared: "The *Novus Ordo Missae* was promulgated to *replace* the old Mass." Pope Benedict XVI knows this very well. When he was a cardinal he wrote pages very critical of the liturgical reform of 1970.

[2] One almost has the impression that Benedict XVI happened to notice the enormous gravity of the liturgical and sacramental crisis, even granting the conferral of the sacraments (*sacramenta conficere*) of Baptism, Extreme Unction, and Confirmation according to the old Ritual and Pontifical.

[3] Cardinal Ruini seems to be more interested in the doctrinal problem of the Council than in the liturgy. Indeed, the liturgy is a practical consequence of the Faith: we pray in accordance with our belief. The *lex credendi* establishes and founds the *lex orandi*. The real problem is thus on a higher plane: in the orthodoxy of the conciliar documents. The battle must still be waged on this point.

[4] Aristotle, *Politics*, II, 8, 1269, 20-24 / 1268b, 27.

[5] Resistance can be either 1) non-violent: a) by not applying the law (passive resistance, which is always licit); or b) by legal active resistance, such as petitioning the government for redress of grievances and by lawsuits, *etc.*; or resistance can be 2) violent (by armed uprising, but only against the civil authority, not the religious authority). In this case, the tyranny or the unjust laws must be constant and habitual. A single unjust law is not sufficient cause to justify an armed uprising or repeated acts of civil disobedience against the public authority). Finally, the fall of a tyrannical government must not create a situation worse than the present situation, for the multitude would suffer even worse evils.

[6] "In a period of distress we are not to alter anything, but should remain firm and unyielding in our resolutions and the purpose of mind in which we found ourselves on the day preceding such distress, or in the purpose in which we found ourselves in the preceding consolation....For, in times of comfort it is the good angel that guides us by his counsel, whereas, in distress, it is the evil sprit...." Cf. Rules 320, 321, and 322 [Fr. Ludovic Marie Barrielle, CP.CR.V., *Rules for Discerning the Spirits* (Angelus Press, 1992), pp.23-28.]

Commentaries on the Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to Some Questions Regarding the Nature of the Church

On July 10, 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) published five responses to as many questions about the doctrine on the Church. The document, signed by the Prefect, Cardinal William Levada, and by the Secretary, Archbishop Angelo Amato, is accompanied by commentary by the same congregation.

We will here try to examine the text without being influenced by the reactions it gave rise to, whether of disappointment or enthusiasm.

1) Intentions and Facts

In reply to the question of whether the Second Vatican Council changed Catholic doctrine on the Church, the Congregation responds as follows:

> The Second Vatican Council neither changed nor intended to change this doctrine; rather it developed, deepened and more fully explained it. This was exactly what John XXIII said at the beginning of the Council. Paul VI affirmed it and commented in the act of promulgating the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*: "There is no better comment to make than to say that this promulgation really changes nothing of the traditional doctrine...." The Bishops repeatedly expressed and fulfilled this intention.[1]

The reading of this general intention to keep in continuity with the perennial Catholic teaching can only be comforting. However, it does not seem to us possible to affirm so casually that in fact the Council changed nothing in this doctrine. The CDF's document not only does not prove this continuity, but, in spite of the proclaimed good intentions, seems to confirm the opposite. The demonstration of continuity between the perennial

magisterium and Vatican II would require a comparison between the texts coming from the magisterium and those approved by the Council. But it suffices to glance over the documents cited to grasp that nothing of the like is involved. Of 20 references, 15 are taken from conciliar texts (three are allocutions of John XXIII and Paul VI, and one concerns the responses of the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians to the Bishops' suggestions), and the other citations are taken from recent documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Pope John Paul II's Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. Not a single document of the previous magisterium is referenced! This approach continues to leave unsolved the fundamental problem, namely, that of providing an effective proof of the doctrinal continuity between past and present.

2) The Problem of the "*Subsistit in*" Still Unresolved

The second question raises the problem of interpreting the famous affirmation according to which "the Church of Christ *subsists* in the Catholic Church." The document does not resolve the problem. It tells us:

> Christ "established here on earth" only one Church and instituted it as a "visible and spiritual community," that from its beginning and throughout the centuries has always existed and will always exist, and in which alone are found all the elements that Christ himself instituted. "This one Church of Christ, which we confess in the Creed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic….This Church, constituted and organised in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him" [the last quote is from *Lumen Gentium*].

Even an orthodox schismatic could affirm without difficulty that the Church is, according to the formula of the Creed, "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." The problem is that the body of the response does not explicitly affirm that between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church there is no difference, and thus that the Church instituted by Christ is exclusively the Catholic Church.[2] Once again, the text has recourse to the use of the "*subsistit in*" of *Lumen Gentium* or of the *invenitur* used in other documents of the CDF:

> In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* "subsistence" means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth.

The answer implies that Christ did not found the Catholic Church, but a Church which, concretely, is to be found fully realized in the Catholic Church and partially in the others–whence the idea of different degrees of communion, rendered by expressions like "full communion," "fully in communion," "full identity," *etc.* Consequently, a serious doubt remains as to the interchangeability of the expressions "*subsistit in*" and "*est.*"

This doubt is augmented by the fact that, whereas from the traditional affirmation of the perfect identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church followed the non-communion of non-Catholic communities, from the new formulation are drawn consequences which are in opposition to Catholic ecclesiology. In the same response, in fact, we find the following affirmation:

> ...The Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them.

This response is reaffirmed in the commentary of the third answer, which states that:

> The use of this expression...comes from and brings out more clearly the fact that there are "numerous elements of sanctification and of truth" which are found outside her structure, but which "as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, impel towards Catholic Unity."

It is noteworthy that the text never specifies–and this is the fundamental point–in what way the presence of these "elements" should be understood. In the 2004 doctrinal study published by the Society of St. Pius X *From Ecumenism to Silent Apostasy* [available from Angelus Press, $5.00–*Ed.*] in the section on doctrinal problems caused by ecumenism, the authors remark that

> The affirmation that "many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside the confines [of the Church]" is equivocal. This proposition implies in effect that the means of salvation materially present in the separated Communities possess a sanctifying power.[3]

Now, as regards these materially present means, the distinction is made between the sacraments that do not require a proper disposition on the part of the recipient (infant baptism), which really have a salutary effect, and those that, on the contrary, require a particular disposition. They conclude their remarks by quoting the doctrine taught by the Council of Florence:

> "[The Church] firmly believes, professes, and proclaims...that the unity of the ecclesiastical body is so strong that only to those remaining in it are the sacraments of the Church of benefit for salvation." Yet, insofar as they are separated, these communities are an obstacle to this implicit desire that would render the sacraments fruitful. Thus one cannot say that these communities possess elements of sanctification and truth, except materially.

It was this question that needed to be answered in order to understand if the presence of "*elementa Ecclesiæ*" was compatible with the dogma "Outside the Church, no salvation" and with the dogma according to which the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church and only the Catholic Church. In other words, the key question is to know whether the non-Catholics are objectively

members of the Church, that is to say, whether they are or are not in communion with her. When the Council and the document we are studying speak of an equivocal "un-full Communion," do they mean that this communion is nonetheless still objectively sufficient for salvation or not? What does the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith think of the following statement of Pope Pius IX (the Encyclical *Amantissimus* §3): "'He who deserts the Church will vainly believe that he is in the Church,'[4] 'whoever eats of the lamb and is not a member of the Church, has profaned'"[5]; or this more recent text (Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, §22): "It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit." In reality, it is hard to see how to harmonize these statements of the perennial magisterium with this assertion of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (§3):

> The children who are born into these Communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation....For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church–whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church–do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body...and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.

It is equally hard to harmonize them with what Pope John Paul II stated in *Ut Unum Sint* (§11) regarding the division among Christians:

> By God's grace, however, neither what belongs to the structure of the Church of Christ nor that communion which still exists with the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities has been destroyed. Indeed, the elements of sanctification and truth present in the other Christian Communities, in a degree which varies from one to the other, constitute the objective basis of the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church. To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them. For this reason the Second Vatican Council speaks of a certain, though imperfect communion.

If it is true that it is necessary to rein in certain extreme deviations like that of Leonardo Boff[6] and others–deviations that are probably the target of this document–it remains nonetheless true that the big problem of the conciliation of Vatican II with the traditional magisterium still remains. It is on this point that a clear declaration from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is still awaited.

3) Outside the Church There Is Now Salvation

The first part of the response to the third question–why was the expression "subsists in" adopted instead of the simple word "is"?–was partially examined in the preceding point. But the second part remains, which raises some supplementary problems. It contains a passage from the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* (§3):

> It follows that the separated Churches and Communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church.

This statement remains unacceptable from every point of view, because from the fact that there are elements of sanctification and truth materially in the other communities, it cannot be deduced that these same communities are used by the Holy Ghost as instruments of salvation. God, indeed, can certainly draw good from evil, but it cannot be affirmed that evil is used as an instrument of salvation, and still less that it has any legitimacy!

The traditional Magisterium always underscored that the Catholic Church is the means of salvation necessary and sufficient willed by God. Outside the Church, there can only be salutary effects, and not means (unless in a purely material sense) or, still worse, salvatory communities, as it was expressed in the letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston:

> Not only did the Savior command that all nations should enter the Church, but He also decreed the Church to be a means of salvation, without which no one can enter the kingdom of eternal glory. In His infinite mercy God has willed that the effects, necessary for one to be saved, of those helps to salvation which are directed toward man's final end, not by intrinsic necessity, but only by divine institution, can also be obtained in certain circumstances when those helps are used only in *desire* and *longing*.[7]

Thus the Holy Ghost can save souls who are objectively outside the Church, in spite of their belonging to schismatic or heretical communities but not thanks to them.

The CDF's document seems to subscribe to the unacceptable affirmation made by Cardinal Kasper in November, 2004, at Rocca di Pappa, on the occasion of a conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Decree *Unitatis Integratio*:

> The Council went a decisive step further with the aid of the "*subsistit in*." It wished to do justice to the fact that there are found outside of the Catholic Church not only individual Christians but also "elements of the church," indeed churches and ecclesial communities which, although not in full communion, rightly belong to the one church and possess salvatory significance for their members (*LG,* 8, 15; *UR*, 3; *UUS*, 10-14). Thus the Council is aware that there are outside of the Catholic

Church forms of sanctification which even extend as far as martyrdom (*LG*, 15; *UR*, 4; *UUS*, 12, 83). The question of the salvation of non-Catholics is now no longer answered personally as in *Mystici Corporis* on the basis of the subjective desire of single individuals, but institutionally on the basis of objective ecclesiology.[8]

4) From Schismatic Communities to "Sister Churches"

The fourth question concerns the attribution of the title "church" to the Eastern [Orthodox] Churches.

In the traditional perspective of the oneness of the Church of Christ, which is the Catholic Church, the attribution of the title of Church to the Eastern schismatic communities remains unacceptable. The document affirms to the contrary that these communities "merit the title of 'particular or local Churches,' and are called sister Churches of the particular Catholic Churches." And it adds:

> However, since communion with the Catholic Church, the visible head of which is the Bishop of Rome and the Successor of Peter, is not some external complement to a particular Church but rather one of its internal constitutive principles, these venerable Christian communities lack something in their condition as particular churches.

The title of "Church" would be restored to those who broke their bond with the Sovereign Pontiff; thus communion with the pope, while remaining an internal constitutive principle, is no longer considered essential, since its lack would constitute a simple deficiency ("*defectu*") that does not alter the essence of "the being Church."

5) The Question of the Protestants

This notion appears even more clearly in the response to the fifth question; in effect, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explains that the Protestant communities cannot be defined as churches because "these Communities do not enjoy apostolic succession in the sacrament of Orders, and are, therefore, deprived of a constitutive element of the Church." It follows logically that the lack of union with the See of Peter is not considered as "a constitutive element of the Church."

Furthermore, in the commentary in response to the fourth question, we read:

> The Council wanted to adopt the traditional use of the term. "Because these Churches, although separated, have true sacraments and above all–because of the apostolic succession–the priesthood and the Eucharist, by means of which they remain linked to us by very close bonds," they merit the title of "particular or local Churches," and are called sister Churches of the particular Catholic Churches. It is through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches that the Church of God is built up and grows in stature.

The Declaration *Dominus Jesus* expressly calls them "true particular Churches." Rupture of the bond with the Pope, then, would not also cause a rupture of unity with the Catholic Church. The document implies that there can be "true particular Churches" even if they do not belong to the Catholic Church through the bond of submission to the Roman Pontiff. To be a true church, it would suffice to possess apostolic succession and a validly celebrated Eucharist, while the bond with the successors of Peter would not be required for communion with the Catholic Church to become full, to use the Council's terminology.

In truth, the term *church*, for the Orthodox communities, can only be used in a certain way in the sense that with the apostolic succession they have conserved a hierarchical structure; however, in the Encyclical *Iam Vos Omnes*, Blessed Pius IX observes that this permanence of the apostolic succession detached from effective communion with the Roman Pontiff, avails nothing:

> Whoever thus gives proper attention and reflection to the situation which surrounds the various religious societies, divided amongst themselves and separated from the Catholic Church–which, without interruption, from the time of Christ the Lord and of His Apostles, by means of her legitimate sacred Shepherds, has always exercised, and exercises still, the divine power conferred upon Her by the Lord–it will be easy to convince [them] that in none of these societies, and not even in all of them taken together, can in some way be seen the one and Catholic Church which Christ the Lord built, constituted, and willed to exist. Neither will it ever be able to be said that they are members and part of that Church as long as they remain visibly separated from Catholic unity.

The apostolic succession in these schismatic communities remains purely material, like a body without a soul, since it lacks the formal and vivifying principle that comes from the communion with the successor of Peter.

The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith ought to answer the following question: How is it possible to reconcile the teaching on the expression "sister Churches," reaffirmed by the present document, with the proclamations of the traditional magisterium, among which we limit ourselves to quoting but two:

> May [the Armenian nation] reject error and return to the one fold of Christ in a spirit of docility and unity, a spirit clearly absent from all who are not joined with this Holy See of Peter. From this Holy See, rights of holy communion flow to all men and to it every obedience and honor must be given. Every church (that is the faithful everywhere) should come together to the See of Peter for greater authority.[9]

> They were no longer members of the Body of Christ which is the Church, for it [the schismatic Church] was

no longer in union with its visible head, the Sovereign Pontiff.[10]

It seems to us that Rome is attempting to set some bounds to certain excessive post-conciliar deviations. After the Motu Proprio on the Tridentine Mass (July 7, 2007), which addresses an important point of the liturgical deviation after the Council, this document of the CDF constitutes the first attempt to address these doctrinal questions on the Church. This is a praiseworthy act in its intentions. However, it should be remarked that trying to remedy doctrinal deviations by referring to the documents of Vatican II means that it will be impossible to give thorough responses in line with Tradition, which would strike at the root of the current general apostasy.

It is well known that it is not enough to cut weeds off at ground level; they must be torn out by the roots. One day the hierarchy will have to take this into consideration seriously, because, as sound philosophy teaches, to reach a proposed end, one must choose means that really lead to it. Or, in the examples given by Our Lord, one should make one's calculations beforehand, lest having begun to build the tower one is constrained to abandon the project for having failed to calculate the expenses; or, one's army suffers defeat for having attempted to fight with a thousand men against ten thousand. Ω

Lanterius

Translated exclusively by Angelus Press from the *Courrier de Rome*, October 2007, pp.1-3.

[1] The quotations from the CDF's Responses are taken from the Vatican Web site.

[2] Note 4 is a little clearer, since, by examining the responses of the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians to the bishops' suggestions, the document concludes that "the commission that was supposed to evaluate the amendments to the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, clearly expresses the identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, as well as its unicity, considering that this doctrine is founded on the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*." By admitting thus that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church and not another, it remains to be understood how the schismatic communities are considered by the Council, a consideration that pushed it to prefer the expression "subsists in" to the traditional expression.

[3] The Society of Saint Pius X, *From Ecumenism to Silent Apostasy* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2006), p. 29.

[4] St. Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

[5] St. Jerome, Epistle 15 to Damasus.

[6] Leonardo Boff, Ph.D. (b. 1938), a Brazilian, is the founder of Liberation Theology in Brazil. He taught for 22 years at the Franciscan Institute at Petropolis, Brazil, while still a Franciscan, and later at the State University of Rio de Janeiro as a layman after he was silenced by the Vatican in 1992 and left the Franciscans. Dr. Boff has been very influential in liberal and populist circles in Brazil. Cf. www.clas.ufl.edu/users/bron/PDF--Christianity/Maclean+Lorentzen--Leonardo%20Boff.pdf.

[7] Protocol No. 122/49, August 8, 1949. The text of the letter in Latin and English was published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. 127, No. 1, (July 1952), 307-315, and as an appendix to *Baptism of Desire: A Patristic Commentary* (Angelus Press, 1999).

[8] "The Decree on Ecumenism Read Anew after Forty Years," online at the Vatican Web site.

[9] Blessed Pius IX, *Neminem Vestrum* on the Persecution of Armenians (February 2, 1854), §14 (online at www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9nemini.htm.

[10] Clement VIII, Bull *Magnus Dominus* (Brest-Litovsk, October 16, 1596).

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