

Vatican II, the Pope and SSPX

— Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn —

www.traditionalmass.org

Why it is wrong to assist at SSPX Masses — and seriously wrong

1. What is wrong with the Second Vatican Council?

The Second Vatican Council taught doctrines which had been already condemned by the Church, and enacted disciplines which are contrary to the Church's teaching and constant practice.

2. What doctrines did it teach which were already condemned?

There are four major errors: (1) concerning the unity of the Church; (2) concerning ecumenism; (3) concerning religious liberty; (4) concerning collegiality.

3. What false doctrine does it teach concerning the unity of the Church?

Vatican II teaches heresy concerning the unity of the Church, namely that the Church of Christ is not exclusively identified with the Catholic Church, but merely subsists in it. This heretical doctrine is contained principally in *Lumen Gentium*, and its heretical meaning is confirmed in statements of Paul VI and his successors, particularly in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, in the 1992 *Statement concerning Church and Communion*, and in the *Ecumenical Directory*.

It is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, contained principally in *Satis Cognitum* of Pope Leo XIII, *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI, *Mystici Corporis* of Pope Pius XII, and in the condemnations of the "Branch Theory" made by the Holy Office under Pope Pius IX.

4. What false doctrine does it teach concerning ecumenism?

The teaching of Vatican II concerning ecumenism, which states that non-Catholic religions are a means of salvation, is overtly heretical. This doctrine directly contradicts the teaching of the Church that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church, called by Pope Pius IX a *most well-known Catholic dogma*. In addition, the ecumenical practices which have resulted from this heretical doctrine are directly contrary to *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI.

5. What false doctrine does it teach concerning religious liberty?

The teaching of Vatican II on religious liberty, contained in *Dignitatis Humanae*, nearly word for word asserts the very doctrine which was condemned by Pope Pius VII in *Post Tam Diuturnas*, by Pope Gregory XVI in *Mirari Vos*, by Pope Pius IX in *Quanta Cura*, and by Pope Leo XIII in *Libertas Præstantissimum*. The teaching of Vatican II on religious liberty also contradicts the royalty of Jesus Christ in society as expressed in *Quas Primas* of Pope Pius XI, and the constant attitude and practice of the Church with regard to civil society.

6. What false doctrine does it teach concerning collegiality?

The teaching of Vatican II concerning collegiality alters the monarchical constitution of the Catholic Church, with which she was endowed by the Divine Savior. The doctrine of Vatican II, confirmed by the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which states that the subject (the possessor) of the supreme authority of the Church is the college of bishops together with the pope, is contrary to the defined doctrine of the Council of Florence and of Vatican I.

7. What is wrong with the New Mass, and the liturgical changes which have been promulgated since Vatican II?

The liturgical changes of Vatican II reflect the doctrinal errors which I have just mentioned. The new liturgy is an **ecumenical** liturgy, and seeks to erase any doctrines which are distinctly Catholic, and to turn the Catholic liturgy into a form of worship which would not be offensive to any Protestant. It is man-centered worship, stripped of all symbolism of the supernatural. The *Ordo Missæ* of Paul VI is an evil liturgical discipline, because (1) it contains a heretical definition of the Mass; (2) it was composed with the express purpose of making an ecumenical liturgy, pleasing to Protestants, stripped of Catholic truths concerning the priesthood, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Real Presence of Christ in the

Holy Eucharist; (3) it was composed with the help and input of six Protestant ministers, which shows the heretical spirit in which it was conceived and formulated; (4) its authors systematically deleted from its prayers and lessons doctrines which would be offensive to heretics; (5) it teaches, both by its omissions and by its symbolism and gestures, heresies and errors concerning the priesthood, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Furthermore, it is most probably invalid owing to a defect of intention which it causes in him who celebrates it, and owing, at least in the vernacular, to a blasphemous alteration of the words of Christ in the consecration formula.

8. What is wrong with the disciplines which have emanated from Vatican II?

The 1983 Code of Canon Law contains the heresy of Vatican II concerning the Church, mentioned above. It also permits sacrilege to the Blessed Sacrament, by approving of its reception by non-Catholics, which is a mortal sin, and permits *communicatio in sacris*¹ with non-Catholics, which is a mortal sin. In addition, the *Ecumenical Directory* of 1993 permits ecumenical practices which have always been taught by the Church to be mortally sinful.

9. What does all this mean?

It means that Vatican II and its subsequent reforms have given us a *new religion*, a religion which is substantially different from the Roman Catholic Faith founded by Christ. The reformers have substantially altered the three main components of religion: *doctrine, worship, and discipline*. The result is that the reformers are promoting a religion of ecumenism in place of the Roman Catholic religion, which has always taught that it alone is the one, true Faith, and that all other religions are false. The Vatican II religion teaches doctrines which have been condemned by the Church in the past. It has instituted rites and disciplines which are Protestant in nature. As a result, the religion which Catholics find in their local parishes and schools, although in name Catholic, is a new, non-Catholic religion already condemned by the Catholic Church.

10. Could it be that you are merely giving a bad interpretation to Vatican II?

No. The heretical nature of this council is confirmed by: (1) the doctrinal interpretation given to Vatican II by Paul VI and his successors in their decrees, encyclicals, catechisms, etc.; (2) the series of *abominations* perpetrated by John Paul II against the

First Commandment of God, in the form of ecumenical ceremonies which constitute false worship, even to pagan deities in some cases; (3) the alteration of the Sacred Liturgy in such a way that the Catholic Mass has been replaced by a Protestant supper service; (4) the tampering with the matter and form of the sacraments so that many of them, but most notably the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders, labor under doubt or invalidity; (5) the promulgation of disciplines, especially the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the *Ecumenical Directory*, which approve of sacrilege against the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Matrimony, and which demonstrate heresies concerning the unity of the Church as their theoretical basis; (6) the scandalous mockery made of the Sacrament of Matrimony by the granting of annulments for spurious reasons, constituting an abandonment of the sacred doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage; (6) Ratzinger's heretical pronouncements, both under John Paul II and after his own election as Benedict XVI, on the nature and unity of the Church.

11. If what you are saying is true, what does it say about the Vatican II popes?

It says that it is impossible that they be true Catholic popes.

12. Why can they not be true Catholic popes and true Catholic bishops?

They cannot be true Catholic popes because it is impossible that the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, which is Christ's authority, give to the universal Church false doctrines, false liturgical practices, and false disciplines.

13. Why cannot authority of the Roman Catholic Church give to the universal Church false doctrines, false liturgical practices, and false disciplines?

Precisely because it is the authority of Christ. The Pope is assisted by the Holy Ghost in the promulgation of dogma and morals, and in the enactment of liturgical laws and pastoral disciplines. In the same way that it is unimaginable that Christ could promulgate these errors or enact these sinful disciplines, so it is unimaginable that the assistance which He gives to the Church through the Holy Ghost could permit such things. Hence, the fact that the Vatican II popes have done these things is a *certain sign* that they have do not have the authority of Christ.

The teachings of Vatican II and the reforms which proceed from it *are contrary to the Faith and ruinous of our eternal salvation*. But since the Church is both indefectible and infallible, it cannot give to the faithful doctrines, laws, liturgy, and disciplines **which are contrary to the Faith and ruinous of our**

¹ *Communicatio in sacris* is active participation by Catholics in the worship of non-Catholic religions.

eternal salvation. We must therefore conclude that this Council and these reforms do not proceed from the Church, that is, the Holy Ghost, but from an evil influence within the Church. From this it follows that those who have promulgated this evil Council and these evil reforms have not promulgated them with the authority of the Church, which is the authority of Christ. From this we rightfully conclude that their claim to have this authority is false, despite whatever appearance they may have, even despite an apparently valid election to the papacy.

14. Do we have the authority to say that these Vatican II popes are not true popes?

We do not have the authority to legally declare it. But on the other hand, as Catholics, we have the obligation of comparing what is taught by Vatican II with the teaching of the Catholic Church. The virtue of faith demands that we do so, since the faith is supernatural wisdom and consequently demands that everything be in conformity with it. If we did not make this comparison, we would not have the virtue of faith. If we find that the teachings of Vatican II are not in conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Faith, we are **bound** to reject Vatican II, and **bound** to conclude that those who promulgate it do not have the authority of Christ. Otherwise our adherence to the error which is contrary to faith would ruin the virtue in us, and we would become heretics. Similarly, if we would entertain the thought that the Catholic Church were capable of promulgating false doctrines and evil worship and discipline, we would be heretics.

So to privately conclude that Benedict XVI is a heretic, indeed an apostate from the Faith, is not to “judge” the pope in the sense that it is meant by canonists and theologians.

In fact, if we could not even think of the possibility of the pope being a heretic, then why do so many theologians speak about this possibility, and about the consequences of his being a heretic?

15. But why can't we sift what the pope does and says, and accept what is Catholic, and reject what is non-Catholic?

Because if Benedict XVI is the pope, we must obey him. Even to admit the possibility that he can promulgate false doctrines and enact universal disciplines which are evil is itself a heresy against the teaching that the Catholic Church is infallible in these matters. It is inconceivable that, in following the universal teachings of the Church or her universal disciplines, you could be led astray and go to Hell. If this were possible, one would have to conclude that the Roman Catholic Church is not the true Church, but a human institution like any other false church.

Furthermore, to sift the teachings of the Church is to set yourself up as the pope, for your adherence to these teachings would not be based on the authority of the Church, but rather your own “sifting” of these teachings.

16. But if your father tells you to do something wrong, you must disobey him. But he still remains your father.

First of all, being someone’s natural father can never change because it is based on physical generation. But being someone’s spiritual father can change because it is based on a spiritual generation. Hence a pope could resign and no longer be the spiritual father of Catholics. So the analogy does not apply.

But more importantly, this argument, which is frequently used by the Society of Saint Pius X, does not hold water for another reason. If a pope gave to a **particular person** a **particular command** which was evil (e.g., to desecrate a crucifix), the argument would apply. For in such a case the pope would not be engaging the whole practice of the Church, and therefore would not involve the indefectibility of the Church. But if he were to make a **general law** that all Catholics ought to desecrate crucifixes, then the very indefectibility of the Church is at stake. For how could the Church of Christ make such a law? Would it then not be leading all souls to Hell? The fact that Benedict XVI has made general laws which prescribe or even permit evil is a violation of the Church’s indefectibility.

Hence the Society’s argument cannot be applied to the present crisis in the Church.

17. But what if we are not sure if Vatican II is erroneous, and if Benedict XVI is a true pope or not?

In such a doubt you must give the superior the benefit of the doubt. In such a case you would have to embrace all the teachings of Vatican II, the new liturgy, and the new disciplines. You would also be obliged to recognize Benedict XVI as a true Catholic pope.

18. Isn't the question of Benedict's papacy a mere matter of opinion?

Absolutely not. Our eternal salvation depends upon our submission to the Roman Pontiff. Therefore the question of Benedict’s papacy is of **supreme importance**, and we must resolve our consciences about it one way or the other. If we conclude that Vatican II contradicts the teaching of the Church, then we *must* reject Benedict XVI as a true pope. If we conclude that Vatican II is not a substantial alteration of the Catholic Faith, then we *must* accept him as a true pope, and follow what he commands us to do. A Catholic who is indifferent as to whether he is the

pope or not is no Catholic at all. Rather he has the spirit of schism and of repudiation of authority.

In the Great Western Schism, in which there were three claimants to the papal throne, St. Vincent Ferrer condemned those who were indifferent as to who was the true Pope.

19. Were there any parallel cases in history?

The Catholic Patriarch of Constantinople in 428 A.D. espoused the heresy that Our Lady was not the Mother of God. After he preached this from the pulpit, the Catholic people would have nothing to do with him, would not attend his Masses, and said, "We have an Emperor, but no bishop." *And this was before he was officially excommunicated by the Church.* While this case concerns a bishop and not a pope, the principle is the same: the promulgation of heresy is incompatible with the possession of the authority of Christ over the flock. If it was true for this bishop Nestorius, it is *all the more true* for him who has the care of the whole flock.

20. Did any Pope ever warn us about a heretic on the throne of Peter?

Pope Paul IV in 1559, fearful lest a Protestant be elected to the papal throne, decreed that if the person elected the Pope should have deviated from the Catholic Faith or fallen into any heresy, his election shall be considered **null, legally invalid, and void.** He furthermore decreed that such a person must not be considered the pope, even if he took possession of the office, was enthroned, and received the veneration and obedience of all the faithful.

21. What is the *una cum* Mass?

The *una cum* Mass is in one in which the name of Benedict XVI is inserted into the first prayer of the canon.

22. Who offers the *una cum* Mass?

Novus Ordo priests when saying the Novus Ordo or the Indult Mass, priests of the Fraternity of Saint Peter and similar organizations, and the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X.

23. What is wrong with the *una cum* Mass?

The *una cum* Mass is wrong because Benedict XVI is not a true pope. The mentioning of the pope in this part of the Mass is to profess *communion* with him as *head of the Church.*

24. Isn't the priest merely praying for him, as you would for anyone, even your enemies?

Not at all. To mention his name is to state that the Mass is offered in union with him as head of the Church. But as we have seen, he is not the head of the

Church, and it is the duty of Catholics to reject him as such. Hence to mention him in the canon of the Mass is to tell a lie in a serious matter.

If a priest wanted to pray *for* Benedict XVI, he would mention this intention silently in the *Memento of the Living*, which is the second prayer of the canon. But to mention him or anyone else here is not to declare communion with him as head of the Church.

To mention his name in the *Te Igitur* (the first prayer) is not to pray *for* him, but *with* him, *in union with him as head of the Church.*

25. Why is it so bad to mention the name of Benedict XVI in the canon?

It is to say that the offering of the Mass is the act of a public heretic. For we know that Christ is the principal offerer of every Mass. Similarly the pope, since he is the Vicar of Christ, is the principal offerer of the Mass, since the pope has the plenitude of jurisdiction over the whole Church. This means that all of the Church's liturgical actions are under his domain, and that the action of the simple priest in saying Mass is merely the extension of the act of the pope. For this reason, if the pope does not approve of the Mass which a priest says, it is not a Catholic Mass, but a schismatic Mass. This is the case of the Greek Orthodox.

Therefore if the Mass is offered in union with a false head of the Church, it is not offered in union with the true head of the Church, which in this case is Christ Himself.

26. What is necessary in order that a Mass be considered a Catholic Mass?

In order that a Mass be Catholic it must (1) contain rites and ceremonies which express the integral Catholic doctrine, and contain no error; (2) it must be offered in union with the true Roman Pontiff, and with his approval and the approval of the bishop of the diocese.

Therefore the Novus Ordo is not a Catholic Mass for it fails to meet the first criterion. The traditional Latin Mass meets the first criterion, but would fail to meet the second if it were offered in union with a false pope. The Mass of the Greek Orthodox is valid and is Catholic in its content, since it is the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, but fails to be Catholic because it is offered in union with a schismatic patriarch. It is a schismatic Mass.

Theologians explain it in this way: in order for a Mass to be Catholic, the priest offering it must be acting **in the person of the Church.** In order to act in the person of the Church, the priest must be an authorized representative of the Catholic Church. Now if Benedict XVI is a false pope, which we have shown, then it is clearly impossible that he be an authorized

representative of the Catholic Church. To the contrary, he offers his Mass as a **false** representative, with a **false** priesthood, that is, he offers it with no right to represent the Church before God. Hence to offer the Mass **in union with** — *una cum* — this false priesthood of Benedict XVI is to place one's own Mass in the same category as his.

27. **Is the *una cum* Mass, then, a schismatic Mass?**

Yes. Because no matter which way you slice it, it is schismatic. Either Benedict XVI is the Pope or he is not. If he is, then the *una cum* Mass is schismatic, since it is said outside of and against his authority. It is **altar against altar**. If he is not the pope, then the *una cum* Mass is also schismatic, since it is offered outside the Church, in union with a false pope.²

In other words, either the altar of the traditional priest is the true altar of God, or Benedict XVI's altar is the true altar of God. Because the traditional priest erects his altar and carries on his apostolate **against** the apostolate of Novus Ordo — which is that of Benedict XVI — it is obvious that both altars cannot be at the same time legitimate Catholic altars, and that both apostolates cannot be at the same time true Catholic apostolates. Christ could not authorize both the Novus Ordo altar and the traditional altar. One is legitimate and one is illegitimate.

Because we say that our altar is legitimate, we are logically bound to say that the altar of the Novus Ordo, and therefore its priesthood and apostolate, are illegitimate.

But if the priest unites himself to the illegitimate altar, priesthood, and apostolate of Benedict XVI and the Novus Ordo, he makes his own altar, priesthood, and apostolate illegitimate.

28. **Is it wrong to attend the *una cum* Mass?**

Yes. It is wrong for many reasons: (1) it is to lie in the Holy Mass, since it asserts that Benedict XVI is the head of the Church even though he is not; (2) it is to declare communion with the heretics in the supreme act of worship; (3) it is to unite the action of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with a heretic and false pope, as the principal offerer; (4) it is to lump Benedict XVI, who has publicly manifested his adherence to heresy and apostasy, in with "all true believers who cherish the Catholic and Apostolic Faith;" (5) it is to sully the most sacred action of the Mass with the name of a heretic and apostate.

It is impossible to conceive that assistance at such a Mass could be pleasing to God.

29. **Is it seriously wrong to attend the *una cum* Mass?**

Yes, because (1) falsehood in religious matters is grave matter; (2) if Benedict XVI is a false pope, it is clearly schismatic to offer the Mass in union with him; (3) it is certainly seriously wrong to declare that Benedict XVI, a public heretic and false pope is in communion with "all true believers who cherish the Catholic and Apostolic Faith."

30. **Are you claiming, then, that all the people who go to the *una cum* Mass are in mortal sin?**

No, because in nearly all cases they are not aware of the sinful nature of it. Nonetheless it is **objectively** a mortal sin, and those who are aware of the principles which I have explained here are committing mortal sins when they attend these Masses.

31. **Don't you think that your position is extreme?**

Extreme or not, it is the truth. It boils down to a single question: **Is it pleasing to God to declare ourselves in communion with Benedict XVI as pope, and with the modernist hierarchy?** There is a simple yes or no answer to this question.

If the answer to that question is "yes," then there is a single thing to do: to submit to Benedict XVI and the modernist hierarchy, to accept the Vatican II reforms, and to abandon the traditional movement. For if Benedict XVI is the head of the Church, and if the modernist hierarchy with him rules the Church, then we have the assurance from Christ that their doctrines are sound and their laws are conducive to heaven.

If the answer to that question is "no," then the obvious conclusion is what I am telling you here: that it is a sin, a serious sin, to declare that you are in communion with them, especially in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In fact, if the answer is "yes," our salvation would depend on our submission to them. But if the answer is "no," then our salvation would depend on our **refusal** to submit to them.

Hence the question of *una cum* boils down to a profession of faith.

32. **But what if you have no other Mass to go to?**

It would not change the immorality of the *una cum* Mass. Our inconvenience does not make good what is objectively evil. For example, Catholics in Greece, even before Vatican II, had great difficulty in finding a true Catholic Mass offered in union with the pope, but very easily found schismatic Masses, **which did not differ in any way from the Catholic Mass, except in that they were offered in union with the schismatics, and not in union with the true pope.** Yet they could not attend these schismatic Masses.

² See appendix.

If you have only an *una cum* Mass to go to, it would be better to stay home and say your Rosary.

33. What if the priest means well, that is, does not intend to be schismatic?

The fact that he “means well” underscores the fact that what he is doing is objectively wrong. And if **we** know that it is objectively wrong, we cannot do it. If he means well, i.e., he has a good intention and does not know that he is doing wrong, then he commits no personal sin. But objectively it is a sinful act.

34. What if we attend the *una cum* Mass, but do not agree with it internally?

It is still wrong, since you are consenting to make your central act of worship something which is offered in union with a false pope and a public heretic. Faith is what unites you to Christ as head of the Church, and heresy is what divides you from Him. If you are connected to heretics in your act of worship, you are divided from Christ.

Your active participation in the *una cum* Mass is a statement of consent to it.

35. Are the Masses offered by the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X an option for us?

No. Their Mass is an *una cum* Mass, and although they certainly “mean well,” their Mass nonetheless remains in union with a public heretic and false pope, and cannot be attended.

The Society of Saint Pius X does not offer a Catholic solution, since on the one hand they recognize Benedict XVI as a true Catholic pope, but on the other hand they completely ignore him. In this they are like the Jansenists, Gallicans, Feeneyites and other sects who have acted similarly. If Benedict XVI **is** the Pope, then he **must** be obeyed. His teachings and his disciplines **must** be accepted. It is hypocritical to accept his authority but to obey him in virtually nothing.

The only Catholic solution is to reject Vatican II and its changes as **contrary to the previous teaching of the Catholic Church**, and to reject as non-Catholic and as non-popes those who have given us these poisonous changes. Only in this way does the Catholic preserve both the indefectibility of the Catholic Church and the identity of faith, discipline, and worship with its glorious past. The only Catholic solution to the intruding heretic who has penetrated into an apparent position of authority is to declare him *anathema*.

36. What if the priest is privately not *una cum*, as is the case with many priests of the Society of Saint Pius X?

It is true that many priests of the Society of Saint Pius X hold the position which I have expounded here, but are unwilling to quit that group.

But their secret adherence to our position does not alleviate the problem. For they do not publicly declare their position, and therefore are **publicly** presumed to profess the position of the Society to which they belong. Think of a Greek Orthodox priest who **secretly** was submitted to the pope but who continued to function in an organization which repudiated the pope. One could not attend his Mass for the same reason, for it would be a public adherence to the Greek Orthodox position. The same is true for the secret sedevacantists of the Society of Saint Pius X.

Furthermore, is it not a hypocrisy to publicly profess communion with Benedict XVI, but to secretly repudiate him? Could God be pleased with such a hypocrisy? “*But let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: and that which is over and above these is of evil.*” (Matthew 5: 37) “*But let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: that you may not fall under judgement.*” (James 5: 12)

37. Are you not aware that many traditional priests, who themselves are not *una cum*, think that it is all right to attend these Masses?

Yes, I am aware of this fact, but the only reasons I have heard them give is either (1) that the people have no other place to go; (2) that the priest means well; (3) that the people do not know that the Mass is *una cum*. But obviously none of these reasons really addresses the issue. I have never heard them give a reason why the *una cum* Mass would not be displeasing to God

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.

(Galatians I:8)

Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath the Father and the Son. If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works. (II John: I: 9-11)

Appendix
**The Problem of the
Una Cum Traditional Mass**

In my article entitled “Communion” (*Sacerdotium V*), I spoke about the problem of validly ordained priests saying Masses which were liturgically Catholic but outside the Catholic Church. This is the case of the Greek schismatics, Old Catholics (in some cases valid), even High Church Anglicans who have gotten themselves validly ordained in one way or another.

I pointed out, by citing authorities on the matter, that for **validity**, it is necessary that the minister be acting **in the person of Christ** at the altar, but for the catholicity of the Mass, he must at the same time be acting **in the person of the Church**. Saint Thomas Aquinas explains the distinction:

And because the consecration of the Eucharist is an act which flows from the power of orders, those who are separated from the Church through heresy or schism or excommunication, can indeed consecrate the Eucharist which, when consecrated by them, contains the true body and blood of Christ: they nevertheless do not do this rightly, but rather sin when they do it. They therefore do not receive the fruit of the sacrifice, which is a spiritual sacrifice.

The priest at Mass indeed speaks in the prayers in the person of the Church, in whose unity he remains; but in consecrating the sacrament he speaks as in the person of Christ, Whose place he holds by the power of orders. Consequently if a priest is separated from the unity of the Church celebrates Mass, not having lost the power of Order, he consecrates Christ’s true body and blood; but because he is severed from the unity of the Church, his prayers have no efficacy.³

Some saints and popes had some stronger words about schismatic Masses:

Pope Pelagius I: One body of Christ establishes the fact that there is one Church. An altar which is divided from the unity [of the Church] cannot gather together the true body of Christ.⁴

Saint Cyprian: The schismatic dares to set up an altar and to profane the truth of the divine Victim by means of false sacrifices.⁵ (He also wanted returning schismatic priests to be reduced to the lay state, referring to them as “those who against the unique and divine altar attempted to offer outside [of the Church] sacrilegious and false sacrifices”)⁶

Saint Augustine: Outside of the Catholic Church the true sacrifice cannot be found.⁷

St. Leo the Great: Elsewhere [that is, outside the Church] there is neither an approved priesthood nor true sacrifices.⁸

Saint Jerome: God hates the sacrifices of these [i.e., heretics] and pushes them away from Himself, and whenever they come together in the name of the Lord, He abhors their stench, and holds His nose...⁹

Fr. Cappello explains this distinction clearly:

Priests who are cut off from the Church, although they validly sacrifice **in the name of Christ**, nevertheless do not offer the sacrifice **as ministers of the Church nor in the person of the Church**. For the priest has the power to pray, to intercede and to offer in the name of the Church by virtue of his commission from the Church, and with regard to this, the Church can deprive the priest who is cut off from sacrificing in its name.¹⁰

From these texts it is clear that the validity of the Mass is not sufficient that it be a *Catholic* Mass, but rather another very important factor is necessary: *the fact that the priest act in the person of the Church, that is, that he be commissioned by the Church to pray in its name.*

This factor creates a terrible problem for the *una cum* traditional Mass. If the priest is saying that Benedict XVI is the Pope, and that he is in communion with him, he is necessarily saying that the Church of which Benedict XVI is the head is the Roman Catholic Church. In order that the Mass which the priest is saying, therefore, be deemed a **Catholic** Mass, it is necessary that the priest be commissioned by Benedict XVI to say the Mass **in the person of the Church**. Without this commission, without this authorization from him who has the care of Christ’s whole flock, from him who has the commission from Christ to teach, rule, and to sanctify, the Mass becomes a non-Catholic Mass. The Catholic priest must be acting as the agent of his bishop, who has the care of the diocesan flock, who, in turn, must be acting as an agent of the Pope who has care of the whole flock. The Pope, in turn, must be acting as an agent of Christ, of whom he is the Vicar. This is the very constitution of the Catholic Church; it is this tight link of agency and

³IIIa q. 82 a. 7, corpus & ad 3um.

⁴*Ep. ad Joan. Patr.*, P.L. 69, 412.

⁵*De Unitate Ecclesie*, c. 17. P.L. 4, 513.

⁶*Ep.* 72, c. 2. P.L. 3, 1048-1049.

⁷cf. PROSPERUM AQUITANUM, *Sent.*, sent. 15 P.L. 51, 430.

⁸*Ep. LXXX Ad Anatolium*, cap. 2.

⁹*In Amos*, V: 22, P.L. 25, 1033-1034.

¹⁰CAPPELLO, FELIX M. S. I., *Tractatus Canonico-moralis de Sacramentis*, (Turin: Marietti), 1962, I, p. 462.

authority which makes the Church Catholic. If the priest, therefore, is acting without the authorization of the diocesan bishop, he is then acting without the authorization of the Pope, and his Mass and sacraments are cut off from both Christ and His Church. His Mass is not Catholic, nor are his sacraments, for he is not acting **in the person of the Church**.

How does the traditional priest today act **in the person of the Church**, when there is no authority to authorize him to say Mass?

He does so by carrying on the mission of the Catholic Church, which is the sanctification of souls. Thus it is perfectly legitimate and necessary for priests to say Mass, preach, and distribute the sacraments, as they are authorized by the Church to do so through the principle of *epikeia*. This principle, however, cannot possibly be invoked if the superior is present; one cannot invoke *epikeia* against a present, acting, and ruling superior. It simply does not make sense, since *epikeia* is essentially an estimation of the mind of the lawmaker in his absence.¹¹

But the *una cum* Mass puts the lawmaker in Rome, and his personal representative in the local chancery, and thus destroys the entire moral underpinning of the extraordinary apostolates which are carried on by traditional priests.

Thus the *una cum* Mass ends up as an objectively schismatic Mass no matter how you slice it:

(a) If, for the sake of argument, Benedict XVI were the Pope, the unauthorized (i.e., non-indult) traditional Mass is schismatic, since it is not said **in the person of the Church**.

(b) If Benedict XVI is not the Pope, then the *una cum* Mass is schismatic since it is said in union with, under the auspices of, a false pope and a false church.

In neither case does the priest have any business saying it.

The only situation in which it would be licit to carry on an extensive, habitual, “unauthorized” apostolate is in a case similar to our own, in which there is a long-term absence of authority. The authorization for saying Mass, preaching, and administering the sacraments would then be *per modum actus*, that is, in the individual acts themselves, and would not be a habitual authority. The authorization would be from the Church itself (*Ecclesia supplet*, that is, the Church supplies jurisdiction in the absence of the competent authority).

The Society of Saint Pius X is excommunicated by the person they say is the Vicar of Christ on earth. They cannot invoke against his supposed authority the very authority of the Church (that is, they can-

not invoke the principle of *Ecclesia supplet*), since he supposedly possesses the fullness of the authority of the Church. To do so is schismatic, and that is exactly what Benedict XVI considers the Society of Saint Pius X to be — schismatic.

¹¹ “*Epikēia non potest licite adhiberi: (a) Si superior, qui dispensationem legis concedere valet, facile adiri queat.*” [Translation: *Epikēia cannot be licitly used: (a) if the superior, who is able to grant the dispensation of the law, can be easily approached.*] Prümmer, *Manuale Theologiæ Moralis* I, no. 231 ff. q.v.