

A COMPASS FOR CATHOLICS



How to
KEEP THE FAITH
in
TIME OF CHURCH CRISIS

By Robert T. Hart

With an added Appendix containing:

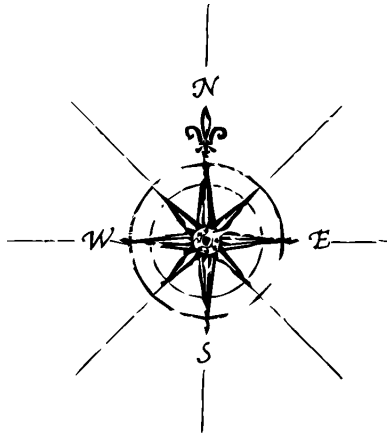
“Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi”

A treatise on the importance of the Traditional Latin Mass
as a safeguard to orthodoxy.

A COMPASS FOR CATHOLICS

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First Edition (Version 1.2)

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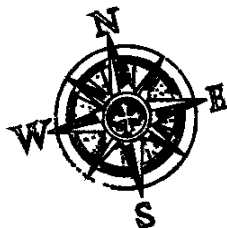
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A COMPASS FOR CATHOLICS

How to Keep the Faith in Time of Church Crisis

That there is presently a crisis in the Church should not be news to any serious Catholic. For, since the time of the Second Vatican Council, there has been an extreme and virtually worldwide decline in the number of priests, seminarians and vocations to religious life. Furthermore, in the Western World, the majority of laity no longer adhere to Church teaching on faith and morals because they receive faulty instruction, are left in ignorance, or worse, knowingly dissent. Finally, polls have shown that in the United States six-in-ten Catholics no longer believe the Church's teaching on the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.¹

Shortly after the Council, Pope Paul VI saw the bad fruits and decried that the Council's *"opening to the world has produced a veritable invasion of the Church by worldly thinking"* (speech of Nov. 23, 1973). He also lamented: *"The Church is in a disturbed period of...self-demolition"* (speech of Dec. 7, 1968). Later, in a book published in the year 2000, the well-known American Jesuit, Fr. John Hardon (RIP), continued the same theme: *"Catholicism is in the throes of the worst crisis in its entire history."*² Finally, as recently as 2010, Msgr. Guido Pozzo, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission, *Ecclesia Dei*, again reconfirmed the analysis of Pope Paul: *"Unfortunately, the effects as enumerated by Paul VI have not disappeared. A foreign way of thinking has entered the Catholic world, stirring up confusion, seducing many souls, and disorienting the faithful"* (speech of July 2, 2010). The crisis, therefore, is obviously grave, and it continues.

What an unspeakable tragedy it would be then, if — because of the errors that predominate in this crisis — you or anyone else lost the Catholic Faith while yet remaining a practicing Catholic. Therefore, it is because this crisis poses such a great danger to the Faith, and therefore to the salvation of souls, that this booklet on how to preserve the Faith during such a crisis has been composed.

May it be a light in the present darkness and a compass to point out the safe way to salvation.

1. The Need to Preserve the Catholic Faith Whole and Inviolable

To begin, it is important to recall the need to adhere to the Catholic Faith in its *entirety*. For, as the Church teaches, no one can save his immortal soul without assenting to the entire Deposit of Faith, that is, to all the divinely revealed truths taught by the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIII made this clear in his encyclical *Satis Cognitum*:

*Such is the nature of faith that nothing can be more absurd than to accept some things and to reject others. ... He who dissents even in one point from divinely revealed truth, absolutely rejects all faith, since he thereby refuses to honor God as the supreme truth and the formal motive of faith. ... They, who take from Christian doctrine what they please, depend on their own judgments, not on faith.*³

Furthermore, the Athanasian Creed proclaims:

Whosoever wishes to be saved, needs above all to hold the Catholic Faith; unless each one preserves this Faith whole and inviolate, he will without a doubt perish eternally.

Enemies Within

Seeing the strict necessity of complete fidelity to the Deposit of Faith, it is important to know how to maintain such fidelity. For, in this time of crisis, there is much confusion concerning the true doctrine of the Church. This confusion originates, not primarily from enemies outside the Church, but from those within. As you will see, today's crisis originates from ecclesiastical authority contradicting the traditional teaching and practices of the Church. Sr. Lucia, the renowned seer of Fatima,

complained at times in her personal letters of the failure of churchmen during the present crisis:

...It is painful to see such a great disorientation and in so many persons who occupy places of responsibility...! For our part we must, as far as is possible for us, try to make reparation through an ever more intimate union with the Lord; and identify ourselves with Him that He may be in us the Light of the world plunged in darkness of error, immorality and pride.... It is because the devil has succeeded in infiltrating evil under the cover of good and the blind are beginning to guide others, as the Lord tells us in His Gospel, and souls are letting themselves be deceived And the worst is that he has succeeded in leading into error and deceiving souls having a heavy responsibility through the places they occupy...! They are blind men guiding other blind men...⁴

Therefore, it should be clear, in this time of great crisis, in this time of confusion, Catholics who wish to save their souls must take great care so as not to lose their Faith. It is vital for salvation.

2. Know and Adhere to the Deposit of Faith

To maintain orthodoxy, to preserve the Faith whole and entire, it is necessary to know and adhere to the Deposit of Faith. As mentioned above, the Deposit of Faith consists in the divinely revealed truths or *dogmas* of our holy religion. These dogmas always concern matters of faith (what we must believe) or morals (how we must act). We refer to them as *divinely revealed* because it is God Himself who has made them known to us. Where do we find these truths? They are found in the two sources of revelation: Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Anyone who possesses the Faith believes *all* the truths contained in the Deposit of Faith. Those he is aware of he believes explicitly, while those he is unaware of, he believes implicitly — being ready to assent to them once they are made known to him. This means, if a Catholic was ignorant of the Church's dogma regarding Purgatory, as soon as

he learned of it, he would immediately assent to it simply because it is contained in the Deposit of Faith.

In order to have a basic understanding of these truths of our religion it is important to study the Faith. Otherwise, it is possible to be easily led astray by false doctrines, which arguably abound more in our times than any other. And, false doctrines lead souls to eternal damnation.* For instance, today there is a dangerous tendency to believe that while the Catholic Church is the best means of salvation, it is not the only means; other religions are also a means. This is a dangerous, false doctrine that opens the path to eternal damnation for souls since it leads them to be indifferent about which religion they adhere to. But those who know the Faith, know the divinely revealed truth that there is only one religion in which souls can be saved, and that it is the Catholic religion. For the infallible dogma of the Church on this point declares: *“There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved.”*^{† 5}

* St. Paul warns of the danger of any “gospel” other than the true Gospel (infallibly set forth in the Deposit of Faith): *“I wonder that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another, only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. 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 (Gal. 1:6-8). He warns those who do not love true doctrine that they are in grave danger of perishing “because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Therefore God shall send them the operation of error, to believe lying: That all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but have consented to iniquity” (2. Thess 2:10-11).*

[†] To be saved one must belong to the Catholic Church in *actual fact*, or where circumstances make this impossible, one must be joined to her *by desire*. Thus, a catechumen who dies before being baptized may be saved — if he has the proper interior dispositions. When the *“operating power of divine light and grace”* (Pope Pius IX, *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*, 1863) moves the soul (who cooperates) to make the necessary supernatural acts of contrition, Faith, and Charity, such a soul can be saved.

The Magisterium Teaches Infallibly in Two Ways

As stated above, the truths of the Deposit of Faith are all found in Scripture and Tradition. Yet, to know this is not sufficient. For Scripture and Tradition are easily misinterpreted. The Bible itself teaches that Scripture contains “*certain things hard to be understood...which the unlearned and unstable wrest... to their own destruction*” (2 Pet. 3:16). The same is true of Tradition. Therefore, so that the Faithful might know with absolute certainty the divinely revealed truths (dogmas), Our Lord gave the Catholic Church the ability to infallibly proclaim them. This infallible teaching authority of the Church is called the *Magisterium*. The Magisterium of the Church infallibly teaches us the dogmas of the Faith in two ways: (1) through her *Extraordinary Magisterium* and, (2) through her *Ordinary Universal Magisterium*.

The dogmas taught by the Extraordinary Magisterium are those given to us through the solemn pronouncements of a Pope, or of a Council (ratified by a Pope). An example of a dogma taught by the Extraordinary Magisterium is that of the Immaculate Conception, which Blessed Pope Pius IX solemnly defined in 1854. Another example is found in the Council of Trent’s solemn proclamation of the dogma that the sin of Adam (original sin) “*is taken away*” only by “*the merit of the one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in his own blood.*”

Similarly, at times, the Extraordinary Magisterium also infallibly declares what is *outside the Faith*. This it does in the form of condemned propositions. Many examples of condemned propositions are found in Bl. Pope Pius IX’s Syllabus of Errors of 1864. For instance, proposition No. 55 condemns the statement: “*The Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church.*”*

* The Church’s teaching on the proper order for relations between Church and State can be found in such encyclicals as *Immortale Dei*, *Quanta Cura* and *Quas Primas* (available for downloading at papalencyclicals.net).

The dogmas taught by the Ordinary Universal Magisterium consist of those revealed truths which, though not solemnly defined by the Extraordinary Magisterium, nevertheless, have been proclaimed at all times and in all places (or “*always and everywhere*” as it is often put) throughout the Universal Church. It is important to understand that the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church does not always speak infallibly. Only the Ordinary *Universal* Magisterium carries the guarantee of infallibility. All other teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium — statements of Popes, Councils and bishops — come from what is called the *Authentic Magisterium*, and do not engage the Church’s infallibility.

An example of a dogma taught by the Ordinary Universal Magisterium is the Church’s teaching on the immorality of contraception. Pope Paul VI upheld this traditional teaching in his 1968 Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in which he reiterated that artificial contraception is, in all cases, gravely sinful. Since the manner in which he taught this truth did not engage the Extraordinary Magisterium, a number of modernist priests and prelates dissented from the teaching, saying it was not an infallible doctrine — but they were wrong. While it is true that the manner in which *Humanae Vitae* expounds this doctrine does not engage the Extraordinary Magisterium and thus the document cannot be said to be infallible *in itself*, nevertheless, the doctrine is an infallible dogma of the Catholic Church. For, since it has been taught *always and everywhere* — that is, it has been taught consistently throughout the universal Church from the time of the Apostles until now — it is part of the Ordinary Universal Magisterium. Thus, it is infallible, just as His Eminence, Giuseppe Cardinal Siri has explained:

This Encyclical [Humanae Vitae] recapitulated the ancient teaching and the habitual teaching of today. This means that we can say that the conditions for the Ordinary irreformable [Universal] Magisterium were met.⁶

Divine and Catholic Faith

All these infallible dogmas, we believe with *divine* and *Catholic* Faith. We believe them with *divine* Faith because they have been revealed by God Who cannot lie. We believe them with *Catholic* Faith because the authority of the Church proposes them to us infallibly as divinely revealed. The First Vatican Council's "Dogmatic Constitution Concerning the Catholic Faith" states:

"[B]y divine and Catholic faith everything must be believed that is contained in the written word of God or in Tradition, and that is proposed by the Church as a divinely revealed object of belief either in a solemn decree or in Her ordinary, universal teaching."

Adhere to the Deposit of the Faith

These truths, the dogmas of the Faith, every Catholic is required to adhere to in order to save his soul. This is the Rule of Faith. Any teaching contrary to the Rule of Faith, that is, contrary to the dogmas contained in the Deposit of Faith, must then necessarily be rejected, for it is heretical. It does not matter who proposes such a heretical teaching, it must be rejected in order to keep the Faith and be saved. Here it is good to remember that there have been many Catholics in Church history that suffered great hardships and even underwent torture and martyrdom rather than to deny one truth of the Faith and lose their souls. Every Catholic is required to do the same should circumstances call for it. This is good reason for frequently meditating on Our Lord's Passion. For, those who do so, and imbibe its spirit, will acquire such a love for their suffering Saviour that they will consider it a tremendous honor to suffer something for Him, in their loyalty to the Faith.

The Great Arian Crisis

One example from Church history of heroic fidelity to the Deposit of Faith is found in the great Arian crisis of the fourth

century. According to the famous English convert, Cardinal John Henry Newman, it was, ironically, only *after* the Council of Nicaea had definitively condemned Arianism that the heresy reached its climax. For it was then that a full eighty percent of the Church’s bishops fell into this error, and though infected with the false doctrine of the Arians, continued reigning in their respective dioceses.* Even Pope Liberius contributed to the crisis when, after many years of exile and confinement, we are told that he yielded to pressure and signed an ambiguous creed that tended to favor the heresy. He also excommunicated St. Athanasius, the renowned champion of orthodoxy during this crisis.† In the end, as Cardinal Newman reports, it was the laity rather than the hierarchy, who kept the Faith, and thus were the instrument used by God to save the Church:

There was the temporary suspense of the function of Ecclesia Docens‡ as about 80 percent of the bishops fell into heresy. The body of bishops failed in their confession of the faith... The episcopate, whose action was so prompt and concordant at [the Council of] Nicaea on the rise of Arianism, did not, as a class or order of men, play a good part in the troubles consequent upon the Council; and the laity did. The Catholic people, in the length and breadth of Christendom, were the obstinate champions of Catholic truth, and the bishops were not.§ 7

* One historian, Fr. William A. Jurgens, in Vol. 2 of his work The Faith of the Early Church Fathers, estimates that at one point during this crisis 97-99% of the bishops were infected with this heresy (Cited in True or False Pope, p. 52 – See Endnote 7).

† While there are some who argue in defense of Liberius’s fidelity, St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, St. Hilary and Sozoman all testify that for a time he fell from orthodoxy (see Addis and Arnold’s Catholic Dictionary, pp. 515-7. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884).

‡ *Ecclesia Docens*: literally, “the teaching Church,” meaning, the hierarchy.

§ Newman further describes the situation, thus: “*The body of bishops failed in their confession of the Faith.... They spoke variously, one against another; there was nothing, after Nicaea, of firm, unvarying, consistent testimony, for*

So, how is it that those of the laity who remained faithful during this calamity retained their Catholic Faith? It was clearly not by following their misguided prelates who did not fight for the true doctrine of the Church. Instead, as Cardinal Newman relates, during this terrible crisis, those who remained faithful did so by adhering to the *“tradition of the Apostles.”* In adhering to the true doctrine, they necessarily had to resist the false and fatal teaching of the majority of the ecclesiastical authorities and were greatly persecuted by them for this. To this, St. Basil bears witness: *“Only one offense is now vigorously punished, an accurate observance of our fathers’ traditions.”*⁸ To avoid being contaminated with the heresy, they refused to attend the Masses of those infected with Arianism. St. Basil reports: *“...the people have left their houses of prayer, and assembled in the deserts.”*⁸ Because of this they came to be known *“by the derogatory term of ‘country Christian.’”*⁹ Yet, they retained their Faith inviolate and saved their souls. And, by keeping the Faith, they also greatly assisted the Church in recovering from this terrible crisis.

3. The Church’s Teaching on Obedience

Assent of Faith vs. Religious Assent

This holy example of stubborn adherence to the traditional teaching of the Faith while resisting the authorities in error remains a model for Catholics in every age who must live through similar trying circumstances. The vital lesson to be learned here is that though obedience to the Church hierarchy is of great importance (for Our Lord structured his Church to function by this obedience), adherence to the Deposit of the Faith is of still greater importance.

nearly sixty years. There were untrustworthy Councils, unfaithful bishops: there was weakness, fear of consequences, misguidance, delusion, hallucination, endless, hopeless, extending into nearly every corner of the Catholic Church. The comparatively few who remained faithful were discredited and driven into exile; the rest were either deceivers or deceived.”
(John Henry Newman, “On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine,” See endnote 10)

If ever there is a conflict between the two, dear soul, you must choose to adhere to the Deposit of Faith. Here is the reason why:

Catholics are bound under pain of mortal sin to adhere to the revealed truths of the Deposit with the *assent of faith*. The assent of faith means that we are required to believe these truths *because* God who cannot deceive has revealed them, and the Church has infallibly proclaimed them. Thus, our motive for belief is *Divine and Catholic Faith*. Other teachings that come to us from established Church authority but are not proposed infallibly (*i.e.* from the Authentic Magisterium) require a lesser adherence called *religious assent*. Religious assent is not motivated by the theological virtue of Faith, but only by the lesser, moral virtue of obedience — obedience to religious authority. The moral virtue of obedience, being subservient to the theological virtue of Faith, must give way to it if ever there is a conflict between the two.

Ordinarily, Catholics are expected to give this religious assent to all the teachings of the Authentic Magisterium. However, since such teachings come from a non-infallible authority, it is possible that they may fail. Therefore, if a teaching coming from any non-infallible source in the Church (*i.e.* the Authentic Magisterium) is contrary to a truth contained in the Deposit of Faith (*i.e.* the Extraordinary Magisterium or the Ordinary Universal Magisterium), a Catholic, if he wishes to remain faithful, must disregard that non-infallible teaching, choosing instead to adhere to the guaranteed truth of the Deposit.

Here it is important for you to understand that this means that there exists the possibility, not only for priests, bishops and cardinals to utter teachings harmful to the Church and even contrary to the truths contained in the Deposit of Faith, but also for synods, Councils and Popes to do so when they are not speaking infallibly. This is clearly what happened during the Arian crisis. Newman explains “*that in that time of immense confusion*”:

...that the body of the episcopate was unfaithful to its commission, while the body of the laity was faithful to its

*baptism; that at one time the Pope, at other times the patriarchal, metropolitan, and other great sees, at other times general councils, said what they should not have said, or did what obscured and compromised revealed truth...*¹⁰

Limited Infallibility of Popes and Councils

Perhaps you are surprised to learn that even Councils and Popes can harm the Church by their statements and decrees; nevertheless, it is really so. For, not every teaching coming from these sources is an infallible statement of the Church. In most of their statements, they engage only the Authentic Magisterium, which can fail. As the reputable twentieth century theologian, Msgr. Gerard Van Noort explains:

*The Church's rulers are infallible not in any and every exercise of their teaching power; but only when, using all the fullness of their authority, they clearly intend to bind everyone to absolute assent or, as common parlance puts it, when they "define" something in matters pertaining to the Christian religion.*¹¹

This means, as another twentieth century theologian, Fr. Nicolas Jung, explains in his classic book, Le Magistère de L'Église:

*The Christian is required to give the assent of faith to all the doctrinal and moral truths defined by the Church's Magisterium. He is not required to give the same assent to teaching imparted by the sovereign pontiff that is not imposed on the whole Christian body as a dogma of faith. In this case it suffices to give that inner and religious assent which we give to legitimate ecclesiastical authority. This is not an absolute assent, because such decrees are not infallible, but only a prudential and conditional assent, since in questions of faith and morals there is presumption in favor of one's superior... Such prudential assent does not eliminate the possibility of submitting the doctrine to a further examination, if that seems required by the gravity of the question.*¹²

Unanimous Teaching of Approved Theologians

The teachings given here are not simply the opinions of contemporary clerics with theological degrees. They are based, rather, on the unanimous teaching of the Church's approved theologians. For instance, the Church's eminent fifteenth century theologian, Juan de Torquemada, once explained: "...the Pope can err at times, and command things which ought not be done," and thus, "we are not to be simply obedient to him in all things."¹³ Therefore, he stated:

Were the Pope to command anything against Holy Scriptures, or the articles of faith, or the truth of the sacraments, or the commands of the natural or divine law, he ought not to be obeyed, but in such commands he is to be disregarded.

Torquemada also reminded his readers of the teaching of Pope Innocent III:

*It is necessary to obey a Pope in all things as long as he does not go against the universal customs of the Church, but should he go against the universal customs of the Church, he need not be followed.*¹⁴

The renowned sixteenth century theologian, Francisco Suarez taught similarly:

*If [a Pope] gives an order contrary to right customs, he should not be obeyed; if he attempts to do something manifestly opposed to justice and the common good, it will be lawful to resist him....*¹⁵

Finally, we find that St. Robert Bellarmine, a Doctor of the Church, agrees with Torquemada and Suarez:*

* Cardinal Cajetan also agrees: "Therefore, you must resist, to his face, a pope who is openly tearing the Church apart..." (Cited in True or False Pope, p. 632 – See Endnote 7).

*Just as it is licit to resist the Pontiff that aggresses the body, it is also licit to resist the one who aggresses souls or who disturbs the civil order, or, above all, who attempts to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by preventing his will from being executed; it is not licit, however, to judge, punish or depose him, since these acts are proper to a superior.*¹⁶*

Licit to Resist, Not to Depose

It is important to understand from this that, while it can be licit to resist the Pope, it is not licit to depose him or to no longer recognize his office. This means that no Catholic has the right to *formally* separate himself from him and say: I no longer recognize him as the Pope. Even though the Pope does harm to the Church and there is need to oppose his teaching or orders, Catholics are still required to recognize him as Pope and his God-given authority over the Church. They must act similarly to a good child who resists his father's command to lie or steal, yet still continues to recognize him as his father and acknowledge his position as head of the family. The same, of course, is true of the other organs of ecclesiastical authority: if we must resist them, we must also continue to recognize their lawful place in office. For, only one with higher power and with the proper jurisdiction can remove such authorities from their positions.

4. Examples of Harm Done by Ecclesiastical Authority

Pope Zosimus Corrected by St. Augustine

One excellent historical example of a Pope erring and being licitly resisted is found in Pope Zosimus whom St. Augustine

* St. Robert Bellarmine wrote these words in defending the Catholic Faith from Protestants who contended that the Pope is an absolute despot who could never be resisted for any reason whatsoever.

publicly resisted. Pope Zosimus made the mistake of recognizing as orthodox the heretical statements of Pelagius that had been condemned by Pope Innocent I and the two Councils of Carthage. In a sermon of September 417, St. Augustine publicly resisted Zosimus's attempt let loose again the heresy of Pelagius, saying that Pope Innocent had already definitively condemned the teaching of Pelagius as heretical; therefore, there could be no further discussion. It is from this famous sermon of St. Augustine that the ancient axiom: *Roma locuta, causa finite* ("Rome has spoken, the cause is finished") was born. Here we find that St. Augustine used adherence to the infallible Extraordinary Magisterium of Pope Innocent to correct the fallible Authentic Magisterium of Pope Zosimus, which was in error.

The Error of Pope John XXII

Another excellent historical example of such licit resistance to a Pope is found in the 14th century. During his reign, Pope John XXII gave a series of sermons in which he proclaimed that the Beatific Vision of the Blessed and the punishment of the damned begin only after the General Judgment at the end of the world. This caused quite a commotion in the Church since the traditional teaching — taught always and everywhere — had always held that the fully purified souls of the just immediately enjoy the Beatific Vision, while those who are lost are sent to Hell immediately after their particular judgment at the moment of death. Faithful Catholics of the time, realizing that the Pope's teaching contradicted the traditional doctrine of the Church, resisted.* Most notably, the theologians at the University of Paris publicly opposed the Pope, and asked him to correct his error. In the end,

* The Extraordinary Magisterium had not at that time formally defined this dogma. Therefore, it was known through the Ordinary Universal Magisterium; for, it had been taught *always and everywhere* throughout the Church. It was John XXII's successor, Benedict XII, who, engaging the Extraordinary Magisterium, formally defined this dogma on January 29, 1336 in the Bull *Benedictus Deus*.

on his deathbed, Pope John signed a statement formally retracting his erroneous opinion. Here we see a clear example showing that when a Pope is not speaking *ex cathedra* and invoking his special charism of infallibility, he can teach error against the Deposit of the Faith. When this happens, the faithful are obliged to resist.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*

A present day example of licit resistance can be found in the reaction of faithful Catholics to the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* — Pope Francis’s concluding document following the 2015 Synod. During the Synod, great efforts were made (with the support of the Pope) to gain acceptance for certain pastoral practices that would directly contradict the Magisterium’s traditional moral teaching — for instance, allowing those who are divorced and “remarried” to receive Holy Communion. Such persons are in a state of objective mortal sin. The Church has taught *always and everywhere* that those who are in a state of unrepentant mortal sin may not licitly approach the Communion table; “For,” as Scripture teaches, “*he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*” (1 Cor. 11:29). As a result of these heterodox efforts, African Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect for the Congregation of Divine Worship, rightly promised a categorical resistance by the entire Church of Africa to any undermining of the Church’s established moral teaching resulting from the Synod. The Cardinal publicly stated:

*The idea that would consist in placing the Magisterium in a nice box by detaching it from pastoral practice — which could evolve according to the circumstances, fads, and passions — is a form of heresy, a dangerous schizophrenic pathology. I affirm solemnly that the Church of Africa will firmly oppose every rebellion against the teaching of Christ and the Magisterium*¹⁷

Furthermore, soon after the Synod, the well-known American Cardinal, Raymond Leo Burke (former Prefect of the Vatican’s Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura),

exhorted the faithful at the Rome Life Forum to such resistance over the same issue:

...today in the Church, there are those who refer to the objective reality of the grace of marriage as merely an ideal to which we more or less seek to conform ourselves. The mundane vision, which, because it is not true, leads to confusion and division within the Body of Christ, ends up by denying the fundamental principle of right reason, called the principle of non-contradiction, namely the law that a thing cannot be and not be in the same respect at the same time. For example, it cannot be that the Church professes faith in the indissolubility of marriage, in accord with the law of God written upon every human heart and announced in the word of Christ, and at the same time admits to the Sacraments those who publicly live in violation of the indissolubility of marriage. (...)

*It is my hope today to assist you in the battle to resist such thinking, in order to remain true to Christ Who is alive in you through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*¹⁸

After the Synod, Pope Francis issued his concluding document, *Amoris Lætitia* (AL). Unfortunately, in a number of places, the natural meaning of its text appears to undermine immutable truths of the Faith. He affirmed as acceptable, for instance, those pastoral practices contrary to the traditional Magisterium that had been fought over during the Synod. This is seen particularly in Chapter 8 where he opened the possibility of access to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist “*in certain cases*” to those living in adulterous second “marriage” relationships.* This directly contradicts the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s Papally mandated letter of September 14, 1994 *reiterating the constant and traditional teaching of the Church* on this subject:

* Pope Francis confirmed this was the correct interpretation saying, “*There are no other interpretations,*” in his Sept. 5, 2016 letter to Mons. Sergio Alfredo Fenoy, delegate of the Buenos Aires Pastoral Region.

*[I]f the prior marriage of two divorced and remarried members of the faithful was valid, under no circumstances can their new union be considered lawful and therefore reception of the sacraments is **intrinsically impossible**. The conscience of **the individual is bound to this norm without exception** (emphasis added).¹⁹*

In light of the “*real spiritual danger*” resulting from this document, Bishop Athanasius Schneider* has exhorted the faithful in the following words:

In these our dark times, in which Our Beloved Lord seems to sleep in the boat of His Holy Church, all Catholics, beginning from the bishops up to the simplest faithful, who still take seriously their baptismal vows, should with one voice (“una voce”) make a profession of fidelity, enunciating concretely and clearly all those Catholic truths, which are in some expressions of AL undermined or ambiguously disfigured. It would be a kind of a “Credo” of the people of God.† AL is clearly a pastoral document (i.e., by its nature of temporal character) and has no claims to be definitive.

* His Excellency, Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary Bishop of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, is noted for being commissioned by the Holy See to visit and evaluate two of the Seminaries of the Society of St. Pius X. (<http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/02/exclusive-bishop-athanasius-schneider.html>).

† Such a “Credo” of fidelity (*A Declaration of Fidelity to the Church’s Unchangeable Teaching on Marriage and to Her Uninterrupted Discipline*) was compiled and signed by 80 Catholic leaders from around the world. Among these are several Cardinals (including Burke) and bishops (including Schneider), as well as many priests, dignitaries, scholars and heads of Catholic organizations. This document proclaims clearly those truths of the Deposit “*which are in some expressions of AL undermined or ambiguously disfigured.*” For example, AL no. 297 states: “*No one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel!*” Since this statement apparently contradicts the Church’s defined dogma on hell, the *Declaration* confirms: “*According to the logic of the Gospel, men who die in the state of mortal sin, unreconciled with God, are condemned to hell forever.*” This “Credo” is available for all Catholic to sign as a testimony of their fidelity to the immutable truths of the Catholic Faith at filialappeal.org. You, dear reader, are certainly encouraged to do so.

*We have to avoid to “make infallible” every word and gesture of a current Pope. This is contrary to the teaching of Jesus and of the whole Tradition of the Church. Such a totalitarian understanding and application of Papal infallibility is not Catholic, is ultimately worldly, like in a dictatorship; it is against the spirit of the Gospel and of the Fathers of the Church.*²⁰

Cardinal Burke, along with three other Cardinals (Brandmüller, Caffarra, & Meisner), also seeing the spiritual danger of AL, sent a private letter to the Pope on September 19, 2016. In it they respectfully asked for a clarification on five points of the document where irreformable moral principles were undermined and the Church left in a state of confusion. For, said Cardinal Burke: “...we, as Cardinals, judged it our responsibility to request a clarification with regard to these questions to put an end to the confusion that is actually leading people into error.”²¹ After two months without receiving a reply they made their letter public for all the faithful. If, after this, they still do not receive a reply, they have announced their intention to issue a formal correction to the Pope to notify him of his errors. In this, they will be following the example of the prelates and theologians of the 14th century who corrected Pope John XXII (mentioned above). Cardinal Burke called the procedure of correcting such papal errors, a “way of safeguarding that office and its exercise.”²²

These three examples (historical and contemporary) show that Popes can bring harm to the Church, and, when this happens, it is proper to resist and to adhere to the true doctrine found in the Deposit of the Faith, just as the approved theologians have always taught. As Bishop Schneider, commenting on the present crisis, has stated:

*I think in a time in which a great part of the holders of the office of the Magisterium are negligent in their sacred duty, the Holy Spirit calls today, namely the faithful, to step into the breach and defend courageously with an authentic “sentire cum ecclesia” [thinking in accord with mind of the Church] the Catholic faith.*²³

The Second Council of Constantinople

One Ecumenical Council that clearly brought harm and confusion to the Church was the Second Council of Constantinople (AD 553). It did so by its unwarranted condemnation of three men, carefully crafted to placate Monophysite heretics — which only left these heretics feeling more justified in their heresy. During this same period, Pope Vigilius twice contradicted himself in official statements over this issue. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia: *“There were no good precedents for thus dealing harshly with the memory of men who had died in the peace of the Church.”* This condemnation *“was not demanded to crush a heresy, but to conciliate heretics who were implacable enemies of the Council of Chalcedon [which had condemned the Monophysite heresy].”*²⁴

As a result of these proceedings of the Council great harm was inflicted on the Church. Church historian Henry Chadwick relates: *“The immediate effect was to produce temporary schisms in the West; and the successive contradictory utterances of [Pope] Vigilius did not enhance the authority of the Roman see.”*²⁵ Later, in order to reunite these newly produced schismatic groups with the Church, Pope St. Gregory the Great advised keeping silent concerning the Council. In order to end the divisions, he purposely refrained from requiring the schismatic groups to accept the Council’s controversial condemnations. Thus, we see that an Ecumenical Council (just as a Pope) can bring harm to the Church through its non-infallible declarations.

The Second Vatican Council

Similar to the Second Council of Constantinople, it may be argued today that the Second Vatican Council is bringing harm to the Church. This Council is certainly unique in all the Church’s history; for, it is the *only* Ecumenical Council that remained *entirely pastoral*, never engaging the Extraordinary Magisterium. Pope Paul VI affirmed: *“There are those who ask what authority,*

what theological qualification, the Council intended to give to its teachings... In view of the pastoral nature of the Council, it avoided proclaiming in an extraordinary manner any dogmas carrying the mark of infallibility” (General Audience Dec. 1, 1966).

This means that although we ordinarily would not expect to faulty doctrine coming from a Church Council, nevertheless there is no guarantee that the *new teachings* coming from this Council are free from error.* Yet, even though this is true, the Council generally came to be regarded as something superior to, and taking precedent over, all prior Church teachings. Cardinal Ratzinger (future Pope Benedict XVI) complained of this in 1988, in a speech to the Chilean Bishops:

*The Second Vatican Council has not been treated as a part of the entire living Tradition of the Church, but as an end of Tradition, a new start from zero. The truth is that this particular Council defined no dogma at all, and deliberately chose to remain on a modest level, as a merely pastoral council; and yet many treat it as though it had made itself into a sort of superdogma which takes away the importance of all the rest.*²⁶

In light of the great Church crisis that began immediately after the Council, a number of reputable men in the Church today are pointing to problems within the texts of this *non-infallible* Council as the cause of this crisis.† For, as with *Amoris Laetitia*, there are places in the Council documents where the text is either

* *New teachings* is stressed here as any *reiteration of previously defined Catholic dogmas* would be, of course, free from error.

† Three such men who have written enlightening books on the subject are: (1) Msgr. Brunero Gherardini, Canon of St. Peter’s Basilica, a secretary for the Pontifical Academy of Theology, and professor emeritus at the Pontifical Lateran University, with his book, [The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion](#), (2) Prof. Roberto de Mattei, Head of the Faculty of Historical Sciences at the European University in Rome, with his book, [The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story](#), and (3) Prof. Romano Amerio, a *peritus* (expert theological advisor) at the Council, with his book, [Iota Unum](#).

ambiguous (and thus open to more than one interpretation), or the natural meaning, taken at face value, apparently contradicts, or at least undermines, the Church's traditional teaching. As Msgr. George A. Kelly remarked in his book, The Battle for the American Church: "*The documents of the Council contain enough basic ambiguities to make the postconciliar difficulties understandable.*"²⁷

In a 2013 interview, Bishop Athanasius Schneider publicly specified a number of problematic texts in the Council documents.²⁸ For instance, he called the teaching on collegiality in the Council document, *Lumen Gentium*, "*insufficient.*" For, it seems to indicate that the college of bishops has an *ordinary* jurisdiction over the universal Church. But, as Bishop Schneider clarified, "*this is not the structure which our Lord gave us. Our Lord gives only to Peter to govern his flock. ... [T]he Pope is also a shepherd of the bishops, of all the Bishops.*" When bishops do share in the responsibility for the whole Church in "*the ecumenical councils,*" he explained, "*this form [is] extraordinary*" and it is exercised only temporarily, "*not continuously.*" The new Conciliar teaching, attacking the primacy of Peter, has resulted in the dangerous weakening of the powers proper to the Papacy noted since the Council.

He also pointed out another problem in the text of *Lumen Gentium*. No. 16 of this document states: "*...the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God.*" The problem here, as he explained, is that Catholics recognize and adore the Holy Trinity, which takes an act of supernatural Faith; but to recognize and adore God simply as the Creator, or as the one only God, does not require supernatural Faith, it requires only the use of reason. Since the natural adoration of Muslims based on human reason is far different than the supernatural adoration of Catholics based on Faith, their adoration is clearly not the same as ours. This new teaching of the Council leads to the false belief that it is sufficient to be a good Muslim to attain salvation. Thus, it undermines the

infallible dogma: *“There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved.”*²⁹

Bishop Schneider also explained that there is a problem in the document *Unitatis Redintegratio*. This document on ecumenism, when speaking of the schismatic Orthodox and Protestant denominations, teaches that God *“has not refrained from using them as means of salvation....”* The problem here, as the bishop pointed out, is that it easily leads to the false understanding that *“there are several branches of Christianity [which] are all means of salvation.”* Here again, this promotes religious indifferentism and undermines the dogma: *“Outside the Church there is no salvation.”*

Since the Council, the *practical application* of these three texts (as well as many others) in a manner contrary to the traditional Magisterium has caused serious confusion and has led people into error. With this, we can certainly see a reasonable cause for the present crisis. Thus, all Catholics would be well advised to be on guard concerning the new teachings coming from the Council. Instead of viewing this pastoral, non-dogmatic Council as a *“superdogma”* which overrides the traditional teaching of the past, they must do exactly the opposite. If any conflicts are found between the texts coming from the teaching authority of the Council, and the traditional teaching of the Deposit of the Faith, they must, of course, always adhere to the traditional, infallible Deposit. Cardinal Burke affirmed this Catholic principle in a recent interview. When asked which is binding on the believer when there is a conflict between ecclesial authority and the Sacred Tradition of the Church, he replied:

*What’s binding is the Tradition. Ecclesial authority exists only in service of the Tradition. I think of that passage of St. Paul in the [Letter to the] Galatians (1:8), that if “even an angel should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.”*³⁰

Peter has No Need of Our Lies or Flattery

So dear soul, as you can see from these examples, faithful Catholics have, not only in the past, but also in our day, resisted ecclesiastical (even Papal) authority, when by word and action that same authority was working to harm the Church by destroying or diminishing the Faith. Such lawful resistance in order to remain faithful to the true doctrine is just what the Church needs to free her from the grip of error in a time of crisis. For, as Our Lord Himself declared: *“the truth shall make you free”* (Jn. 8:32). Thus, far from being an act of disobedience, such resistance is a courageous act of that special kind of obedience in which we *“obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). The great St. Francis of Assisi — noted for his exceptional obedience to the hierarchy of the Church — prophesied of a time to come when there would be a Pope who would lead men astray and it would be necessary to *“obey God rather than men.”* He declared:

At the time of this tribulation a man, not canonically elected, will be raised to the Pontificate, who, by his cunning, will endeavor to draw many into error and death. ... Those who are found faithful will receive the crown of life; ... choosing to obey God rather than man, they will fear nothing, and they will prefer to perish rather than consent to falsehood and perfidy. Some preachers will keep silence about the truth, and others will trample it under foot and deny it. Sanctity of life will be held in derision even by those who outwardly profess it, for in those days Our Lord Jesus Christ will send them not a true Pastor, but a destroyer.³¹*

* *Not canonically elected*: The man “*raised to the Pontificate*” of which St. Francis is speaking is a valid Pope (not an antipope). For, as Cardinal Billot explained: *“From the moment in which the Pope is accepted by the Church and united to her as the head to the body, it is no longer permitted to raise doubts about a possible vice of election or a possible lack of any condition whatsoever necessary for legitimacy. For the aforementioned adhesion of the Church heals in the root all fault in the election and proves the existence of all the required conditions”* (Billot, *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi*, Vol. I, pp. 612-3. Roma: Gregoriana, 1921 – Cited in True or False Pope, p. 43 – See Endnote 7).

For those who may fear that such necessary resistance is harmful to the office of the Papacy, the distinguished Dominican theologian of the Council of Trent, Melchior Cano* assures them that the contrary is true:

*Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the Supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See — they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations.*³²

5. Ecclesiastical Traditions

It is important at this point to also note that the Faith can be harmed not only by the introduction of actual new teachings contrary to settled Church doctrine, but also by changes made to longstanding practices in the Church. For, as was noted above, Pope Innocent III declared that if the Roman Pontiff should “*go against the universal customs of the Church, he need not be followed.*” But, what are these “*universal customs*”? They are part of the Church’s *ecclesiastical traditions*. While Apostolic Tradition is comprised of those teachings that originate directly from the Apostles, ecclesiastical tradition is comprised of teachings and practices that have developed in the Church over the course of her history and that have become a natural and necessary means for the transmission and preservation of the Deposit of the Faith. Thus, they are various modes of *expression* of that Deposit in concrete situations. The vital importance of ecclesiastical traditions is made clear in the decrees of the Second Council of

* *Melchior Cano* (1509-1560): According to [The Catholic Encyclopedia](#), Cano “*was enabled by his historical erudition and his mastery of scholastic and positive theology to render important service in the deliberations and achievements of the council [Trent].*” And: “*In the estimation of some critics [his work *De Locis Theologicis* (Salamanca, 1563)] marking a new epoch in the history of theology has made its author worthy of a place next to St. Thomas Aquinas.*” (Volz, John, “Melchior Cano.” [The Catholic Encyclopedia](#). Vol. 3. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. newadvent.org/cathen/03251a.htm).

Nicea (787). This Council dealt with the heresy of Iconoclasm, which was attacking the ecclesiastical tradition of venerating sacred images. To defend this holy tradition, the Council set forth these explicit anathemas:

If anyone does not confess that Christ our God can be represented in his humanity, let him be anathema.

If anyone does not accept representation in art of evangelical scenes, let him be anathema.

If anyone does not salute such representations as standing for the Lord and his saints, let him be anathema.

Then, to protect all other ecclesiastical traditions of the Church, the Council also declared: *“If anyone rejects any written or unwritten tradition of the Church, let him be anathema.”* Since ecclesiastical traditions express the Deposit of the Faith, it is easily understood why the Church at Nicea II spoke so strongly to protect them. For, if an ecclesiastical tradition is destroyed or substantially altered, the dogma that it expresses and upholds is endangered, and the door to error and heresy is thrown open.

In his monumental encyclical against the heresy of Modernism* (*Pascendi*, 1907), Pope St. Pius X found it necessary to reiterate from this same Council another and more expressive decree concerning ecclesiastical traditions. For Modernists, rather than attacking Church doctrine directly (which would be too obvious), like to introduce their false doctrines into the Church by cleverly changing the ecclesiastical traditions that oppose them. Pope Pius X explained:

But for Catholics nothing will remove the authority of the Second Council of Nicea, where it condemns those “who dare, after the impious fashion of heretics, to deride the

* This heresy, having resurged again in recent decades, is the root error behind today’s crisis in the Church.

*ecclesiastical traditions, to invent novelties of some kind...or endeavor by malice or craft to overthrow any one of the legitimate traditions of the Catholic Church” ... Wherefore the Roman Pontiffs, Pius IV and Pius IX, ordered the insertion in the profession of faith of the following declaration: “I most firmly admit and embrace the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions and other observances and constitutions of the Church.”**³³

Examples:

(1) The Use of Sacramentals

One example of an ecclesiastical tradition that is being attacked in our times is the use of sacramentals such as the St. Benedict Medal, the Brown Scapular and Holy Water. These sacramentals did not always exist in the Church, but have been brought into use and approved by the Church over the course of her history. Modernists do not tend to like them because they are reminders of certain traditional Catholic beliefs with which they feel uncomfortable.

Take for instance the Brown Scapular. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel gave it to St. Simon Stock on her Feast in 1251 with the promise that whosoever died wearing it would not suffer eternal fire. With this, the Church has approved of the “Sabbatine Privilege” connected to the Scapular in which it is promised that for those who fulfill the necessary conditions Our Lady will obtain their release from Purgatory soon after death, especially on Saturdays.[†] Thus, besides teaching devotion to Our Lady, the scapular reiterates the Catholic dogmas of Hell and its eternal fire, and of the temporal place of

* For the full text of this Creed see No. 9.

[†] The two conditions are: that being enrolled in the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular, (1) one observes chastity according to his state in life and (2) recites daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today the Church has granted priests permission to substitute five decades of the Rosary for the Little Office.

punishment called Purgatory, all of which embarrass Modernists. Thus, they would do away with this sacramental. But, since it has been in use in the Church for many centuries and has the approval of numerous Popes it is certainly one of those ecclesiastical traditions that are now a permanent part of the Church's patrimony. Therefore, while ecclesiastical authority may make some alterations in the regulations regarding its use (such as the conditions for the Sabbatine Privilege), it can never be done away with or substantially changed.* The same is true of the other traditional sacramentals.

(2) The Manner of Receiving Holy Communion[†]

Another example of an ecclesiastical tradition being attacked — to the point of being almost brought to extinction throughout the Latin Rite — is the practice of receiving Holy Communion kneeling and on the tongue, from the consecrated hands of a priest. This tradition, expresses the truth of transubstantiation — that the Most Holy Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ are really and substantially present in the Sacred Host received in Holy Communion. As Bishop Athanasius Schneider has noted, the reverence and awe of Catholics who truly believe they are receiving Jesus in the Eucharist should lead them to kneel and receive Communion on their tongues.³⁴

Though this is certainly true, in the first few years after the turn of the millennium, pious Catholics in some dioceses of the United States were, at times, being denied Holy Communion when they attempted to observe this holy tradition. The reason for this denial was the July 2002 newsletter of the U.S. Conference of

* This author highly recommends the Brown Scapular to all. It is a form of consecration to Mary and part of the Fatima message. Thus, it is certainly God's Will that all Catholics wear it as a sign of their devotion to Mary. Furthermore, Our Lady once told St. Dominic: "*One day through the Rosary and the Scapular I will save the world.*" We have reason to believe we may now be living in that day.

[†] See also the heading: "Communion-in-the-Hand" in the Appendix, p. 50.

Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, which proclaimed: "*Kneeling is not a licit posture for receiving Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States of America unless the bishop of a particular diocese has derogated from this norm in an individual and extraordinary circumstance.*"

When reports that devout souls in the U.S. were being denied Holy Communion for taking the traditional posture reached Rome, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments intervened. The Prefect for the Congregation, Cardinal Jorge Estévez, defended the practice of kneeling by noting in a letter to a U.S. bishop that it "*has in its favor a centuries-old tradition.*" He also stated that kneeling to receive "*is a particularly expressive sign of adoration, completely appropriate in light of the true, real and substantial presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the consecrated species.*"*³⁵ Here it is clearly seen that *tradition* takes precedence over the U.S. Bishops' decision. Furthermore, this tradition *expresses* in action, the Catholic *dogma* regarding the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. Thus we witness here a clear and practical example of how ecclesiastical traditions both express and safeguard the dogma of the Faith.

Though we find here that through Rome's intervention this ecclesiastical tradition was protected from extinction, it can be argued that making the posture of standing *the norm* should never have been allowed, for it gives this posture an undue precedence over the traditional one of kneeling.[†] As Cardinal Juan Luis

* Cardinal Estévez went on to say: "... while this Congregation gave the *recognitio* to the norm desired by the Bishops' Conference of your country that people stand for Holy Communion, this was done on the condition that communicants who choose to kneel are not to be denied Holy Communion on these grounds. Indeed, the faithful should not be imposed upon nor accused of disobedience and of acting illicitly when they kneel to receive Holy Communion." He also stated: "Priests should understand that the Congregation will regard future complaints of this nature with great seriousness, and if they are verified, it intends to seek disciplinary action consonant with the gravity of the pastoral abuse."

† Exceptions have always been allowed for those who are unable to kneel.

Cipriani affirmed in 2009 during a sermon given in his cathedral in Lima, Peru: *“The most respectful manner of receiving the Eucharist is kneeling and on the tongue. We must recover the respect and reverence that the Eucharist deserves, because the love of Jesus is the center of our Christian life. The soul is at stake.”*^{* 36}

From these two examples it should be easily seen that just as actual false teachings directly opposed to truths of the Deposit work to destroy the Faith, so does abandoning or substantially altering ecclesiastical traditions. For, doing so undermines the truths expressed by these traditions.

6. The Crucial Lesson to be Learned

The Root Cause of the Present Crisis: MODERNISM

As you have seen, the teaching given in this treatise on the primacy of Catholic dogma and on adhering to the Deposit of Faith over any and all other consideration is of vital importance during this time of crisis when teachings coming from authority in the Church often contradict that Deposit. But what is the reason for this contradiction? It is because many churchmen have become infected in various degrees with the heresy of Modernism — **the heresy that teaches that all things must change, even Church dogma and liturgy, in order to keep pace with the times.**[†] Thus, it is

* At the Traditional Latin Mass, the practice of receiving Holy Communion kneeling and on the tongue (as well as from the consecrated hands of a priest) is preserved as the norm. This is *one* of the reasons why this Mass is specified in No. 7 as a means for preserving the Faith.

† Pope St. Pius X declared of modernists: *“...they lay down the general principle that in a living religion everything is subject to change, and must change, and in this way they pass to what may be said to be, among the chief of their doctrines, that of Evolution. To the laws of evolution everything is subject — dogma, Church, worship, the Books we revere as sacred, even faith itself, and the penalty of disobedience is death”* (*Pascendi*, 26). This encyclical is well worth reading in order to gain a clear understanding of the heresy. It can be freely downloaded at papalencyclicals.net.

Modernism that is the root cause of the present crisis, a crisis that is arguably the worst in all Church history. Pope Saint Pius X condemned this heresy in his encyclical, *Pascendi* in the first years of the twentieth century. Afterward, however, when he was congratulated for his success in arresting the heresy, he made clear his displeasure that he had not eradicated it but only driven it underground. Thus, it is no surprise that it has again resurfaced in our times.

That Modernism is at the root of this worst crisis is understandable, for it is the worst heresy. As St. Pius X stated, it is the “*synthesis of all heresies.*” One of the greatest dangers of this heresy is that those clerics who are infected with it often appear to be perfectly orthodox and among the most conservative. The same sainted Pope explained: “*...in their books you find some things which might well be expressed by a Catholic, but in the next page you find other things which might have been dictated by a rationalist.*”^{*} This means that even those priests and prelates that you’ve heard speak at various times in perfect accord with the dogmas of the Faith — and thus that you would tend to trust for their orthodoxy — may well be infected with the heresy, speaking

^{*} With all due respect to the formerly reigning Pontiff, Benedict XVI offers us a striking example (of countless that could be given). Though Benedict has often shown traditional Catholic thinking (e.g. regarding Holy Mass), regarding a fundamental article of Faith found in the Apostles’ Creed, he speaks as a modernist. In his book, Introduction to Christianity, he denies the resurrection of the body:

“One thing at any rate may be fairly clear: both John (6:63) and Paul (1 Cor. 15:50) state with all possible emphasis that ‘resurrection of the flesh’ and the resurrection of the body,’ is not ‘a resurrection of physical bodies.’ _ Thus, from the point of view of modern thought, the Pauline sketch is far less naïve than later theological erudition with its subtle ways of construing how there can be eternal physical bodies. To recapitulate, Paul teaches, not the resurrection of physical bodies, but the resurrection of persons, and this not in the return of the ‘fleshly body,’ that is, the biological structure, an idea he expressly describes as impossible...” (Joseph Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, pp. 57-8. San Francisco, Cal.: Ignatius Press, 1968 & 2004 – with a new Forward by Cardinal Ratzinger dated April 2000).

The faithful Catholic will, of course, adhere to what is contained in the Deposit of Faith as stated in the Apostles’ Creed: “*I believe in the resurrection of the body,*” rather than accept this novel teaching.

elsewhere in a heterodox manner. This is a critical point that must always be kept in mind while navigating through the continuing crisis.

The Crucial Lesson

So dear soul, if you wish to retain your Faith whole and entire during this crisis and thus maintain that foundational orthodoxy vital for saving your immortal soul, you must put into practice the crucial lesson given here. For, as you have seen, the Church teaches through her approved theologians and Saints, as well as her historical examples, what is to be done in such a crisis. When the ecclesiastical authorities become disoriented in a time of crisis, rather than blindly following them into error, the faithful are to cling to the Deposit of Faith and all the traditions vital to that same Faith — for, as Jesus Himself declared: *“if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit”* (Mt. 15:14).^{*} This Deposit is the Rule of Faith to which we must always adhere. It is exactly what the Holy Spirit (through the pen of St. Paul) exhorted the faithful to do in order not to be led into error in the times of apostasy that He said would come: *“...stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle”* (2 Thess. 2:14). He further instructed:

As we said before, so now I say again: If anyone preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema (Gal. 1:9).

Following the Rule of Faith is especially important now, in our times of darkness, when the Catholic truth is otherwise obscured. The Council of Trent made this clear when it stated that its reason for declaring dogmatic truths was *“so that all, making use of the rule of faith, with the assistance of Christ, may*

^{*} Sister Lucia of Fatima spoke similarly of the present crisis: *“...[the devil] has succeeded in leading into error and deceiving souls having a heavy responsibility through the place they occupy...! They are blind men guiding other blind men...”* (Extract of a letter to Mother Martins [Sept. 16, 1970]).

be able to recognize more easily the Catholic truth in the midst of the darkness of so many errors."³⁷

The Church Father, St. Vincent Lérins, tells us under what circumstances the faithful must take care to put this rule into action:

What then will a Catholic Christian do, if a small portion of the Church have cut itself off from the communion of the universal faith? What, surely, but prefer the soundness of the whole body to the unsoundness of a pestilent and corrupt member? What, if some novel contagion seeks to infect not merely an insignificant portion of the Church, but the whole? Then it will be his care to cleave to antiquity [i.e. tradition] which at this day cannot possibly be seduced by any fraud of novelty.

He further admonished:

*...it is incumbent on all Catholics who are anxious to approve themselves genuine sons of Mother Church, to adhere henceforward to the holy faith of the holy Fathers, to be wedded to it, to die in it; but as to the profane novelties of profane men — to detest them, abhor them, oppose them, give them no quarter.*³⁸

Thus, although we may under no circumstances leave holy mother Church (so necessary for salvation), we must, like those who kept the Faith during the great Arian crisis, keep a distance from those prelates, priests, parishes and schools that endanger our Faith. For, as the great Church theologian, Francisco Suarez, remarked: *"heresy 'spreads like cancer,' which is why heretics should be avoided as much as possible."*³⁹

7. Learning the Truths of the Deposit of the Faith

Throughout this treatise the importance of adhering to the Deposit of the Faith has been stressed. It has also been stated that it is necessary to study the Faith in order to know precisely what must be adhered to. But, you may ask, what exactly should be

studied? Among the best sources are the traditional catechisms and encyclicals. The traditional Mass and Rosary should also be reflected on and clung to. And, the Church's traditional Creeds or Professions of Faith should be studied and reviewed.*

Traditional Catechisms and Encyclicals

The catechisms recommended to learn the Church's pure doctrine are the traditional catechisms, that is, those catechisms that were approved and published before the present crisis in the Church began. Such catechisms can be relied upon because, having been approved of *before* the present crisis, they are naturally free from the errors presently afflicting the Church. As St. Vincent Lérins declared: "*Antiquity...cannot possibly be seduced by any fraud of novelty.*" Such catechisms include the Catechism of the Council of Trent (which Pope Clement XIII proclaimed, sets forth "*the common doctrine of the Church, from which all danger of doctrinal error is absent*") and the Catechism of St. Pius X. The old Baltimore Catechism is also a trustworthy source.†

The papal encyclicals (and other papal documents) are perhaps the most outstanding source of Catholic truth in today's crisis. The encyclicals that should be studied are those published from the time of Pope Gregory XVI to Pope Pius XII. These Popes were united as one voice (*una voce*) in fighting the errors

* For those interested in studying the defined dogmas and traditional teachings in greater depth and with more precision, The Sources of Catholic Dogma by Henry Denzinger and Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott are trustworthy compilations of all the Church's teaching.

† Although the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) contains much beautiful and truthful text, it unfortunately cannot be recommended. For, being the fruit of the Second Vatican Council, it repeats the Council's problematic teachings that are causing confusion and leading people into error. For example, n. 819 of the CCC repeats the faulty teaching of the Conciliar document, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, pointed out by Bishop Schneider (see p. 25): "*Christ's Spirit uses these [schismatic Orthodox] Churches and [Protestant] ecclesial communities as means of salvation.*"

of Liberalism and Modernism that have invaded the world and the Church since at least the time of the French Revolution, and still afflict us today. In their writings you will find today's prevalent errors specifically pointed out and refuted by an unequivocal reiteration of the Church's true and traditional doctrine. These encyclicals cover many important topics such as: the proper relationship between Church and State (*Immortale Dei*, *Quanta Cura* and *Quas Primas*), fostering true religious unity (*Mortalium Animos*), Christian marriage (*Casti Connubii*), Christian education (*Divini Illius Magistri*), the heresy of Modernism (*Pascendi Gregis*), the Sacred Liturgy (*Mediator Dei*), the condemnation of various modern errors and false opinions (*The Syllabus of Errors*, *Lamentabili Sane* and *Human Generis*) and still much more. You are almost certain to be surprised at what you learn from these precious Church documents!

Though these encyclicals do, at times, define infallible truths, generally they only engage the Authentic Magisterium. Nevertheless, like the ecclesiastical traditions, the contents of these encyclicals often entail teachings and disciplines that are *expressions* of infallible dogmas applied to concrete situations. Hence, their importance is easily understood. Take for example, the encyclical, *Quas Primas* (On the Kingship of Christ). It instituted the Feast of Christ the King so that all Catholics would be reminded each year of that critical doctrine regarding the duty of governments to "*give public honor and obedience to Christ,*" thus refuting the condemned proposition that favors separation of Church and State. As another example, there is *Mortalium Animos* (On Religious Unity). This encyclical applies the Church's dogma on the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation *against* that erroneous kind of ecumenism that refuses to work for the conversion of non-Catholics. For, it made clear: "*...the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it.*"

The Traditional Latin Mass and Mary's Psalter

Another good source of Catholic dogma is the Traditional Latin Mass. For, as explained in the treatise: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* (see Appendix), the prayers and gestures of the traditional Mass teach us by word and action the truths of the Faith. The Mass has always been recognized as a chief means of teaching the Faith, as the ancient axiom, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, makes clear.* Along with this, Mary's Psalter (the Holy Rosary) is also another means of preserving orthodoxy. Meditation on the fifteen mysteries given us by Our Lady brings us to consider again and again the basic tenets of our holy Faith. Thus, Sr. Lucia of Fatima proclaimed the Rosary a gift from Our Lady for protecting her children from erroneous doctrine:

People must recite the Rosary every day. Our Lady repeated this in all her apparitions, as if to arm us in advance against these times of diabolical disorientation, so that we would not let ourselves be fooled by false doctrines and that through prayer, the elevation of our soul to God would not be diminished ... This is the diabolical disorientation invading the world and misleading souls! It is necessary to stand up to it...⁴⁰

We can be sure that the more we faithfully and fearlessly “*stand up to it*,” and also follow Our Lady's requests, the sooner God will be pleased to end this crisis, which we may expect through the triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart promised at Fatima.

The Church's Traditional Professions of Faith

Finally, you can look to the traditional professions of faith or creeds as sure guides that summarize the truths of the Faith.[†]

* *lex orandi, lex credendi*: literally, *the law of prayer is the law of belief*—meaning, the way we pray determines the way we believe.

† The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Creed of the Council of Trent.

Perhaps the profession of faith promulgated by the Council of Trent (also known as the Creed of Pope Pius IV) is the most helpful in the current crisis because it is the most comprehensive. After the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX added to this creed the important new dogmatic definitions it had proclaimed. Reciting (and reflecting on) this creed from time to time will help to impress upon your mind the many important and immutable truths of the Faith that it contains. It has been placed at the end of this treatise to review at your convenience.

8. A Final and Important Note: Maintaining the Proper Perspective

The teaching given in this treatise on the circumstances for lawful resistance to ecclesiastical authority must not in any way jeopardize the proper respect, submission and filial devotion that all Catholics must maintain toward those in authority in the Church.* Rather, this teaching is given to put that devotion and submission into proper Catholic perspective, thus protecting them against the possibility of being led astray by following blind and disoriented Church leaders. If they must firmly and uncompromisingly resist such leaders, it should always be done

* Here it is good to note the example of St. Padre Pio — who died in 1968, about the time that the current crisis began. His circumstances never required resistance to Church authority. Thus, in his situation, he was always perfectly and even heroically obedient to all ecclesiastical authorities. For example, he suffered greatly when, in the 1930's, because of false accusations, he was forbidden to continue his public ministry. His praiseworthy response to this action of the authorities was to simply and quietly obey. Though the unjust deprivation of his public priestly ministry *prevented much good* that he ardently wished to accomplish, it was in no way a danger to the Faith. Therefore, he was right in choosing to submit and quietly suffer the effects of the censure until God Himself should intervene. In this, he was following Pope St. Gregory the Great's teaching on obedience: "*Know that evil ought never to be done by way of obedience, though sometimes something good, which is being done, ought to be discontinued out of obedience*" (*Moralium*, lib. V, c. 10. Cited in True or False Pope?, p. 628 – See Endnote 7).

respectfully. The attitude evident in the words of the philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand (uttered decades ago at the beginning of the current crisis) serves as a good example for all:

On account of my deep love for and devotion to the Church, it is a special cross for me not to be able to welcome every practical decision of the Holy See, particularly in a time like ours, which is witnessing a crumbling of the spirit of obedience and of respect for the Holy Father.⁴¹

9. A Comprehensive Profession of Faith — Creed of Pope Pius IV

I, N, with a firm faith believe and profess each and everything which is contained in the Creed which the Holy Roman Church maketh use of. To wit:

I believe in one God, The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary: and was made man. He was also crucified for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, and who spoke through the prophets. And one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Apostolic and Ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I firmly admit to and embrace (emphasis added).

I also accept the Holy Scripture according to that sense which holy mother the Church hath held, and doth hold, and to whom it belongeth to judge the true sense and interpretations of the Scriptures. Neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

I also profess that there are truly and properly Seven Sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all are necessary for everyone; to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the accepted and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments.

I embrace and accept each and everything which has been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either species alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

I steadfastly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise, that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be honored and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated. I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God, ever virgin, and also of other Saints, ought to be kept and retained, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them.

I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

I likewise undoubtedly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred Canons, and general Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent, and by the ecumenical Council of the Vatican, particularly concerning the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching. I condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church hath condemned, rejected, and anathematized.

This true Catholic faith, outside of which no one can be saved, which I now freely profess and to which I truly adhere, I do so profess and swear to maintain inviolate and with firm constancy with the help of God until the last breath of life. And I shall strive, as far as possible, that this same faith shall be held, taught, and professed by all those over whom I have charge. I *N.*, do so pledge, promise, and swear, so help me God and these Holy Gospels of God.

¹ Pew Research Center article: “Who Knows What About Religion,” September 8, 2010. <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey-who-knows-what-about-religion/>.

² Hardon, John A. S.J., *Marian Catechist Manual*, p. xv [MCM]. Bardstown: Eternal Life, 2000. Cited from Cardinal Raymond Burke’s address to the Rome Life Forum: “Martyrdom for the Faith in our times” (May 7, 2016). Posted at: voiceofthefamily.com/cardinal-burke-martyrdom-for-the-faith-in-our-times/.

³ Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII: *Satis Cognitum* (9) 1896 (available at papalencyclicals.net).

⁴ Letter of Sr. Lucia to Mother Martins (Sept. 16, 1970)).

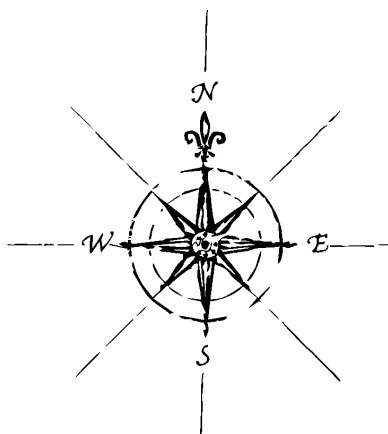
⁵ Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

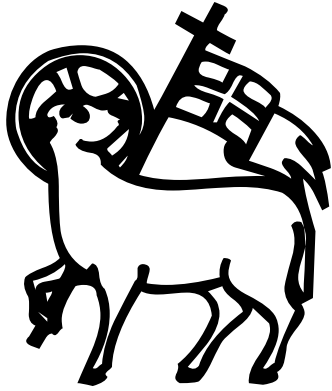
⁶ *Renovatio*, Oct-Dec. 1968.

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- 12 Jung, Nicolas, Le Magistère de L’Èglise, 1935, pp. 153, 154; Cited in “Clear Ideas, On the Pope’s Infallible Magisterium,” *SiSiNoNo*, January 2002, No. 44.
- 13 Summa De Ecclesia (1489), pp. 47-8. Cited in Newman, John Henry, “A Letter addressed to His Grace, The Duke of Norfolk,” no. 68. <https://archive.org/details/a678635200newmuoft>.
- 14 Bull De Constitudine. Cited in Torquemada’s Summa de Ecclesia.
- 15 Francisco Suarez, *De Fide*, Disp. X, Sec. VI, N. 16.
- 16 St. Robert Bellarmine, De Romano Pontifice, Book II, Ch. 29.
- 17 Hilary White, “Detaching ‘pastoral practice’ from Catholic doctrine is a ‘dangerous schizophrenic pathology’: Vatican cardinal,” Feb. 23, 2015, @ lifesitenews.com. Cited in: Ferrara, Christopher A. & Woods, Thomas E., The Great Façade, p. 452 (footnote). Kettering, Ohio: Angelico Press, 2015.
- 18 Address of Cardinal Raymond Burke to the Rome Life Forum, May 7, 2016. <http://voiceofthefamily.com/cardinal-burke-martyrdom-for-the-faith-in-our-times/>
- 19 *Letter To The Bishops Of The Catholic Church Concerning The Reception Of Holy Communion By The Divorced And Remarried Members Of The Faithful*, Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith: September 14, 1994.
- 20 Bishop Athanasius’ letter of reply to *The Remnant’s*, “Open Letter to Bishop Athanasius Schneider,” (May 26, 2016).

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- 21 Edward Pentin, “Cardinal Burke on *Amoris Laetitia Dubia*: ‘Tremendous Division’ Warrants Action,” *National Catholic Register*, Nov. 15, 2016. <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/cardinal-burke-on-amoris-laetitia-dubia-tremendous-division-warrants-action>.
- 22 Lisa Bourne, “EXCLUSIVE: Cardinal Burke suggests timeline for ‘formal correction’ of Pope Francis,” Dec. 19, 2016, @ lifesitenews.com. <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/exclusive-cardinal-burke-suggests-timeline-for-formal-correction-of-pope-fr>
- 23 <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/02/exclusive-bishop-athanasius-schneider.html>.
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- 25 Ibid.
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- 33 Encyclical of Pope Pius X: *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, Sept. 8, 1907. This Encyclical may be downloaded at papalencyclicals.net.
- 34 From a Catholic News Agency report on an article in the Jan. 8, 2008 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*. Cited in a Lifesitenews report, Jan. 9, 2008.
- 35 Letter posted at: notitiae.ipsissima-verba.org.

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- 36 Catholic News Agency report: September 22, 2009.
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newadvent.org/fathers/3506.htm.
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<http://trueorfalsepope.com/articles/siscoe/Deposing%20a%20Heretical%20Pope%20-%20Part%201%20-%20CFN.pdf>.
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Appendix

LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI

Purity of the Faith: one of the Dearest Interests of Jesus

In our day when there exists a general lack of concern about adhering to the true religion, when the erroneous attitude reigns that it matters little which religion one belongs to as long as one is sincere, it is important to be reminded of the infallible doctrine found in the Athanasian Creed:

Whosoever wishes to be saved, needs above all to hold the Catholic Faith; unless each one preserves this Faith whole and inviolate, he will without a doubt perish eternally.

From this we can easily understand the truth of the words of the renowned Father Faber: * *“Purity of the Faith is one of the dearest interests of Jesus.”* And: *[O]ne who truly loves his Lord and Master is pained beyond the power of words by the expression of false doctrines, especially among Catholics.”*¹

Recognizing these truths, this author feels a duty in conscience, to advise all those who are of the Latin Rite to seek out and attend the Traditional Latin (Tridentine) Mass as a *doctrinal safeguard*.[†] Though the New Mass (*Novus Ordo Missæ*) given to the Church in 1970 is certainly a valid Mass, Pope Benedict XVI (while as yet Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the

* Rev. Father Frederick William Faber (1814-1863): While perhaps best known for his hymn *Faith of our Fathers*, he is also esteemed for his devotional works. The Catholic Encyclopedia states: *“His knowledge of the spiritual life and the extent of his theological and ascetic reading were seen in the eight works that...came from his pen.... The many foreign translations of these works, their circulation...their constant quotation by spiritual writers, have raised their author to the rank of a master in mystical theology”* (Bowden, H.S. "Frederick William Faber." The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 5. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. newadvent.org/cathen/05740c.htm).

[†] Pope Benedict XVI has dubbed the Traditional Mass the *“extraordinary form of the liturgy.”*

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) made it clear that there are real problems with it that tend to harm the *"integrity of the Faith,"* so dear to Jesus.

Benedict XVI: Cause of the Crisis is Collapse of the Liturgy

As mentioned earlier, there presently exists a grave and continuing crisis in the Church which, affecting the Faith, morals and practice of Catholics worldwide, thus gravely endangers the salvation of many.* What is the cause? Before his elevation to the Papacy, Cardinal Ratzinger candidly declared: *"I am convinced that the ecclesial crisis in which we find ourselves today is to a large extent due to the collapse of the liturgy."*² This naturally leads us to ask, what does he mean by the collapse of the liturgy? Looking again to the Cardinal, we find the answer in his lamenting that abandoning the old rite and creating something entirely new *"introduced a breach into the history of the liturgy whose consequences could only be tragic.... the old building was demolished, and another was built.... this has caused us great harm."*³

The Catholic rite of the Mass is a trust handed down to us as something sacred, whose integrity must be safeguarded. While it may experience certain incremental changes over the centuries likened to the natural growth of an organism, it must not be mutated into something entirely new and different. The Cardinal explained:

*In place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it — as in a manufacturing process — with a fabrication, a banal on-the-spot product.*⁴

The problem with *"manufacturing"* a new liturgy is recognized when we consider the ancient axiom: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. What does it mean? The "law of prayer" (*lex orandi*)

* The crisis is briefly elaborated upon on pp. 4-5.

determines the “law of belief” (*lex credendi*). In other words, the way in which we worship (liturgy) determines the way we believe. The Mass, then, has always been recognized as a prime means of conveying the doctrine of the Faith. Thus, in every generation, those in the hierarchy received the Catholic rite of liturgy as a sacred deposit handed down to them from the Apostles and Fathers, and were careful to fulfill their duty to hand it on, untainted, for the preservation of orthodoxy.* They guarded the sacred rite with extreme care to protect it from any alteration that could change the Faith of the people. But, in our age, certain authorities, infected with the heresy of Modernism (the root cause of today’s crisis), thought it good to “update” the Mass that it might keep pace with the times. “Manufacturing” an entirely new liturgy, they disregarded the tradition of safeguarding the sacred rite, thus endangering the orthodoxy of the faithful.

Those who led the 16th century Protestant revolt understood this concept of *lex orandi*, *lex credendi* well. It is precisely for this reason that they quickly changed the Catholic Mass into a different rite of worship. For by changing the rite of worship (*lex orandi*), the people’s belief (*lex credendi*) would easily be changed, saving much effort to try to alter it through their (heretical) preaching. Thus we can understand why Cardinal Ratzinger, once reigning as Benedict XVI, mandated that “usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition be maintained, not only so that errors may be avoided, but also that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church’s rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*).”†⁵

* This is made manifest by the Church’s customary designation of the Traditional liturgy as “*the received and approved rite.*”

† Similarly, Cardinals Ottaviani (as Head of the Holy Office) and Bacci showed concern for the integrity of the Faith in their letter warning that the New Mass “*represents, as a whole and in detail, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as it was formulated in Session XXII of the*

Communion-in-the-Hand*

One example of a tradition that has been broken in the New Mass and that harms the integrity of the Faith is found in the manner of receiving the Sacred Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. In what Pope Paul VI called, “*a most ancient and venerable tradition*,”⁶ only the consecrated hands of God’s ordained minister (one set apart to act in the person of Christ) could licitly touch and distribute the sacred species, and Our Lord’s faithful always humbly knelt to receive Him on their tongues. The leaders of the Protestant revolt abhorred this ancient custom *because of the Catholic doctrines it clearly conveys* — doctrines concerning the Real Presence and the sacred, ministerial Priesthood. One such leader, Martin Bucer, called this tradition: “*A double superstition: first [because of] the false honor they wish to show to this sacrament, and secondly [because of] the wicked arrogance of priests claiming greater holiness than that of the people of Christ, by virtue of their oil consecration.*”⁷ Thus, we clearly understand why the Protestants introduced the novel practice of Communion-in-the-hand while the Catholic Church remained firmly attached to the “*ancient and venerable tradition.*” How wonderfully, and without any words, this reverential manner of receiving Communion continually instructs the faithful in pure Catholic doctrine. Furthermore, it shows great honor to his Divine Majesty humbly hidden in the Sacred Host!

Yet, in the late 1960’s, through the disobedience of certain modernist prelates, Communion-in-the-hand began to be introduced in the Catholic Church in various places in Europe. Pope Paul VI tried to rein in this harmful practice in 1969, ordering the letter *Memoriale Domini* to be issued by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. This letter would mandate that

Council of Trent, which, by fixing definitively the ‘canons’ of the rite, erected an insurmountable barrier against any heresy which might attack the integrity of the Mystery” (Letter to Pope Paul VI, 1969).

* See also the heading: “The Manner of Receiving Holy Communion,” p. 30.

the practice of receiving Communion on the tongue, “based on a most ancient and venerable tradition,” be maintained. For, a change in this practice “carries certain dangers with it...: the danger of loss of reverence for the august Sacrament of the altar, of profanation, of adulterating the true doctrine.” Here we see the Pope’s concern for the integrity of Faith based on the ancient principle *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*.*

Unfortunately, the letter was ineffective. Through further disobedience, clever maneuvering, and a lack of firmness on the part of the Vatican, the dangerous practice was soon spread throughout the entire universal Church.† As a result, today (decades later), this “most ancient and venerable tradition,” explained by the following words of the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas, is virtually forgotten:

...[O]ut of reverence towards this sacrament, nothing touches it, but what is consecrated; hence the corporal and the chalice are consecrated, and likewise the priest's hands, for touching this sacrament. Hence it is not lawful for anyone else to touch it except from necessity, for instance, if it were to fall upon the ground, or else in some other case of urgency.⁸

Loss of Esteem for the Priesthood

It is not only faith in and reverence for the Most Blessed Sacrament that is affected. With this new practice of the faithful receiving the Sacred Host in the hand and even commonly distributing Holy Communion, what has become of the reverence

* At the 1997 Call to Holiness Conference the well-known American Jesuit, Fr. John Hardon (RIP), explained to those present: “*Behind Communion-in-the-hand — I wish to repeat and make as plain as I can — is a weakening, a conscious, deliberate weakening of faith in the Real Presence.*” Therefore, he advised: “*Whatever you can do to stop Communion-in-the-hand will be blessed by God.*”

† Notably, during his reign, Pope Benedict XVI administered Communion exclusively on the tongue in his Diocese of Rome.

and awe Catholics once had for the sacred person of the priest — a man who has been called apart by God to act in the Person of His Divine Son Jesus Christ? How many present day Catholics still retain something of that veneration for the priesthood that was so pronounced in the Saints? For example, the regard of St. Francis of Assisi for the sublime dignity of those whose hands are consecrated to touch the Body and Blood of Christ was such that he exclaimed: *“If I were at the same time to meet some saint coming down from Heaven and any poor little priest, I would first pay my respect to the priest and proceed to kiss his hands first.”* For, he said, *“this person’s hands handle the Word of Life and possess something that is more than human.”*⁹

Changes in the Offertory Prayers

Another example of a tradition that has been broken in the New Mass and that brings harm to the integrity of the Faith is found in its altered prayers and rubrics. This is something more intrinsic to the Mass than receiving Communion in the hand. The end result of these alterations is that the notion that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice — the very renewal of the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary — has become very much obscured. Take, for example, the changes made to the offertory prayers. While the traditional prayers speak of a sacrifice offered for the propitiation of sin (the very definition of the Catholic Mass), in the corresponding prayers of the *Novus Ordo*, the concept of propitiatory sacrifice has been completely omitted. Here are the prayers of the Traditional Liturgy:

Accept, O holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this unspotted host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offenses, and negligences, and for all here present...

We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, humbly begging of thy mercy that it may rise before Thy divine majesty with a pleasing fragrance, for our salvation and that of all the world.

Compare them with those of the *Novus Ordo*:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

Bishop Athanasius Schneider has said of these new prayers: *“They are an entirely new creation and had never been used in the Church. They do less to express the mystery of the sacrifice of the Cross than that of a banquet; thus they recall the prayers of the Jewish Sabbath meal.”*¹⁰

Here we can see clearly why Cardinal Ratzinger has called the New Mass both *“fabricated”* and *“banal.”* For, the new prayers, having absolutely no root in the Church’s tradition, are indeed *“a manufactured, on-the-spot product.”* And in them, the offering made is nothing more than common bread and wine for the purpose of becoming some kind of vague spiritual food. On the other hand, in the traditional prayers, the *“host”** and *“chalice of salvation”* are offered, indicating the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, and this Sacrifice is offered in atonement for sin unto salvation.

The Anglican Prayer Book

It was strikingly similar changes made to the liturgy in England (after King Henry VIII usurped the Pope’s authority there) that worked to effectively protestantize the Faith of the people. It caused the Church of England to go from the sad enough of state being schismatic, to the worse state of being clearly heretical. Speaking of the Anglican Prayer Book of 1549, which introduced the new liturgy to the English, Monsignor Hughes relates in his work, The Reformation in England:

* *Host*: from the Latin word *hostia*, which means sacrificial victim.

*Once these new sacramental rites... had become the habit of the English people the substance of the doctrinal reformation, victorious now in northern Europe, would have transformed England also. All but insensibly, as years went by, the beliefs enshrined in the old, and now disused rites, and kept alive by these rites in men's minds and affections would disappear — without the need of any systematic missionary effort to preach them down.*¹¹

If these alterations to the liturgy in England changed the Faith of the English people, we can be certain that the conspicuously similar changes that we witness in the New Mass would likewise produce similar results — which they have.* We have only to consider the polls revealing that 60% of Catholics in the U.S. no longer believe the Catholic doctrine on the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist to be convinced.¹² Here again, we clearly see the profound effect of the principle, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, and we can understand why Cardinal Ratzinger was drawn to publicly state: “*I am convinced that the ecclesial crisis in which we find ourselves today is to a large extent due to the collapse of the liturgy.*”

Concern: Not for Validity, but with Keeping the Faith

It is important to reiterate unequivocally that there is no question here concerning the validity of the *Novus Ordo Missæ*. If a validly ordained Catholic priest offers it with the proper matter, form and intention, the bread and wine are, indeed, consecrated; thus, it is a valid Mass. The focus of concern therefore, is not with validity, but with how the New Mass affects the integrity of the Faith of those who attend. And, of course, this integrity of Faith is of vital importance for the

* Remarkably, Anglican Bishop Moorman, an observer at the Second Vatican Council, noted: “*In reading the schema on the Liturgy, and in listening to the debate on it, I could not help thinking that, if the Church of Rome went on improving the Missal and Breviary long enough, they would one day invent the Book of Common Prayer [i.e. the Anglican Prayer Book].*” (Davies, Michael, *Pope Paul's New Mass*, Vol. 3 of *The Liturgical Revolution*, p. 279. Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1980).

salvation of every Catholic. For, this reason, *“Purity of the Faith is one of the dearest interests of Jesus.”* Therefore, it is because the Traditional Latin Mass reinforces so well the doctrine of the Faith in its prayers and actions — which the New Mass does not — that it must necessarily be advised. Many devout individuals and families today travel an hour and even more to assist at the Traditional Latin Mass in order to safeguard and nourish their Catholic Faith.

Good Fruits of the Traditional Mass

As you have seen, the fruits of the New Mass, according to Benedict XVI (and others), are the current crisis in the Church. This crisis may be described as a crisis of Faith affecting innumerable souls (clergy, religious and faithful) worldwide, ranging from a dangerously *unwitting* erosion of Faith to complete apostasy. On the other hand, we have witnessed tremendously good fruits from the Traditional Latin Mass over the centuries. It has produced countless holy men and women throughout every age of the Church who knew how to sanctify themselves by it. Today we venerate them as Saints. All of them had a great love and awe for the Holy Eucharist and the sacred Priesthood. For, the Traditional Mass — in all its prayers, customs and gestures — conveys clearly these (and other) doctrines of the Catholic Faith. Thus, it strengthens the orthodoxy of those who participate in it, while at the same time, it protects them from errors — and errors certainly abound in our time.

Before being raised to the Papacy, Benedict XVI lamented that the Traditional Liturgy had come to be considered as something off limits, saying: *“A community is calling its very being into question when it suddenly declares that what until now was its holiest and highest possession is strictly forbidden, and when it makes the longing for it seem downright indecent.”*¹³ However, once elected as Pope, he officially made it clear that the Traditional Mass *“was never juridically abrogated”*; thus, it had never been legally forbidden.¹⁴ Finally, after resigning, he rejoiced in witnessing the Faithful freely participating at it: *“I am*

*very glad that the *Usus antiquus* [the ancient usage or traditional Mass] now lives in full peace within the Church, also among the young, supported and celebrated by great Cardinals....”¹⁵*

Further Recommended Reading

In truth, *far more* could still be said of the problematic, “*fabricated*” New Mass, but it would take an entirely separate book. Yet, because this subject is important for guarding the integrity of the Faith while avoiding the dangers of error and heresy, I strongly encourage all who read this booklet to educate themselves further. For, further instruction in the matter will help to make still more clear how the Traditional Latin Mass safeguards the purity of the Catholic Faith against error. And, again, “*purity of the Faith is one of [Jesus] dearest interests.*” A number of excellent works on this subject are available, but the first this author would recommend is Michael Davies’ three volume set, The Liturgical Revolution, which Cardinal Ratzinger called an “*important publication.*”^{*} You may also wish to download my free PDF booklet: *The Novus Ordo Question*, available at sicutincaelo.org.

A Final Warning on Changing the Liturgy

In closing this treatise, I leave you with this amazing prophecy which Pope Pius XII uttered (while yet a Cardinal and Vatican Secretary of State) before his fellow prelates:

*I am worried by the Blessed Virgin’s messages to Lucy of Fatima. This persistence of Mary about the dangers which menace the Church is **a divine warning against the suicide that***

^{*} Upon Mr. Davies death in 2004, then Cardinal Ratzinger (soon to be Pope Benedict XVI) publicly stated: “*I have been profoundly touched by the news of the death of Michael Davies. I had the good fortune to meet him several times and I found him as a man of deep faith and ready to embrace suffering. Ever since the Council he put all his energy into the service of the Faith and left us important publications especially about the Sacred Liturgy*”

(<https://www.remnantnewspaper.com/Archives/archive-2007-0815-mershon-davies.htm>).

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- ⁶ *Memoriale Domini*, Letter of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship ordered by Pope Paul VI in 1969 to safeguard the traditional practice of receiving Communion on the tongue.
- ⁷ From the article: *Why the Traditional Mass?* Available at olrl.org.
- ⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (III, Q. 82, A. 3).
- ⁹ Meyer, James, OFM, *The Words of St. Francis*, p. 66.
Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982.
- ¹⁰ <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com.es/2016/02/exclusive-bishop-athanasius-schneider.html?m=1>.
- ¹¹ Cited in: Davies Michael, *Cranmer's Godly Order* (Vol. 1 of *The Liturgical Revolution*), p. 289. Ft. Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books, 1995.
- ¹² See endnote 1 in *A Compass for Catholics* (p.42).
- ¹³ Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal, *Salt of the Earth*, trans. Adrian Walker, p. 176. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997.
- ¹⁴ Letter of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, mandated by Benedict XVI: "Instruction on the Application of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* of His Holiness Benedict XVI given *Motu Proprio*." April 20, 2011.
- ¹⁵ Ferrara, Christopher A. & Woods, Thomas E., *The Great Façade*, p. 464. Kettering, Ohio: Angelico Press, 2015. Citing: Sandro Magister: "The 'Evangelii Gaudium' of Pope Emeritus Benedict," Oct. 28, 2014 @[chiesa. Espresso.repubblica.it/](http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/).
- ¹⁶ Roche, George, *Pie XII devant L'Histoire*, pp. 52-3. Paris: R. Laffont, 1972.



FURTHER READING

Books on the Current Ecclesiastical Crisis

- ❖ The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion, by Msgr. Brunero Gherardini.
- ❖ The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story, by Prof. Roberto de Mattei.
- ❖ The Rhine Flows into the Tiber, by Ralph Wiltgen — An objective history of the Second Vatican Council written by a priestly reporter who was an eyewitness to the events. Gives insight into the cause of the current crisis
- ❖ The Great Façade, by Christopher A. Ferrara & Thomas E. Woods — A clear presentation of the cause of the current crisis and of the truth of the traditionalists' position of resistance.
- ❖ True or False Pope, by Robert Siscoe & John Salza — Documenting clearly the *falsity* of the sedevacantist position: that the Chair of St. Peter is empty.
- ❖ The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita, a Blueprint for the Subversion of the Catholic Church, by John Vennari — A stunning report on the Papally verified Masonic document that outlines their plan to subvert the Church.

Books on the Liturgical Crisis

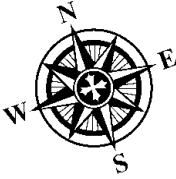
- ❖ The Liturgical Revolution, by Michael Davies (3 Vols.).
- ❖ The Novus Ordo Question, by Robert T. Hart (free download at sicutincaelo.org).

Traditional Catechisms

- ❖ The Catechism of the Council of Trent, The Catechism of St. Pius X & The Baltimore Catechism — Being approved and published by the Church prior to the current crisis, they are without doubt free of its errors.

Traditional Encyclicals

- ❖ The Popes Against Modern Errors — Sixteen Papal Documents (from Gregory XVI to Pius XII) collected under one cover that speak with one voice (*una voce*) and with astounding insight against the errors existing both in the world and in the Church in our day. Traditional encyclicals (before 1962) may be downloaded individually at papalencyclicals.net.



Today the Church is suffering through what the well-known, American Jesuit, Father John A. Hardon (RIP) once called: “...*the worst crisis in its entire history.*” Confusion reigns as we witness Church authorities contradicting one another over serious matters of Church teaching and discipline. Our Lady at Akita, Japan predicted this several decades ago:

“The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops. ...the Church will be full of those who accept compromises and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord” (October 13, 1973).

In such a time of crisis, how can average Catholics know the truth that they may save their immortal souls? This is a crucial question.

In **A COMPASS FOR CATHOLICS**, you will find that there is a clear answer. For, Our Lord does not leave his faithful abandoned. When the ecclesiastical authorities become disoriented in a time of crisis, the Church teaches that, rather than blindly following them into error, the faithful are to cling to the Deposit of Faith and all the traditions vital to that same Faith. In these pages then, you will learn exactly what that Deposit is, and what is necessary to remain faithful to, it in order not to be led into any error.

“...stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:14).