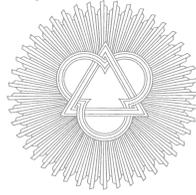

Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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My Dear Catholic people,

In the picture in the middle of the page you can see our recent ordinands. Rev. Mr. Damien Dutertre from France (in the white tunic) received the subdiaconate; the others received one of the minor orders. In June, I will ordain Rev. Mr. Dutertre to the diaconate, and promote the same four to the next level of minor orders. As always, remember the seminarians in your prayers. They are your future priests. Their formation and their perseverance in the seminary is of capital importance for the Church in the future.

Recognize and resist. Recently an article appeared in *The Remnant* by a Mr. Robert Siscoe¹ which attempted to defend the *recognize and resist* position concerning the papacy in the present situation.

For those who may not be familiar with what I am talking about, this position (R & R) holds that we must *recognize* the Vatican II “popes” and their hierarchy as true popes and a true Catholic hierarchy, but at the same time *resist* whatever is false in their teaching or evil in their disciplines.

This position was espoused originally by Archbishop Lefebvre, who said that we must sift the Novus Ordo magisterium, accepting only what is in accordance with tradition, and reject the rest. The Society of Saint Pius X has operated on this principle since its beginnings in the 1970’s. It seems that they will soon enter into union with the Modernists, however, which will necessarily alter their

position into *recognize and accept*.

There is now a resistance to the SSPX’s desire to reunite with the Modernists. They are not very numerous. They are disorganized. They are carrying the torch for the R & R position.

Recognize and resist holds that the Catholic Church is able to err, even against the Faith itself, even when it universally teaches doctrine and promulgates universal disciplines, including Canon Law and the sacred liturgy.

In such a case, R & R asserts, those responsible for the Church’s avoidance of defection are the faithful who reject these false teachings and evil disciplines. The Church remains faithful, in other words, not through the pope and the hierarchy, but through the rejecters.



¹ Mr. Robert Siscoe is the co-author of an 800-page book against sedevacantism.

These R & R proponents search for historical precedents in order to bolster their position. They try to find cases in the past when “the Church erred” but was saved by the rejecting sheep.

Mr. Siscoe thought that he found one such incident in the Middle Ages. It concerned the Pauline Privilege.

The Pauline Privilege is a law of the Church based on the teaching of Saint Paul. It says that in the case of the marriage of two unbaptized persons, if one should convert to the Catholic Faith, and the other, unconverted, should persecute the Catholic, then the marriage is dissolved. This would apply even if the non-baptized party should merely blaspheme Christ in front of the Catholic party.

Pope Celestine III (1191-1198) handed down a decision in which he *stated his opinion* that the Pauline Privilege could also apply to persons in a Catholic marriage if one party should become a heretic. He did not make any universal law concerning it.

His successor, Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), said that Celestine was wrong about this. However, *at the time*, the interpretation of the Pauline Privilege was disputed, and not yet settled. St. Robert Bellarmine attests to this.²

Mr. Siscoe claims that a later Pope, Gregory IX, promulgated as universal law the interpretation of Celestine III, thereby promulgating to the whole Church an evil law that permits adultery.

Mr. Siscoe thought he had the perfect argument in favor of R & R, and against the sedevacantists. For the sedevacantists argue that it is impossible that the whole Catholic hierarchy teach error concerning faith and morals, or that the Church can prescribe or even permit some practice which is contrary to faith or morals. Because it is certain that the Vatican II popes and bishops have done this very thing, it is proof positive that they are not true popes or true Catholic bishops.

What is particularly alarming is the glee which is detected in Mr. Siscoe’s “discovery,” as if he had found a pot of gold. He seems delighted that he proved that the Catholic Church could permit, by universal law, something which is a mortal sin, contrary to divine law. This he does despite the numerous testimonies of popes and theologians that such a thing is not possible.

Why does Mr. Siscoe delight in the condemned doctrine so much? Because he sees it as the pin which will blow up the sedevacantists’ theological balloon. For the sedevacantists hold, as I said, that proof positive of the non-papacy of the Vatican II “popes” is that they have, precisely, authorized as universal law practices which are mortally sinful. Since such aberration is impossible by the assistance of the Holy Ghost to His Church, it is clear that these so-called popes do not enjoy this assistance and therefore do not enjoy the power to teach, rule, and sanctify the Church. They are not true popes; indeed they *cannot* be true popes,

unless one is willing to assert that the Holy Ghost does not preserve the popes from teaching doctrinal error to the whole Church. But this is contrary to faith.

Mr. Siscoe seemed to think that he found the ultimate “gotcha” against the sedevacantists.

Insufficient research. Mr. Siscoe failed to do sufficient research concerning his subject. Celestine’s interpretation was never made universal law. Pope Gregory IX specifically ordered Celestine’s individual case law to be expunged from what he would publish as the *Decretals*. This information is easily available from Canon Law manuals and encyclopedias. Fr. Cekada exposed the faulty research in a video available on *YouTube* entitled *Siscoe, Celestine, and Sedevacantism*, which I urge everyone to look at. Fr. Cekada approaches the subject with his usual wit and humor.



POPE CELESTINE III

² “I respond that neither Celestine nor Innocent decreed anything certain about that matter, but both responded what seemed to them to be the more probable. This is manifestly deduced from the words of Innocent who, when he says that his predecessor [Celestine] thought differently, indicates that the whole matter was still a matter of opinion.” (*Controversies of the Christian Faith on the Roman Pontiff*, Book IV, chapter 14.)

The teaching of the Church. The Church is quite clear in her teaching concerning the infallibility of her universal laws and disciplines. Gregory XVI said in the encyclical *Quo graviora* of October 4, 1833: “Is it possible that the Church, which is the pillar and ground of truth and which is continually receiving from the Holy Ghost the teaching of all truth, could ordain, grant, or permit what would turn to the detriment of the soul’s salvation, to the contempt and harm of a sacrament instituted by Christ?”

The same pontiff said in the encyclical *Mirari vos* of August 15th, 1832: “It would be beyond any doubt blameworthy and entirely contrary to the respect with which the laws of the Church should be received by a senseless aberration to find fault with the discipline which she has established, and which includes the administration of holy things, the regulation of morals, and the laws of the Church and her ministers; or to speak of this discipline as opposed to certain principles of the natural law, or to present it as defective, imperfect, and subject to civil authority.”

Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) in the Bull *Auctorem fidei* condemned as “false, rash, scandalous, dangerous, offensive to pious ears, injurious to the Church and to the Spirit of God by whom it is guided, at least erroneous,” the proposition that “the Church which is ruled by the Spirit of God could have established discipline which is dangerous and harmful.”³ Saint Augustine, recalling those things “which the Church does throughout the whole world,” said: “and hence to dispute whether it should be done in such a way pertains to the most insolent insanity.” (*Epist. 169 ad Januar. De variis consuetudinibus regionum, cap. V.*)

All Catholic theologians, furthermore, assert that it is at least *theologically certain* that the Church cannot err in its universal disciplines, i.e., it cannot prescribe or even permit something sinful. The famous theologian John of Saint Thomas calls *heretical* the notion that the Church could do such a thing.⁴

Furthermore, the indefectibility of the Church is a doctrine which pertains to *faith*. We are bound by faith to believe that the Church as an institution will remain until the end of time, and will remain in the same state as Christ founded it. This means that it cannot undergo any substantial changes in doctrine, morals, or disciplines.

Now all traditionalists would agree that the teachings and practices which have been promulgated by the Vatican II popes and bishops are contrary to faith and to morals. Otherwise why resist them?

We sedevacantists therefore argue in this way: since we are bound to believe that the Church can never defect, and since it is at least theologically certain that the Church could never prescribe or permit what is sinful, then we must, in the case of Vatican II and its changes, look for the cause of the

defection elsewhere. What *can* defect, obviously, is the faith of the men appointed to be her leaders. We therefore conclude that those who are apparently popes or bishops, *cannot* be true ones, since they have promulgated false doctrines, evil disciplines, and a false liturgical practices. In other words, they have *manifested* to us that they are false, because they have contradicted the teaching of the Church and have promulgated evil disciplines, which the true Catholic hierarchy cannot do, owing to the assistance of the Holy Ghost.



POPE PIUS VI

He condemned the very principle at the foundation of the "Recognize and Resist" position.

³ Denz. 1578.

⁴ John of Saint Thomas thinks this way: “In that which pertains to the substance and morality of the law, which the Pontiff commonly proposes, as a rule of morals to be followed, it would be heresy to assert that the Church could err, in such a way that it could either permit or prescribe something destructive, or against good morals, or the natural law or the divine law.” Likewise St. Thomas Aquinas proves that those things are suitable which are done in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. He offers as the solution: “the custom of the Church, which cannot err, since it is led by the Holy Ghost.” (IIIa. q. 83. art. 5). The Council of Trent, in session XXII, can. 7 declares: “If any one should say, that the ceremonies, vestments, and outward signs, which the Catholic Church makes use of in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety, rather than offices of piety; let him be anathema.”

Our argument rests on the very solid foundations of Catholic doctrine concerning the indefectibility and infallibility of the Church. To put it succinctly: If the changes of Vatican II are a departure from the Catholic Faith, then we are bound *by faith* to draw the certain conclusion that those who promulgate them lack the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and are not the true hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

What does recognize and resist rest on? The position of the R & R people rests on *condemned* doctrines. It rests on principles which are certainly *false*. They may even be *heretical*.

R & R is in the same company as the Gallicans, the Old Catholics, and Hans Küng, all of whom are heretics. They assert the same thing as R & R: that the whole hierarchy could teach falsehood or could promulgate evil laws, but that the Church will be infallible and indefectible because the people will reject these things.

Recognize and resist, by claiming that the Church can prescribe or permit sinful acts in its universal laws, is, as Pius VI said, *a false, rash, scandalous, and dangerous* doctrine. It destroys the very essence of the Church, which is the assistance of the Holy Ghost to the Church's hierarchy. It infects the laity with a wicked attitude, which is protestant, of sifting everything that Rome says, taking what it likes, rejecting what it finds to be wanting. It reduces the Church to being a purely human institution which is subject to the foibles and vicissitudes of human frailty and ignorance.

Christ promised assistance to the Church's *hierarchy*. He did not promise assistance to those who learn doctrine from the hierarchy. If there is defection from the faith on the part of the hierarchy, the faithful have but one thing to do: to flee from them as false shepherds and to denounce them as such. Saint Paul said: "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. As we said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." (Galatians I: 7-9) Notice that there is no command to "sift" here, or to "recognize and resist."

More defection from the Faith. While we are on the subject of the Novus Ordo's defection from the faith, we should examine the latest word on *Amoris Laetitia*, the "joy of love" encyclical of Bergoglio, or, as some have called it, "the joy of adultery."

Novus Ordo Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio is in charge of the Vatican's office that interprets the Novus

Ordo's laws. He said recently that couples living in either adulterous or fornicatory unions can stay together and engage in intercourse, provided that they desire to change their situation, but cannot act on their desire because doing so would lead to further sin.

He gives the example of a woman who is cohabitating with a divorced man and his children. According to the N.O. cardinal, the woman "has saved the man from a state of deep despair, probably from the temptation of suicide." He points out that he has helped him raise the children, and has provided the opportunity to add a new child to the family.

"But evidently," says Coccopalmerio, "she can't [leave the man]. If in fact, if she left the union, the man would turn back to the previous situation, the children would be left without a mother."

According to the cardinal, to leave the children would be a "new sin."

Does the cardinal realize that she is not the mother at all, not even a stepmother, but merely a mistress?

Like Bergoglio, the cardinal makes the absurd claim of upholding the traditional teaching of the Church by calling it an "ideal." He says: "In no way, must the Church renounce to proposing the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its greatness [...] Any form of relativism, or an excessive respect in the moment of proposing it, would be a lack of fidelity to the Gospel and also a lack of love of the Church."

So the Modernist termites, which began their work even before Vatican II, have now penetrated into the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, denying the sacrosanct doctrine of the indissolubility of matrimony by permitting adultery and fornication.

While such a thing is to be deplored, it is not at all surprising. Is it surprising that the termites eventually will eat everything?

What is more deplorable and truly surprising is the attitude of the Novus Ordo conservative who will somehow defend this as in accordance with tradition, and who will condemn as "extreme" and "misled" those who point out the break from tradition and the necessary logical consequences thereof, which I described above. Their assertion that "nothing has changed" is pure fiction, and will not last the test of time.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn
Rector