

THE ERRORS OF THE “RECOGNIZE AND RESIST” SYSTEM

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This article presents a series of erroneous propositions commonly defended by the theological system labeled “Recognize and Resist”. These errors are then refuted by appeal to the Church’s infallible magisterium, and by the teaching of Fathers and doctors of the Church. Some objections are then addressed, which give us the occasion to deepen further certain aspects of the Thesis.

1. “Recognize and Resist”.

This expression, coined by Father Cekada, and now commonly accepted, refers to the theological system which aims to recognize as valid and legitimate the authority of the “Vatican II popes”, while resisting most (if not all) of the teachings, disciplines, and liturgical laws, of the “Vatican II popes”. The “recognize-and-resist” system (henceforth referred to as “R&R”) admits degrees, depending on the balance one chooses between recognizing and resisting the “Vatican II popes”. The Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, has been the main vehicle of this system, and is still today its main embodiment. Other groups have disagreed on exactly how much you may recognize or resist the aforesaid “Vatican II popes”. Many “novus ordo conservatives” are nowadays leaning closer and closer to the SSPX position, and share the main tenets of the R&R system, while giving more into “recognizing” than SSPX does. On the other hand, a number of priests have left the

SSPX, and have labeled themselves as “the Resistance”, owing to their hardline insistence on “resisting” more things that SSPX does, out of a desired fidelity to the original “R&R” taught and promoted by Archbishop Lefebvre.

2. What the R&R position got right.

The R&R system is based on two observations which many Catholics have perceived by their Catholic faith.

First, these Catholics have come to the conclusion (to a greater or lesser extent) that the Vatican II religion is a new religion. They do not want anything opposed to the Catholic faith, and reject whatever they perceive as a modernist novelty. This is a very good disposition, and indeed, it is required by our faith: we must hold to the Catholic religion, and refuse any substantial change to it.

Secondly, these Catholics observe that to “fix the problem in the Church”, so to speak, is not directly up to them, in the sense that they understand that they have no title to

erect themselves as any kind of authority in the Church, to judge and depose bishops and popes, and call a conclave to elect a good Catholic pope.

As a consequence, Catholics adhering to the R&R system commonly reject the New Mass, the new doctrines of Vatican II, and the new disciplines. They abhor ecumenism, for example, and are greatly scandalized by the idolatrous practices allowed in Assisi, or more recently, in the Vatican itself.

On the other hand, these Catholics rightly flee any idea of calling a conclave of their own, and “playing Church”, knowing very well that they are in no way entitled to do such a thing.

3. The essential error of the R&R system.

The problem of the R&R system does not consist in these preceding observations, which are shared by the Thesis, and which are simple reactions dictated by a spirit of faith. The problem of the R&R position is rather in the *theological system* which is proposed as an attempt to reconcile these two basic observations. For this system attributes the defection of Vatican II to the divinely instituted authority of the Church, which is assisted by the Holy Ghost. This is absolutely untenable, and utterly irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine on the nature of the Church, its indefectibility, and its infallibility.

As a direct consequence of this first error, the R&R clergy proclaims the necessity to establish a parallel apostolate to the “official Church”, in the entire world, since the “official Church” (or “conciliar Church”) is recognized, essentially, as not doing its work and not fulfilling its mission. This is usually believed by means of a more pragmatic

attitude, but it is a very serious error, when established as a speculative principle. It destroys in the mind of the faithful the very foundations of the traditional doctrine concerning the Church’s nature, mission, and divine attributes.

We believe that the Thesis is the theological system able to explain with satisfaction the unprecedented crisis in which we live, and able to reconcile the simple observations on which the R&R position itself is based, in conformity to Catholic dogma concerning the nature and attributes of the Church.

Precisely because the R&R system is untenable, people often disagree on how much exactly they should give to “recognizing” the “Vatican II popes”, and how much they should give to “resisting” the Vatican II religion.

A fair and objective analysis of history would show that Archbishop Lefebvre has not himself always followed the same balance between “recognizing” and “resisting” the “Vatican II popes”. It does not therefore come as a surprise that his disciples would disagree over time on exactly what balance one should observe between these two aspects of the R&R system.

Despite these variations and nuances, it seems fair to us to establish the following propositions as the main characteristics of the R&R theological system, even if these principles are not followed by all with the same rigor. Some of the propositions of this syllabus are very close to each other, but we feel the need to show that every nuance of these errors have been already condemned, and thus we were not afraid to seem repetitive.

4. Why call it a “Syllabus” of errors?

A syllabus is, in general, a summary of the outline of a discourse, or a list of the essential points of a doctrine or treaty.

In the history of the Church, errors have often been condemned in the form of a syllabus, as a list of propositions condemned by the magisterium of the Church. These condemned propositions are either taken word for word from unorthodox writings, or give in similar terms the dangerous idea being defended.

The most famous of the Church’s *syllabi*, is “the” Syllabus, that is, the one issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864. It presents, in an orderly fashion, a number of modern errors which Pope Pius IX had to condemn over the course of his pontificate.

5. Value of this R&R syllabus.

The “syllabus” which we present here to the reader does not enjoy, obviously, the authority of the Church *as it is a syllabus*. By this we mean that we ourselves made this compilation, and not the Holy See. Nonetheless, all these condemnations are taken from the magisterium of the Church itself, and in this aspect, differ little from the syllabus of Pope Pius IX. His syllabus of 1864 listed condemnations which He had

issued over time, by different means: encyclicals, letters, allocutions, etc. In proposing this syllabus of R&R errors, we are doing exactly the same thing: we are merely listing and compiling condemnations that the magisterium of the Church *has already issued*, and this, *on many occasions*. Let no one therefore say that this syllabus has no value: it has the value of the condemnations of the Church which it presents.

6. Purpose.

By compiling these condemnations together, we want to show in a clear and systematic fashion the numerous contradictions existing between the R&R system and the infallible doctrine of the Church. To list the errors of the R&R system all together, and in a way in which they reveal themselves as clearly opposed to Catholic doctrine is very striking and eye-opening. We thus hope, in charity, to be of help for Catholics confused by the present crisis, and who, in order to safeguard the Catholic doctrine against the assaults of the modernists, may be tempted to fall for a system which itself overturns the fundamentals of Catholic dogma.

FIRST ARTICLE

SYLLABUS OF ERRORS MAINTAINED BY THE R&R SYSTEM

7. The following propositions are errors commonly held by R&R adherents.

1. The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the deposit of the faith, and could neglect the defense of the truth.

2. It could happen that the truth of faith and morals become obscured and ignored in the entire Church.

3. The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the sacraments instituted by Christ, and even promulgate liturgical rites deficient with regard to piety, or such that could render the sacraments doubtful.

4. The Roman Pontiff is both the head of the Catholic Church and of an ecumenical Church. Some of his acts are directed to the Catholic Church, others are directed to the ecumenical Church. Catholics are entitled to judge the value of the acts of the Holy See, in order to determine if they are directed to the Catholic Church or to the ecumenical church.

5. To know who is the Pope is irrelevant and insignificant for Catholics, and has very little consequence on their salvation. In today's confusion, it is prudent and safe to stay in ignorance or remain in doubt on this issue.

6. The Popes have erred many times in the past in matters of faith and morals, in their duty of universal teacher of the faithful.

7. An ecumenical council can err in matters of faith and morals to such an extent that it could teach doctrines previously condemned definitively.

8. Catholics are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate the decisions of a

legitimate ecumenical council of the Catholic Church.

9. The universal teaching of the bishops, submitted and united to the Roman Pontiff, could fail in the Church's mission to preach the faith in its integrity, and the universal teaching of the bishops together with the Pope is not infallible.

10. Catholics are bound to assent only to what is taught definitively by an express solemn decree, and not by the ordinary and daily magisterium.

11. Catholics are not bound to assent to the teachings set forth by the merely authentic magisterium of the Church, but are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate them. Catholics are free to hold condemned doctrines provided they are not formally anathematized.

12. The authority of the Church could give harmful or in some way deficient universal discipline.

13. Catholics are free to refuse and even publicly repudiate the universal disciplinary laws of the Church.

14. The Church is not infallible in the promulgation and imposition of universal liturgical rites.

15. The liturgical laws of the universal Church could cause a weakening of the faith and lead the faithful to impiety.

16. Catholics are free to refuse and even publicly repudiate new liturgical laws given by the authority of the Catholic Church.

17. The Church is not infallible in the solemn canonization of the saints.

18. Catholics are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate the solemn canonizations

of the Catholic Church.

19. Catholics are free to refuse obedience to the authority of the Catholic Church as long as they profess this duty of obedience with sincerity and piety.

20. Bishops are free to refuse obedience to the Roman Pontiff if they think they have a good reason.

21. Catholics are free to judge the value of the decisions of the authority of the Catholic Church.

22. Catholics are free to judge the value of the declarations of nullity of matrimony issued by the Holy See, and constitute their own assemblies to confirm it.

23. Catholic priests are free to administer the sacraments in any diocese without the delegation of the legitimate bishop, and even despite his prohibition, if they deem it to be

necessary. Catholics are free to access any priest for the sacraments, even against the will of the legitimate hierarchy.

24. Catholics are free to establish parishes, schools, seminaries, convents and monasteries without the authorization of the diocesan bishop or of the Holy See, and even despite their prohibition, if they deem it be profitable to the salvation of souls.

25. It is perfectly licit and even virtuous to consecrate bishops despite the express prohibition of the reigning Roman Pontiff.

26. Catholics are free to despise sentences of excommunication, if they deem it to be unjustly given.

27. Catholic priests are free to administer the sacraments, despite having been suspended or excommunicated, if they deem the sentence to be unjust.

SECOND ARTICLE

THE R&R ERRORS ARE EXPOSED AND REFUTED BY THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

8. R&R ERROR # 1: The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the deposit of the faith, and could neglect the defense of the truth.

Pope Pius XII teaches the indefectible attachment of the Church to her mission:

In the tempest of earthly events, and in spite of the deficiency and weakness which may dim her luster to our eyes, [the Church] has the security of remaining imperturbably faithful to her mission to the end of time.¹

Leo XIII teaches the same thing:

The Apostolic mission was not destined to die with the Apostles themselves, or to come to an end in the course of time, since it was intended for the people at large and instituted for the salvation of the human race...

The Church continues the mission of the Saviour for ever.²

One of the primary duties of the Catholic Church is the safeguard of the deposit of faith. Christ has endowed the Church with His own authority for that very purpose, and has promised to the Church His indefectible assistance in this duty.

Pope Leo XIII teaches, in his encyclical *Satis cognitum*:

It can never be that the Church

¹ Pope Pius XII, Allocution to Cardinals of December 24th, 1944.

² Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*.

committed to the care of Peter shall succumb or in any wise fail. [...] Therefore God confided His Church to Peter so that he might safely guard it with his unconquerable power.³

9. R&R ERROR # 2: It could happen that the truth of faith and morals become obscured and ignored in the entire Church.

The 1870 Vatican Council speaks in explicit terms on this question, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, and solemnly teaches that the Church could never cease to preach and defend the Catholic faith:

For, even as God wills all men to be saved, and to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, even as Christ came to save what had perished, and to gather together the children of God who had been dispersed, so the Church, constituted by God the mother and teacher of nations, knows its own office as debtor to all, and is ever ready and watchful to raise the fallen, to support those who are falling, to embrace those who return, to confirm the good and to carry them on to better things. Hence, it can never forbear from witnessing to and proclaiming the truth of God, which heals all things, knowing the words addressed to it: "My Spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, from henceforth and forever." (Isaias LIX,21).

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical *Mortalium animos* (1928), utterly condemns the idea

³ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, n. 12.

that the Church could lose her doctrine and qualifies it as *blasphemy*:

Jesus Christ sent His Apostles into the whole world in order that they might permeate all nations with the Gospel faith, and, lest they should err, He willed beforehand that they should be taught by the Holy Ghost. Has then this doctrine of the Apostles completely vanished away, or sometimes been obscured, in the Church, whose ruler and defense is God Himself? If our Redeemer plainly said that His Gospel was to continue not only during the times of the Apostles, but also till future ages, is it possible that the object of faith should in the process of time become so obscure and uncertain, that it would be necessary today to tolerate opinions which are even incompatible one with another? If this were true, we should have to confess that the coming of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, and the perpetual indwelling of the same Spirit in the Church, and the very preaching of Jesus Christ, have several centuries ago, lost all their efficacy and use, to affirm which would be blasphemy.

The Synod of Pistoia⁴ defended the idea that certain doctrines had been introduced over time in the Church, although they were sanctioned without sufficient authority, and are a corruption of the faith. This idea was utterly condemned by Pope Pius VI in the

⁴ The synod of Pistoia was a diocesan synod held in 1786 by Scipione De Ricci, bishop of Pistoia and Prato. This synod was a bold attempt to secure recognition of Jansenist and Gallican doctrines in Italy. It taught many serious errors and heresies, in doctrine, discipline, and liturgy, many of which bear a striking resemblance with Vatican II. The synod of Pistoia was condemned in a very detailed fashion by Pope Pius VI's bull *Auctorem fidei* of 1794.

bull *Auctorem fidei*:

The assertions of the synod, accepted as a whole concerning decisions in the matter of faith which have come down from several centuries, which it represents as decrees originating from one particular church or from a few pastors, unsupported by sufficient authority, formulated for the corruption of the purity of faith and for causing disturbance, introduced by violence, from which wounds, still too recent, have been inflicted.

These assertions of the Synod of Pistoia were condemned as

false, deceitful, rash, scandalous, injurious to the Roman Pontiffs and the Church, derogatory to the obedience due to the Apostolic Constitutions, schismatic, dangerous, at least erroneous.⁵

In the same bull *Auctorem fidei*, Pope Pius VI condemned as **heretical** the following proposition:

In these later times there has been spread a general obscuring of the more important truths pertaining to religion, which are the basis of faith and of the moral teachings of Jesus Christ.⁶

10. R&R ERROR #3: The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the sacraments instituted by Christ, and even promulgate liturgical rites deficient with regard to piety, or such that could render the sacraments doubtful.

The Church's magisterium expressed itself

⁵ Pope Pius VI, Bull *Auctorem fidei*, proposition n. 12; D. 1512.

⁶ *Auctorem fidei*, proposition n. 1; D. 1501.

numerous times on the infallibility of the Church's universal laws and disciplines. Gregory XVI said in the encyclical *Quo Graviora* of 1833:

The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth – all of which truth is taught by the Holy Spirit. Should the Church be able to order, yield to, or permit those things which tend toward the destruction of souls and the disgrace and detriment of the sacrament instituted by Christ?

Pope Leo XIII similarly teaches:

There must needs be also the fitting and devout worship of God, which is to be found chiefly in the divine Sacrifice and in the dispensation of the Sacraments, as well as salutary laws and discipline. All these must be found in the Church, since it continues the mission of the Savior forever. The Church alone offers to the human race that religion - that state of absolute perfection - which He wished, as it were, to be incorporated in it. And it alone supplies those means of salvation which accord with the ordinary counsels of Providence.⁷

On the same subject, the Council of Trent, session XXII, canon 7, declares:

If anyone says that the ceremonies, vestments, and outward signs, which the Catholic Church uses in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety rather than the services of piety: let him be anathema.⁸

The Council of Trent has also defined against the protestants that the Canon of the Mass contains no error:

⁷ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, n. 9.

⁸ D. 954.

If anyone says that the canon of the Mass contains errors, and should therefore be abrogated: let him be anathema.⁹

This obviously entails that the rites given by the Church for the administration of the other sacraments are also valid, since the sacraments were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church to be faithfully kept and administered until the end of times.¹⁰

11. R&R ERROR #4: The Roman Pontiff is both the head of the Catholic Church and of an ecumenical Church. Some of his acts are directed to the Catholic Church, others are directed to the ecumenical Church. Catholics are entitled to judge the value of the acts of the Holy See, in order to determine if they are directed to the Catholic Church or to the ecumenical church.

This proposition should not need to be addressed. It is an insult to the divine constitution of the Church, to the divine institution of the papacy, and a blasphemy to the Holy Ghost by which the Roman Pontiff is assisted.

This error reverses the entire doctrine on the papacy, and we could therefore adduce a great number of references to refute it. Let it suffice to show that the Roman Pontiff, far from being a principle of division, or duality of churches, is the principle of unity in the Church of Christ.

The dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, chapter 3, promulgated by the 1870 Vatican

⁹ D. 953.

¹⁰ It goes without saying that doubting or denying the validity of a universal rite of the Church is a blasphemy, and logically leads one to deny the Church's indefectibility.

Council, solemnly declares:

By unity with the Roman pontiff in communion and in profession of the same faith, the church of Christ becomes one flock under one supreme shepherd. This is the teaching of the catholic truth, and no one can depart from it without endangering his faith and salvation.

The same dogmatic constitution further teaches that the decisions of the Holy See are not to be revised, sifted, or judged by anyone:

Since the Roman pontiff, by the divine right of the apostolic primacy, governs the whole church, we likewise teach and declare that he is the supreme judge of the faithful, and that in all cases which fall under ecclesiastical jurisdiction recourse may be had to his judgment. The sentence of the apostolic see (than which there is no higher authority) is not subject to revision by anyone, nor may anyone lawfully pass judgment thereupon.

This strange idea of two churches, one good and the other evil, which we could label as some sort of “manichean ecclesiology” is reminiscent of a similar error of the “fraticelli” whose ideas were condemned by John XXII (pope from 1316 to 1334):

Thus, the first error which breaks forth from their dark workshop invents two churches, the one carnal, packed with riches, overflowing with luxuries, stained with crimes which they declare the Roman prefect and other inferior prelates dominate; the other spiritual, cleansed by frugality, beautiful in virtue, bound by poverty, in which they only and their companions are held, and which they, because of the merit of their spiritual life, if any faith should be applied to lies,

rule.¹¹

The idea that a pope could be the head of two churches is also in contradiction with the Catholic doctrine that the pope and Christ form one moral head of the Church. There is only one head of the Church: Christ is the true head of the Church, and the pope is the visible head of the Church because he is one with Christ in his office of the papacy, by a moral union. Pope Pius XII witnesses that this is the solemn doctrine of the Church:

That Christ and His Vicar constitute one only Head is the solemn teaching of Our predecessor of immortal memory Boniface VIII in the Apostolic Letter *Unam Sanctam*; and his successors have never ceased to repeat the same.¹²

Therefore to assert that the pope could be the head of two churches is to say that Christ is also Himself the head of two churches, which is a blasphemy, or that the said “pope” is not really “one with Christ.”¹³

12. R&R ERROR #5: To know who is the Pope is irrelevant and insignificant for Catholics, and has very little consequence on their salvation. In today’s confusion, it is prudent and safe to stay in ignorance or remain in doubt on this issue.

This is quite word for word refuted by the teaching of Pope Boniface VIII:

¹¹ Proposition condemned by John XXII in *Gloriosam Ecclesiam*, D. 485.

¹² Pope Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*, n. 40.

¹³ Incidentally, the Thesis does argue indeed that the “Vatican II popes” are not “one with Christ” and are therefore not true popes. But it is impossible to both be “one with Christ” and “against Christ” at the same time, as “pope” of two churches.

This authority, however, (though it has been given to man and is exercised by man), is not human but rather divine, granted to Peter by a divine word and reaffirmed to him (Peter) and his successors by the One Whom Peter confessed, the Lord saying to Peter himself, “whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven” etc. Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God... Furthermore, **we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.**¹⁴

The reason is very simple: the Church is the unique means of salvation, and one ought to be a member of the Church to be saved. But the whole Church is submitted to the Roman Pontiff as its supreme power. Hence all Catholics are bound to obey the pope in regards to doctrine, discipline, and liturgy.

In addition, to claim that the R&R system is a “prudent” position is clearly a mistake. A position would be “prudent” which would follow a safer course, so that when confronted with a dilemma, it would end up in a correct position in either alternative. But the exact opposite is true of the R&R system: in both situations (that is, whether the “Vatican II popes” are true popes or not) the R&R system can be certain of being in the wrong. For if the “Vatican II popes” are indeed true popes, then the R&R system is wrong in resisting them. If they are true popes, then the religion promulgated by them is the true religion, and the traditional movement has been one big mistake of history. On the other hand, if the “Vatican II

¹⁴ Boniface VIII, Bull *Unam sanctam*, D. 469.

popes” are not true popes, then the R&R system has been responsible for keeping up as long as possible their false claim to the papacy, which would inevitably lead back to the modernist wolves a great many sheep desirous of no longer being in schism with whom they are told is their supreme pastor.

In other words, the R&R system is wrong if Bergoglio is pope, and wrong if he is not the pope.

In either alternative of this dilemma, therefore, we can be certain of one thing: the R&R system is wrong. It is therefore imprudent to adhere to this system, since it is a guarantee of being wrong in either case.

13. R&R ERROR #6: The Popes have erred many times in the past in matters of faith and morals, in their duty of universal teacher of the faithful.

To some extent this error is reminiscent of the condemned proposition 23 of Pope Pius IX’s syllabus:

Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have wandered outside the limits of their powers, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in defining matters of faith and morals.¹⁵

This error is also clearly contradicting the solemn teaching of the 1870 Vatican Council:

Indeed, all the venerable fathers have embraced their apostolic doctrine, and the holy orthodox Doctors have venerated and followed it, knowing full well that the See of St. Peter always remains unimpaired by any error, according to the divine promise of our Lord the Savior made to the chief of His disciples: “I have

¹⁵ D. 1722.

prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren".¹⁶

Pope Pius XII also said explicitly:

Jesus Christ, hanging on the Cross, opened up to His Church the fountain of those divine gifts, **which prevent her from ever teaching false doctrine and enable her to rule them for the salvation of their souls** through divinely enlightened pastors and to bestow on them an abundance of heavenly graces.¹⁷

14. R&R ERROR #7: An ecumenical council can err in matters of faith and morals to such an extent that it could teach doctrines previously condemned definitively.

This logically falls under the scope of the condemned proposition 23 of Pope Pius IX's syllabus:

Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have wandered outside the limits of their powers, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in defining matters of faith and morals.¹⁸

This condemned proposition also refutes the objection that rejection of a council would be licit if that council were to undermine Catholic doctrine, without sufficient authority and infallibility. For this certainly would be at least covered by the idea that the council "has wandered outside the limits of its power", which was condemned by Pius IX.

15. R&R ERROR #8: Catholics are free

¹⁶ Vatican Council, Dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, c. 4; D. 1836.

¹⁷ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici corporis*. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ D. 1722.

to ignore and even publicly repudiate the decisions of a legitimate ecumenical council of the Catholic Church.

This error is so opposed to Catholic tradition, that it is sad to arrive at a point where it needs to be refuted.

Let it suffice to argue from the very law of the Church, codified in the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

Canon 228. § 1. An Ecumenical Council enjoys supreme power over the universal Church.

Any attempt to justify a resistance on the basis that a council trespasses its rights and duties logically falls under the scope of the condemned proposition 23 of Pope Pius IX's syllabus, already adduced above:

Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have wandered outside the limits of their powers, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in defining matters of faith and morals.¹⁹

16. R&R ERROR #9: The universal teaching of the bishops, submitted and united to the Roman Pontiff, could fail in the Church's mission to preach the faith in its integrity, and the universal teaching of the bishops together with the Pope is not infallible.

The 1870 Vatican Council teaches in very explicit terms:

By divine and Catholic faith, all those things must be believed which are contained in the written word of God and in tradition, and those which are proposed by the Church, **either in a**

¹⁹ D. 1722.

solemn pronouncement or in her ordinary and universal teaching power, to be believed as divinely revealed.²⁰

Pope Pius XI explains that the universal ordinary magisterium of the Church is exercised on a daily basis:

The teaching authority of the Church, which in the divine wisdom was constituted on earth in order that revealed doctrines might remain intact for ever, and that they might be brought with ease and security to the knowledge of men, is daily exercised through the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops who are in communion with him.²¹

17. R&R ERROR #10: Catholics are bound to assent only to what is taught definitively by an express solemn decree, and not by the ordinary and daily magisterium.

Pope Pius IX reminded Catholics of their duty to accept the teaching of the universal ordinary magisterium:

For, even if it were a matter concerning that subjection which is to be manifested by an act of divine faith, nevertheless, it would not have to be limited to those matters which have been defined by express decrees of the ecumenical Councils, or of the Roman Pontiffs and of this See, but would have to be extended also to those matters which are handed down as divinely revealed by the ordinary teaching power of the whole Church spread throughout the world, and

²⁰ Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, D. 1792. Emphasis added.

²¹ Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, 1928, n. 9.

therefore, by universal and common consent are held by Catholic theologians to belong to faith.²²

18. R&R ERROR #11: Catholics are not bound to assent to the teachings set forth by the merely authentic magisterium of the Church, but are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate them. Catholics are free to hold condemned doctrines provided they are not formally anathematized.

This is essentially the error condemned in the 22nd proposition of Pope Pius IX's syllabus of errors:

The obligation by which Catholic teachers and authors are strictly bound is confined to those things only which are proposed to universal belief as dogmas of faith by the infallible judgment of the Church.²³

This error had been explicitly rejected by Pope Pius IX, in *Tuas libenter*:

It is not sufficient for learned Catholics to accept and revere the aforesaid dogmas of the Church, but that it is also necessary to subject themselves to the decisions pertaining to doctrine which are issued by the Pontifical Congregations, and also to those forms of doctrine which are held by the common and constant consent of Catholics as theological truths and conclusions, so certain that opinions opposed to these same forms of doctrine, although they cannot be called heretical, nevertheless deserve some theological censure.²⁴

Pope Pius XII was himself very concerned

²² Pius IX, *Tuas libenter*; D. 1683.

²³ D. 1722.

²⁴ D. 1684.

of the fact that so many Catholics were imbued with this attitude of distrust and disobedience to the Holy See:

And, although this sacred magisterium, in matters of faith and morals, should be the proximate and universal norm of faith to any theologian, inasmuch as Christ the Lord entrusted the entire deposit of faith to it, namely, the Sacred Scriptures and divine tradition, to be guarded, and preserved, and interpreted; yet its office, by which the faithful are bound to flee those errors which more or less tend toward heresy, and so, too, “to keep its constitutions and decrees, by which such perverse opinions are proscribed and prohibited,” is sometimes ignored as if it did not exist. [...] It is not to be thought that what is set down in Encyclical Letters does not demand assent in itself, because in this the popes do not exercise the supreme power of their magisterium. For these matters are taught by the ordinary magisterium, regarding which the following is pertinent: “He who heareth you, heareth me”; and usually what is set forth and inculcated in the Encyclical Letters, already pertains to Catholic doctrine. But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their acts, after due consideration, express an opinion on a hitherto controversial matter, it is clear to all that this matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiffs, cannot any longer be considered a question of free discussion among the theologians.²⁵

19. R&R ERROR #12: The authority of the Church could give harmful or in some way deficient universal discipline.

In the bull *Auctorem fidei*, Pope Pius VI condemned as

²⁵ Pope Pius XII, *Humani generis*, n. 18.

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 idea according to which

the Church which is ruled by the Spirit of God could have established discipline which is not only useless and burdensome for Christian liberty to endure, but which is even dangerous and harmful and leading to superstition and materialism.²⁶

The Church’s magisterium expressed itself numerous times on the infallibility of the Church’s universal laws and disciplines. Gregory XVI said in the encyclical *Quo Graviora* of 1833:

The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth – all of which truth is taught by the Holy Spirit. Should the Church be able to order, yield to, or permit those things which tend toward the destruction of souls and the disgrace and detriment of the sacrament instituted by Christ?

20. R&R ERROR #13: Catholics are free to refuse and even publicly repudiate the universal disciplinary laws of the Church.

This idea has been condemned as heretical by Pope Pius IX:

Nor can the Eastern Churches preserve communion and unity of faith with Us without being subject to the Apostolic power in matters of discipline. Teaching of this kind is heretical, and not just since the definition of the power and nature of the papal primacy was determined by the ecumenical Vatican Council: the Catholic Church has always considered it such and

²⁶ Pope Pius VI, Bull *Auctorem fidei*, proposition 78; D. 1578.

abhorred it.²⁷

Gregory XVI declared in the encyclical *Mirari Vos* of 1832:

Furthermore, the discipline sanctioned by the Church must never be rejected or be branded as contrary to certain principles of natural law. It must never be called crippled, or imperfect or subject to civil authority. In this discipline the administration of sacred rites, standards of morality, and the reckoning of the rights of the Church and her ministers are embraced. To use the words of the fathers of Trent, it is certain that the Church “was instructed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles and that all truth was daily taught in it by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.” Therefore, it is obviously absurd and injurious to propose a certain “restoration and regeneration” for her as though necessary for her safety and growth, as if she could be considered subject to defect or obscurity or other misfortune.

21. R&R ERROR # 14: The Church is not infallible in the promulgation and imposition of universal liturgical rites.

On this subject, the Council of Trent, session XXII, canon 7, declares:

If anyone says that the ceremonies, vestments, and outward signs, which the Catholic Church uses in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety rather than the services of piety: let him be anathema.²⁸

The Council of Trent has also defined against the protestants that the Canon of the

²⁷ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Quartus Supra*.

²⁸ D. 954.

Mass contains no error:

If anyone says that the canon of the Mass contains errors, and should therefore be abrogated: let him be anathema.²⁹

We have already presented above the teaching of Gregory XVI, who said in the encyclical *Quo Graviora* of 1833:

The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth – all of which truth is taught by the Holy Spirit. Should the church be able to order, yield to, or permit those things which tend toward the destruction of souls and the disgrace and detriment of the sacrament instituted by Christ?

22. R&R ERROR # 15: The liturgical laws of the universal Church could cause a weakening of the faith and lead the faithful to impiety.

The same condemnation issue by the Council of Trent, session XXII, canon 7, is here pertinent:

If anyone says that the ceremonies, vestments, and outward signs, which the Catholic Church uses in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety rather than the services of piety: let him be anathema.³⁰

Pope Leo XIII similarly teaches:

There must needs be also the fitting and devout worship of God, which is to be found chiefly in the divine Sacrifice and in the dispensation of the Sacraments, as well as salutary laws and discipline. All these must be found in the Church, since it continues the mission of the Savior forever. The Church alone offers to the

²⁹ D. 953.

³⁰ D. 954.

human race that religion - that state of absolute perfection - which He wished, as it were, to be incorporated in it. And it alone supplies those means of salvation which accord with the ordinary counsels of Providence.³¹

23. R&R ERROR # 16: Catholics are free to refuse and even publicly repudiate new liturgical laws given by the authority of the Catholic Church.

In a letter to the Apostolic Delegate of Constantinople, Pope Pius IX explains that Catholics must submit themselves to the Roman Pontiff not only in questions of doctrine, but also in matters of liturgy and discipline:

To carry out your mission with exactitude, Venerable Brother, you will have to recall and to inculcate in the faithful committed to your care this truth which is part of the Catholic faith: namely, that the Roman Pontiff, in the person of blessed Peter, has received from our Lord Jesus Christ the full power and authority to feed, to guide, and to govern the Universal Church; that the free and entire exercise of this power can recognize no limitation or restriction in point of territories or of nationalities; and that all those who glory in the title of Catholic must not only be united to him in matters of faith and dogmatic truth, but also be submissive to him in matters of liturgy and discipline.³²

24. R&R ERROR # 17: The Church is not infallible in the solemn canonization of the saints.

³¹ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, n. 9.

³² Pope Pius IX, Letter *Non sine gravissimo*, of February 24th, 1870.

Let us here reproduce what we have explained in the chapter on the indefectibility of the Church.

Father Salaverri affirms that the infallibility of canonizations can be considered as now implicitly defined, since Popes Pius XI and Pius XII explicitly affirmed it on multiple occasions in the *Decretal Letters* of canonizations.

In 1933, Pope Pius XI affirmed, regarding the canonization of Saint André-Hubert Fournet:

As supreme Master of the Catholic Church, We have uttered with these words an infallible sentence.³³

In 1934, the *Decretal Letters* of the canonization of Saint Marie-Michelle of the Blessed Sacrament stated:

As supreme universal Master of the Church of Christ, We solemnly pronounced from the chair of Saint Peter, an infallible sentence by these words...

Notice that the Supreme Pontiff explicitly says that he pronounced a sentence “*ex cathedra*”, *from the chair of Saint Peter*. These are the actual words he uses in Latin: *ex cathedra*.³⁴ This expression, *ex cathedra*, is the same expression used by the 1870

³³ “Infallibilem Nos, uti catholicae Ecclesiae supremus Magister, sententiam in haec verba protulimus: *Ad honorem Sanctae et individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XI, *Litterae Decretales*, AAS 1933, p. 426).

³⁴ “Nos, ex cathedra Divi Petri, uti supremus universalis Christi Ecclesiae Magister, infallibilem hisce verbis sententiam sollemniter pronunciamus: *Ad honorem Sanctae et individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XI, *Litterae Decretales*, AAS 1934, p. 540).

Vatican Council to designate infallible decisions of the Roman Pontiff.³⁵

The Acts of Pope Pius XII also indicate, in several instances,³⁶ that in the canonizations of saints he was pronouncing an infallible *ex cathedra* decision.

And it is not necessary for the Sovereign Pontiff to *declare* that he is indeed making an infallible pronouncement in order that a given canonization be *in fact* infallible. The Acts of

³⁵ “And so We... teach and explain that the dogma has been divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*... operates with that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer wished that His church be instructed in defining doctrine on faith and morals; and so such definitions of the Roman Pontiff from himself, but not from the consensus of the Church, are unalterable.” D. 1839.

³⁶ Canonization of St. Gemma Galgani and of St. Marie of Saint Euphrasie Pelletier: “Nos, universalis catholicae Ecclesiae Magister, *ex cathedra una super Petrum Domini voce fundata*, falli nesciam hanc sententiam sollemniter hisce pronunciamus verbis: *Ad honorem Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1941, pp. 105-106). Canonization of St. Nicolas of Flüe: “*Ipsa sedens in Cathedra mitramque gestans, de plenitudine Apostolici ministerii sollemniter sic pronunciat: Ad honorem Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1947, pp. 209-210). Canonization of St. Michel Garicoits and of St. Elisabeth Bichier des Ages: “E caelo superna lux Pontificem Maximum collustrat, qui iam inerrantem sententiam suam laturus est. Caelicolis hisce, quos Petrus, in Pio vivens, loquens, decernens, sanctitudinis infula mox est decoraturus, nos nostraque omnia supplici prece concredamus.” (Pius XII, AAS 1947, pp. 281-282). Canonization of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort: “*Tum Beatissimus Pater, in Cathedra sedens, sic definit: Ad honorem Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1947, pp. 329-330). Canonization of St. Catherine Labouré: “*Tum Beatissimus Pater, in Cathedra sedens, sic sollemniter pronunciat: Ad honorem Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1947, pp. 377-378).

Pope Pius XII render this point very clear. The canonization of Saint John de Britto, Saint Bernardine Realino, and Saint Joseph Cafasso, pronounced on June 22nd, 1947, appears for the first time in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* in 1947, in a rather descriptive way:

Then the Most Holy Father, being seated, solemnly pronounced, from the chair (*ex cathedra*) of St. Peter: For the honor of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, etc.³⁷

The Holy Father does not say here that he is infallible, although this is evident. But, two years later, remembering this event, Pius XII explicitly affirms that he was then infallible:

...being seated on the Chair, fulfilling the **infallible** magisterium of Peter, we have solemnly pronounced... (emphasis added)³⁸

According to the teaching of both Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, canonizations are therefore solemn and infallible *ex cathedra* definitions.³⁹

³⁷ “*Tum vero Ssmus Dnus Noster, sedens, ex Cathedra Divi Petri sollemniter pronunciat: Ad honorem Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1947, pp. 249-250).

³⁸ “*Nos autem, Paracliti Spiritus lumine una cum adstantibus prius implorato, ut ab Eo menti Nostrae superni luminis copia magis magisque affulgeret, in Cathedra sedentes, inerranti Petri magisterio fungentes, sollemniter pronunciamus: Ad honorem Sanctae et individuae Trinitatis, etc.*” (Pius XII, AAS 1949, pp. 137-138).

³⁹ One could probably find equivalent teaching in the acts of other Roman Pontiffs. Cardinal Lépicier indicates for example that such was the teaching of Pope Clement VII, in the canonization of Saint Antoninus of Florence: “ait: *Deum non passurum fore militantem Ecclesiam suam errare, scilicet in eadem canonizatione decernenda*” (Lépicier, *op. cit.*, p. 130).

25. R&R ERROR # 18: Catholics are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate the solemn canonizations of the Catholic Church.

The infallible formula used by the Roman Pontiffs in the ceremony of the canonization of saints establishes very clearly that Catholics are henceforth bound to recognize the newly canonized saint. The same formula is kept by the “Vatican II popes.” We present here the formula of “canonization” of John XXIII and John-Paul II. This formula is perfectly traditional:

For the honor of the Blessed Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after due deliberation and frequent prayer for divine assistance, and having sought the counsel of many of our brother Bishops, we declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II to be Saints and we enroll them among the Saints, **decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole Church.** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. [Emphasis added].

A general principle could also be adduced, namely that the determination of public worship (such as the celebration of festivals of saints) is not left to the private decisions of Catholics, but is directly reserved to the Holy See:

To carry out your mission with exactitude, Venerable Brother, you will have to recall and to inculcate in the faithful committed to your care this truth which is part of the Catholic faith: namely, that the Roman Pontiff, in the

person of blessed Peter, has received from our Lord Jesus Christ the full power and authority to feed, to guide, and to govern the Universal Church; that the free and entire exercise of this power can recognizable no limitation or restriction in point of territories or of nationalities; and that all those who glory in the title of Catholic must not only be united to him in matters of faith and dogmatic truth, but also be submissive to him in matters of liturgy and discipline.⁴⁰

26. R&R ERROR # 19: Catholics are free to refuse obedience to the authority of the Catholic Church as long as they profess this duty of obedience with sincerity and piety.

This hypocrisy has been condemned by Pope Pius IX:

For the Catholic Church has always regarded as schismatic those who obstinately oppose the lawful prelates of the Church and in particular, the chief shepherd of all... For the Church consists of the people in union with the priest, and the flock following its shepherd. Consequently the bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop, and whoever is not with the bishop is not in the Church.⁴¹

Elsewhere the same Pope Pius IX condemned this same principle as heretical:

What good is it to proclaim aloud the dogma of the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors? What good is it to repeat over and over declarations of faith in the Catholic Church and of obedience to the Apostolic See when actions give the lie to these fine words? Moreover, is not

⁴⁰ Pope Pius IX, Letter *Non sine gravissimo*, of February 24th, 1870.

⁴¹ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Quartus Supra*.

rebellion rendered all the more inexcusable by the fact that obedience is recognized as a duty? Again, does not the authority of the Holy See extend, as a sanction, to the measures which We have been obliged to take, or is it enough to be in communion of faith with this See without adding the submission of obedience, — a thing which cannot be maintained without damaging the Catholic Faith? ...

In fact, Venerable Brothers and beloved Sons, it is a question of recognizing the power (of this See), even over your churches, not merely in what pertains to faith, but also in what concerns discipline. He who would deny this is a heretic; he who recognizes this and obstinately refuses to obey is worthy of anathema.⁴²

27. R&R ERROR # 20: Bishops are free to refuse obedience to the Roman Pontiff if they think they have a good reason.

In addition to the doctrine presented above, we could adduce as well the teaching of the 1870 Vatican Council:

Furthermore We teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the disposition of the Lord, holds the sovereignty of ordinary power over all others, and that this power of jurisdiction on the part of the Roman Pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is immediate; and with respect to this the pastors and the faithful of whatever rite and dignity, both as separate individuals and all together, are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in things which pertain to faith and

⁴² Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Quae in patriarchatu*, of September 1st, 1876.

morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church [which is] spread over the whole world, so that the Church of Christ, protected not only by the Roman Pontiff, but by the unity of communion as well as of the profession of the same faith is one flock under the one highest shepherd. This is the doctrine of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate and keep his faith and salvation.⁴³

As a consequence of Christ's continual assistance to the Church, Pope Leo XIII assures us that there can never be a situation where schism would be necessary in order to preserve the true religion instituted by Christ:

Wherefore as no heresy can ever be justifiable, so in like manner there can be no justification for schism.⁴⁴

28. R&R ERROR #21: Catholics are free to judge the value of the decisions of the authority of the Catholic Church.

Pope Pius XI alludes to the obedience due to the doctrinal decrees of the Holy See (even non infallible ones) as “that assistance given by God with such liberal bounty” in order to “be kept unharmed and free from error and moral corruption.”⁴⁵ Pius XI continues:

⁴³ Vatican Council, Dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, c. 3; D. 1827.

⁴⁴ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 10.

⁴⁵ Encyclical *Casti Connubii* (1930): “... for the same purpose he has constituted the Church the guardian and the teacher of the whole of the truth concerning religion and moral conduct; to her therefore should the faithful show obedience and subject their minds and hearts so as to be kept unharmed and free from error and moral corruption, and so that they shall not deprive themselves of that assistance given by God with

For it is quite foreign to everyone bearing the name of a Christian to trust his own mental powers with such pride as to agree only with those things which he can examine from their inner nature, and to imagine that the Church, sent by God to teach and guide all nations, is not conversant with present affairs and circumstances; or even that they must obey only in those matters which she has decreed by solemn definition as though her other decisions might be presumed to be false or putting forward insufficient motive for truth and honesty. Quite to the contrary, a characteristic of all true followers of Christ, lettered or unlettered, is to permit themselves to be guided and led in all things that touch upon faith or morals by the Holy Church of God through its Supreme Pastor the Roman Pontiff, who is himself guided by Jesus Christ Our Lord.

29. R&R ERROR #22: Catholics are free to judge the value of the declarations of nullity of matrimony issued by the Holy See, and constitute their own assemblies to confirm it.

Pope Pius VII denied any strength and validity to self-proclaimed matrimonial tribunals:

The decision of lay tribunals and of Catholic assemblies by which the nullity of marriages is chiefly declared, and the dissolution of their bond attempted, can have no strength and absolutely no force

such liberal bounty, they ought to show this due obedience not only when the Church defines something with solemn judgment, but also, in proper proportion, when by the constitutions and decrees of the Holy See, opinions are prescribed and condemned as dangerous or distorted.”

in the sight of the Church.⁴⁶

Pope Pius IX repeats the Catholic principle that matrimonial laws and matrimonial cases are submitted to decisions of the Church:

It pertains absolutely to the power of the Church to discern those things which can pertain in any way to matrimony.⁴⁷

30. R&R ERROR # 23: Catholic priests are free to administer the sacraments in any diocese without the delegation of the legitimate bishop, and even despite his prohibition, if they deem it to be necessary. Catholics are free to access any priest for the sacraments, even against the will of the legitimate hierarchy.

This contradicts the teaching of Pope Leo XIII:

The power of performing and administering the divine mysteries, together with the authority of ruling and governing, was not bestowed by God on all Christians indiscriminately, but on certain chosen persons. For to the Apostles and their legitimate successors alone these words have reference: “Going into the whole world preach the Gospel.” “Baptizing them.” “Do this in commemoration of Me.” “Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them.” And in like manner He ordered the Apostles only and those who should lawfully succeed them to feed - that is to govern with authority - all Christian souls. Whence it also follows that it is necessarily the duty of Christians to be subject and to obey.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Pius VII, *Brevum ad Carolum de Dalberg*.

⁴⁷ Pius IX, *Acerbissimum vobiscum*.

⁴⁸ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 10.

Pope Pius VI condemned the action of intruded clergy in France, and of Catholics who had recourse to their ministry, as a sin of schism:

For what is the sin of schism committed by the intruded priest, if it is not to usurp by his own action the pastoral ministry without any authorization, and even in contempt of the authority of the bishop whom he rejects? And what else is the Catholic doing who receives baptism from the intruded priest, except to commit the crime of schism with him, since one in administering baptism, and the other, in receiving it, consummates a premeditated offense, which neither one could have committed without the concurrence of the other. So when a Catholic cooperates in the schism by his conduct, it is impossible for him not to assent by that very fact to the sin of schism, and not to recognize and treat the intruder as a legitimate priest.⁴⁹

31. R&R ERROR #24: Catholics are free to establish parishes, schools, seminaries, convents and monasteries without the authorization of the diocesan bishop or of the Holy See, and even despite their prohibition, if they deem it be profitable to the salvation of souls.

This error is very similar to the precedent, hence we could have presented the same condemnations. But since it is not anymore a question of an occasional administration of sacraments, but rather of a permanent counter apostolate, we find the following condemnations even more pertinent.

Leo XII established very clear principles, in

⁴⁹ Pope Pius VI, Instruction to the French bishops *Laudabilem majorum*, of September 26th, 1791.

condemning the attitude of the French “Petite Eglise”:⁵⁰

Therefore, dearly beloved, beware of false leaders; do not follow their counsels; resist their deadly suggestions. In fact they are seeking to snatch you from the bosom of the Church, then to bring about your final perdition, when they strive to separate you from communion with us, with the Holy See. They flatter themselves falsely on the pretended communion with the Apostolic See, while they refuse communion with the Roman Pontiff and with the bishops in communion with him. Do not let yourselves be deceived by this illusion. [...]

If each of you in the light of faith, meditates within himself on these truths in tranquility of mind before his crucifix, it will be easy for him to see that the outcome of slogans such as you have heard can be nothing else than, by separating you from the Roman Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him, to separate you from the Catholic Church in its entirety, and consequently you will cease to have her for a mother. For how could the Church be your mother, unless your fathers are the shepherds of the Church, that is to say, the bishops? How can you boast of the title Catholic, if,

⁵⁰ The “Petite Eglise” was a movement, in France, in the XIXth century, of refusal of the Concordat signed between Pope Pius VII and Napoleon. It led its adherents, among which were some priests, to establish an unlawful apostolate, entirely independent and in defiance of the legitimate bishops of the Church of France. This is exactly the pragmatic attitude of the R&R adherents. And although it was caused by a refusal of something different than resistance to Vatican II, the very idea of an unlawful parallel apostolate (whatever the justification may be) is here clearly condemned by the Roman Pontiffs.

separated from the center of catholicity, that is to say, from this Apostolic and Holy See and from the Sovereign Pontiff in whom God has placed this source of unity, you break with Catholic unity? The Catholic Church is one, she is neither broken nor divided: therefore, your “petite église” cannot belong in any sense to the Catholic Church.⁵¹

Gregory XVI teaches that bishops may not exercise any apostolate unless they are united and submitted to the pope; priests may not preach without the permission of their legitimate bishop:

Let all remember that the judgment on the orthodox teaching with which the faithful must be instructed, and the government and the administration of the entire Church belong to the Roman Pontiff, to whom, “the plenitude of power to feed, direct, and govern the universal Church, has been given by Christ the Lord,” as the Fathers of the Council of Florence have expressly declared (Session XXV, *In definit.*) It is the duty of each bishop to attach himself loyally to the Chair of Peter, religiously to keep the deposit, and to govern the flock which has been entrusted to him. It is the duty of priests to submit to the bishops, whom Saint Jerome exhorts “to consider as the fathers of their souls” (*Ep.* LII ad Nepotian., I, 24); and they must never forget that the ancient canons forbid them to do anything in their ministry, and to arrogate to themselves the power of teaching and preaching “without the permission of the bishop, to whose faith the people are confided, and from whom an account of their souls will be

⁵¹ Leo XII, Exhortation *Pastoris Aeterni*, of July 2nd, 1826.

demanded.” (X. can. app. xxviii.)⁵²

Leo XIII also teaches the general principle that bishops who refuse submission to the Roman Pontiff are outside the edifice of the Church:

From this it must be clearly understood that Bishops are deprived of the right and power of ruling, if they deliberately secede from Peter and his successors; because, by this secession, they are separated from the foundation on which the whole edifice must rest. They are therefore outside the edifice itself; and for this very reason they are separated from the fold, whose leader is the Chief Pastor; they are exiled from the Kingdom, the keys of which were given by Christ to Peter alone.⁵³

32. R&R ERROR #25: It is perfectly licit and even virtuous to consecrate bishops despite the express prohibition of the reigning Roman Pontiff.

Pope Pius XII has explicitly addressed this issue, and has condemned such a schismatic practice. May the reader allow us to quote him at length, since this issue is a very serious one:

Here We must mention a symptom of this falling away from the Church... Those who profess themselves most interested in the welfare of their country have for some considerable time been striving to disseminate among the people the position, devoid of all truth, that Catholics have the power of directly electing their bishops. To excuse this kind of election they allege a need to look after

⁵² Gregory XVI, Encyclical *Mirari vos*.

⁵³ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 13.

the good souls with all possible speed...

In addition, certain ecclesiastics have rashly dared to receive episcopal consecration, despite the public and severe warning which this Apostolic See gave those involved. Since, therefore, such serious offenses against the discipline and unity of the Church are being committed, We must in conscience warn all that this is completely at variance with the teachings and principles on which rests the right order of the society divinely instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord.

For it has been clearly and expressly laid down in the canons that it pertains to the one Apostolic See to judge whether a person is fit for the dignity and burden of the episcopacy, and that complete freedom in the nomination of bishops is the right of the Roman Pontiff. [...]

Bishops who have been neither named nor confirmed by the Apostolic See, but who, on the contrary, have been elected and consecrated in defiance of its express orders, enjoy no powers of teaching or of jurisdiction since jurisdiction passes to bishops only through the Roman Pontiff...

Acts requiring the power of Holy Orders which are performed by ecclesiastics of this kind, though they are valid as long as the consecration conferred on them was valid, are yet gravely illicit, that is, criminal and sacrilegious.

To such conduct the warning words of the Divine Teacher fittingly apply: "He who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up another way, is a

thief and a robber."⁵⁴

33. R&R ERROR #26: Catholics are free to despise sentences of excommunication, if they deem it to be unjustly given.

This idea has already been condemned countless times. Hence Pope Pius IX says in very clear terms:

The Jansenist heretics dared to teach such doctrines as that an excommunication pronounced by a lawful prelate could be ignored on a pretext of injustice. Each person should perform, as they said, his own particular duty despite an excommunication. Our predecessor of happy memory Clement XI in his constitution *Unigenitus* against the errors of Quesnell forbade and condemned statements of this kind. These statements were scarcely in any way different from some of John Wyclif's which had previously been condemned by the Council of Constance and Martin V.⁵⁵

34. R&R Error #27: Catholics priests and bishops are free to administer the sacraments, despite having been suspended or excommunicated, if they deem the sentence to be unjust and the faithful in need of the sacraments.

Pope Pius IX had already rejected the excuses adduced today by R&R clergy:

They argue that the sentence of schism and excommunication pronounced against them by the Archbishop of Tyana, the Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople, was unjust, and consequently void of strength and influence. They have

⁵⁴ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, of June 29th, 1958.

⁵⁵ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Quartus Supra*.

claimed also that they are unable to accept the sentence because the faithful might desert to the heretics if deprived of their ministrations. These novel

arguments were wholly unknown and unheard of by the ancient Fathers of the Church.

THIRD ARTICLE

THE R&R ERRORS ARE EXPOSED AND REFUTED BY THE TEACHING OF SAINTS, DOCTORS, AND THEOLOGIANs

35. The errors of the above syllabus are explicitly rejected by the tradition of saints, doctors of the Church and major theologians.

Besides the explicit condemnations drawn from the magisterium of the Church, and presented above, one could also adduce here an innumerable amount of testimonies, witnessing the traditional faith of the Church. We have here selected among the most relevant and authoritative testimonies of the constant tradition of the Church, often drawn from the writings of canonized saints, Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

36. R&R ERROR # 1: The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the deposit of the faith, and could neglect the defense of the truth.

St. Francis of Sales, doctor of the Church, teaches against the heretics:

But if she [the Church] can err then it is no longer I, or man, who will keep error in the world; it will be our God Himself who will authorize it and give it credit, since He commands us to go to this tribunal to hear and receive justice.⁵⁶

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches:

The Church cannot err in any way, not even by apostatizing from God.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ St. Francis of Sales, *The Catholic Controversy*, Part II, Chapter XII, London, 1886.

⁵⁷ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, T. II, L. III, c. 14, Paris, 1614.

The same doctor says again:

But our Church, the Catholic Church, teaches no error, no foul thing, nothing contrary to reason, although many things are above reason. [...]

Therefore we conclude with St. Augustine: “Nothing filthy and wicked is set forth to be gazed at or imitated in christian Churches; but either precepts of the true God are recommended, his miracles narrated, his gifts praised, or his benefits implored...”⁵⁸

37. R&R ERROR # 2: It could happen that the truth of faith and morals become obscured and ignored in the entire Church.

St. Francis of Sales declares this to be absolutely impossible:

It is the same as St. Paul teaches when he calls the Church *the pillar and ground of truth* (1 Tim. III:15). Is not this to say that truth is solidly upheld in the Church? Elsewhere truth is only maintained at intervals, it falls often, but in the Church it is without vicissitude, unmovable, unshaken, in a word steadfast and perpetual...

It is the pillar and ground of truth; truth then is in it, it abides there, it dwells there; who seeks it elsewhere loses it. It is so thoroughly safe and firm that all the gates of hell, that is, all the forces of the enemy, cannot make themselves masters of it. And would not the place be taken by

⁵⁸ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, T. II, L. IV, c. 11, Paris, 1614.

the enemy if error entered it, with regard to the things which are for the honor and service of the Master? Our Lord is the head of the Church; are you not ashamed to say that the Body of so holy a Head is adulterous, profane, corrupt?⁵⁹

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches similarly:

It is certain that the Church is called “holy,” because her profession is holy, containing nothing false with respect to doctrine, and nothing unjust with respect to a doctrine of morals.⁶⁰

St. Irenaeus says that faith is said to be in the Church:

always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causing the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also.⁶¹

Later in the same work, he adds:

And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to it has been entrusted the light of God.⁶²

St. Augustine also teaches that the Church will always keep her sacred deposit until the end of times:

The Church has always had this, she has always held it: she has received it from the faith of the ancients; she will keep it until the end.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ St. Robert Bellarmine, *ibid.*

⁶¹ St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Hær.*, III. 4.

⁶² St. Irenaeus, *op. cit.*, V, 20.

⁶³ Sermon 176.

38. R&R ERROR #3: The authority of the Catholic Church could fail in her mission to protect the sacraments instituted by Christ, and even promulgate liturgical rites deficient with regard to piety, or such that could render the sacraments doubtful.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches very clearly that the sacraments of the Church, among other things, will remain the same until the end of times:

The Church is the same *numero*⁶⁴ which was then and now is, because the faith is the same and the sacraments of the faith are the same, and there is the same authority and the same profession. For this reason, the Apostle says in I Cor. I:13: *Is Christ divided?* This is repugnant... There is a different state of the Church now and then, but there is not a different Church.⁶⁵

39. R&R ERROR #4: The Roman Pontiff is both the head of the Catholic Church and of an ecumenical Church. Some of his acts are directed to the Catholic Church, others are directed to the ecumenical Church. Catholics are entitled to judge the value of the acts of the Holy See, in order to determine if they are directed to the Catholic Church or to the ecumenical church.

⁶⁴ To be the same “*numero*” (lit. *by number*) is to be the same *individually*, as opposed to be the same *specifically*. Thus, for example, two brothers may have “the same car” meaning that they both own an individual car of the same model. They together have two cars, and not just one. Whereas these brothers have the same mother “*numero*”, meaning that together they have only one mother, which is common to both.

⁶⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibetales*, XIII, art. 19.

This error is indirectly refuted by St. Robert Bellarmine, in the following, where he rejects the idea of a twofold Church, one visible and defectible, and the other invisible and indefectible:

Now it can easily be proven that this true and visible Church cannot defect. Moreover it must be observed that many waste their time when they try to show that the Church cannot defect absolutely, for Calvin and the other heretics concede that, but they say it ought to be understood about the invisible Church. Therefore, we mean to show that the visible Church cannot defect, and by the name Church, we do not understand one thing or another, but the multitude gathered together, in which there are Prelates and subjects.⁶⁶

St. Robert Bellarmine, in another work, refutes the allegations of the heretics calling the Roman Pontiff the antichrist. Among other statements of the heretics, he addresses this one, which is very close to one may hear from R&R adherents:

It is certain that the Roman pontiffs, along with their members, defend impious doctrine and impious worship, and this plainly fits the mark of Antichrist in the rule of the pope and his members.⁶⁷

40. R&R ERROR #5: To know who is the Pope is irrelevant and insignificant for Catholics, and has very little consequence

⁶⁶ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, T. II, L. III, c. 13.

⁶⁷ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. III, c. 19. This proposition was defended by a council of Lutherans, and is attributed to Melancthon.

on their salvation. In today's confusion, it is prudent and safe to stay in ignorance or remain in doubt on this issue.

Saint Vincent Ferrer wrote, in a time when to determine who was the true pope was difficult and required some investigation:

Then for the faith of Christianity and to reach salvation it is necessary to determine the legitimate pope, universal vicar of the Savior.⁶⁸

The Dominican saint also wrote:

The one that is indifferent and in doubt of [who] is the true pope, is also indifferent and in doubt of the true Church of Christ, that is of the true apostolic college, since the Roman and Apostolic Church can not be known if the true pope is not known.⁶⁹

41. R&R ERROR #6: The Popes have erred many times in the past in matters of faith and morals, in their duty of universal teacher of the faithful.

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches the general principle on this issue:

⁶⁸ *De moderno Ecclesiae schismate*, cap. V.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, cap. IV. It is interesting to note that St. Vincent Ferrer himself was wrong about who was the true pope, since he followed Benedict XIII, who is now commonly considered to have been a false pope, but what he condemned was indifference. One might be wrong, and if in good faith, could actually still be a saint (and in this case, one of the greatest thaumaturgists of history), because error in good faith is excusable before God. What is not excusable, however, is indifference in this matter. It must also be said that the issue at the time was a canonical issue, quite difficult to resolve for people distanced from the happenings of conclaves. The issue of authority is not difficult to solve, however, in our crisis, since it is obvious to all that the "Vatican II popes" are in fact teaching a false religion.

The supreme pontiff can in no case err when he teaches the whole Church in those matters which pertain to faith.⁷⁰

And again:

For the pope not only should not, but cannot preach heresy, but rather should always preach the truth. He will certainly do that, since the Lord commanded him to confirm his brethren, and for that reason added: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,” that is, that at least the preaching of the true faith shall not fail in thy throne.⁷¹

St. Robert Bellarmine then goes on to refute no less than forty allegations by which the enemies of the Church have accused past Roman pontiffs to have erred.⁷²

42. R&R ERROR #7: An ecumenical council can err in matters of faith and morals to such an extent that it could teach doctrines previously condemned definitively.

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches:

All Catholics constantly teach that general Councils confirmed by the Supreme Pontiff cannot err, either in the explication of the faith, or in handing down precepts of morals common to the whole Church.⁷³

The holy doctor doubles down:

It must be held with Catholic faith that

⁷⁰ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 3.

⁷¹ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 5.

⁷² St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 8-14.

⁷³ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, T. II, L. II, c. 2, Paris, 1614.

general Councils confirmed by the Supreme Pontiff can neither err in faith nor morals.⁷⁴

In the next chapter, he says again:

Secondly, the fathers and the Councils teach that all those who do not acquiesce to plenary Councils are heretics and must be excommunicated. It manifestly follows from this that they thought that Councils could not err.⁷⁵

It is very clear from the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine that the idea that one would have to suffer excommunication or other sentences for refusing an ecumenical council in order to preserve the faith makes no sense at all. On the contrary, precisely because a doctrine or discipline is made obligatory in the universal Church, it is impossible that this doctrine or discipline may be harmful in any way.

Fr. Pacifico Albero O.F.M. dealt with this question in an apologetic work he wrote. To the question,

Can we not say that we are not obliged to accept the decisions of a general Council if they were not confirmed to the Word of God?

The friar responded:

This is a sophism, for it is to suppose that the Church can teach what is opposed to the word of God. However, this is impossible, because God would not then keep His Word. Were His Holy Ghost to not teach, as He promised to His Church, all truth and for ever, the gates of Hell would prevail against her. God did not provide that men would guide themselves

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ St. Robert Bellarmine, *op. cit.*, c. 3.

with what they judged to conform to Scripture. He sent his ministers that they might teach all nations and He ordained that he who would not believe would be condemned.⁷⁶

43. R&R ERROR #8: Catholics are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate the decisions of a legitimate ecumenical council of the Catholic Church.

Let us repeat the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine, presented above:

Secondly, the fathers and the Councils teach that all those who do not acquiesce to plenary Councils are heretics and must be excommunicated. It manifestly follows from this that they thought that Councils could not err.⁷⁷

St. Robert Bellarmine adds further:

St. Augustine calls the decree of a general Council the consensus of the universal Church, and rightly so since the Church does not teach nor discern anything except through her pastors, just as any body you like through its head.⁷⁸

St. Francis of Sales says similarly:

Finally, what stricter command have we than to take our food from the hand of our pastors? Does not S. Paul say that *the Holy Ghost has placed them over the flock to rule us*, (Acts XX:28) and that Our Lord has given them to us *that we may not be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine!* (Eph IV:14) What respect then must we not pay to the ordinances and canons which

⁷⁶ *¿Por qué somos Católicos y no Protestantes?*, cap IX, 1937.

⁷⁷ St. Robert Bellarmine, *op. cit.*, c. 3.

⁷⁸ St. Robert Bellarmine, *op. cit.*, c. 14.

emanate from their general assembly? It is true that taken separately their teachings are subject to correction, but when they are together and when all the ecclesiastical authority is collected into one, who shall dispute the sentence which comes forth? If the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be preserved? If the chiefs are blind, who shall lead the others? If the pillars are falling, who shall hold them up? In a word, what has the Church more grand, more certain, more solid, for the overthrow of heresy, than the judgment of General Councils?⁷⁹

44. R&R ERROR #9: The universal teaching of the bishops, submitted and united to the Roman Pontiff, could fail in the Church's mission to preach the faith in its integrity, and the universal teaching of the bishops together with the Pope is not infallible.

All the Fathers agree that the universal teaching of the Catholic Church is infallible. But all the bishops teaching together, and in union with the pope, represent the entire Teaching Church. Therefore their teaching is infallible.

St. Robert Bellarmine says:

If we are commanded by God to listen and follow Bishops as overseers, pastors, doctors, watchmen and fathers, then certainly they cannot deceive us or err at some point.⁸⁰

45. R&R ERROR #10: Catholics are

⁷⁹ St. Francis of Sales, *The Catholic Controversy*, Part II, Art. IV, Chapter II, London, 1886.

⁸⁰ St. Robert Bellarmine, *ibid.*

bound to assent only to what is taught definitively by an express solemn decree, and not by the ordinary and daily magisterium.

St. Francis of Sales rejects this error:

I conclude then that when we see that the universal Church has been and is in the belief of some article, – whether we see it expressly in the Scripture, whether it is drawn therefrom by some deduction, or again by tradition, – we must in no way judge, nor dispute, nor doubt concerning it, but show obedience and homage to this heavenly Queen, as Christ commands, and regulate our faith by this standard: And if it would have been impious in the Apostles to contest with their Master, so will it be in him who contests with the Church. For if the Father has said of the Son: *Hear ye him*, the Son has said of the Church: *If any one will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.*⁸¹

46. R&R ERROR #11: Catholics are not bound to assent to the teachings set forth by the merely authentic magisterium of the Church, but are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate them. Catholics are free to hold condemned doctrines provided they are not formally anathematized.

This error can be refuted by a general principle admitted by all the fathers, that Catholics must obey the Church, who has the power of loosing and binding. Thus St. Maximus the Abbot teaches:

The Apostolic See has received and hath government, authority, and power of

⁸¹ St. Francis of Sales, *The Catholic Controversy*, Part II, Chapter XII, London, 1886.

binding and loosing from the Incarnate Word Himself; and, according to all holy synods, sacred canons and decrees, in all things and through all things, in respect of all the holy churches of God throughout the whole world, since the Word in Heaven who rules the Heavenly powers binds and loosens there.⁸²

47. R&R ERROR #12: The authority of the Church could give harmful or in some way deficient universal discipline.

Saint Augustine, speaking of the things

that the Church does in the whole world

said that

to discuss whether things ought to be done that way would be of the most insolent insanity.⁸³

Indeed, he explains:

The Church of God... does not approve those things which are against faith or a good life, nor is it silent about them, nor does it do them.

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches the general principle on this issue:

Not only can the supreme pontiff not err in decrees of faith, but even in precepts of morals which are prescribed for the whole Church.⁸⁴

48. R&R ERROR #13: Catholics are free

⁸² St. Maximus, in *Defloratio ex Epistola ad Petrum illustrem*. This teaching is endorsed by Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 13.

⁸³ *Ep.* 54.

⁸⁴ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 5.

to refuse and even publicly repudiate the universal disciplinary laws of the Church.

St. Robert Bellarmine directly refutes this error:

But in the Catholic Church it has always been believed that bishops over their dioceses (as well as the Roman pontiff over the whole Church), are true ecclesiastical princes, who can impose laws that oblige in conscience, judge in ecclesiastical cases, and at length, punish by the custom of others; all without the consensus of the people or the counsel of priests.⁸⁵

49. R&R ERROR # 14: The Church is not infallible in the promulgation and imposition of universal liturgical rites.

As already quoted above, St. Augustine, speaking of the things

that the Church does in the whole world

said that

to discuss whether things ought to be done that way would be of the most insolent insanity.⁸⁶

50. R&R ERROR # 15: The liturgical laws of the universal Church could cause a

⁸⁵ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 15.

⁸⁶ Letter 54, n.6. It must be noted that this teaching of St. Augustine has been explicitly endorsed by Pope Gregory XVI, in *Quo graviora* (1833). It is sad to observe that the following has been omitted in common English translations of this encyclical: “Nonne potius insolentissimae insaniae erit, ut inquebat Augustinus, si quid universa per orbem frequentat Ecclesia, quin ita faciendum sit disputare?”

weakening of the faith and lead the faithful to impiety.

St. Thomas Aquinas proves that those things are suitable which are done in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; he himself offers as the solution the following principle:

The custom of the Church cannot err, since it is led by the Holy Ghost.⁸⁷

51. R&R ERROR # 16: Catholics are free to refuse and even publicly repudiate new liturgical laws given by the authority of the Catholic Church.

The same principle, indicated in the question of general discipline, can be used in particular concerning liturgy. This principle is defended by St. Francis of Sales, saying:

Thus he [the Roman pontiff] never gives a general command to the whole Church in necessary things except with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who, as he is not wanting in necessary things even to second causes, because he has established them, will not be more wanting to Christianity in what is necessary for its life and perfection. And how would the Church be one and holy, as the Scriptures and Creeds describe her? For if she followed a pastor, and the pastor erred, how would she be holy; if she followed him not, how would she be one? And what confusion would be seen in Christendom, while the one party should consider a law good the others bad, and while the sheep, instead of feeding and fattening in the pasture of Scripture and the Holy Word, should occupy themselves in controlling the decision of their

⁸⁷ IIIa. q. 83, art. 5.

superior?⁸⁸

52. R&R ERROR # 17: The Church is not infallible in the solemn canonization of the saints.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that the Church is infallible in the canonization of saints:

Because the honor which we pay to the saints is a type of profession of faith, by which we believe in the glory of the saints, it must be believed with piety that even in these things the judgment of the Church is also not able to err.⁸⁹

The Angelic doctor adds further (*ibid.*):

In the Church there cannot be an error worthy of condemnation. But it would be an error worthy of condemnation if a sinner were venerated as if he were a saint, because some, aware of his sins, would believe this to be false, and so it could happen that they be led into error. Therefore the Church is not able to err in such things.

Against the objection that the pope may err in the canonization of saints if he did not follow a proper process of examination, let us adduce here a relevant argument of St. Robert Bellarmine:

If anyone would ask, however, whether the pope could err if he should rashly define something, then without a doubt the aforesaid authors would all respond that it cannot happen that the pope would rashly define something, for God has promised the end, and without a doubt he

⁸⁸ St. Francis of Sales, *The Catholic Controversy*, Part II, Art. VI, Chapter XIV, London, 1886.

⁸⁹ *Quodl.* IX, art. 16.

promised also the means which are necessary to obtain that end.⁹⁰

St. Thomas Aquinas says similarly (*ibid.*):

Divine Providence preserves the Church in such a way that it is not deceived in such things through the fallible testimony of men.

Therefore, although the pope is bound to diligent examination before any definition, the very fact of his definition is an assurance, for Catholics, that this definition is legitimate and true.

Cardinal Mazzella doubles down, together with Melchior Canus, saying that if the process of examination were so necessary that it could not be omitted, then the very fact of the canonization would be an infallible sign that the process had been indeed legitimately completed:

But if the diligence of the pontiff were to be necessary in order that he may define at all, we would still have to believe that when he defines some controversy, he did use sufficient diligence; by the same faith shown above, that we must believe that he then defines truly and infallibly. The reason is that by the very fact that Christ promised to the Church that she may not err, and that therefore, as well, the pontiff may never define a controversy falsely, it must also be understood that it would never happen that a pontiff define anything without a previous due diligence, if indeed such a diligence were to be absolutely necessary for the pontiff to define.⁹¹

⁹⁰ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. IV, c. 2.

⁹¹ Mazzella, *De Religione et Ecclesia*, Disp. IV, Art. VII, n. 792, Rome, 1896; Melchior Canus, *De Locis Theologicis*, lib. V, c. 5. These

As the reader can tell, theologians leave no room for any sophism aimed at weakening the Church's infallibility.

If canonizations of saints were not infallible, indeed, then it would be possible for the whole Church to venerate, pray to, and imitate a sinner damned in hell. But this is blasphemous. It would also overturn the Catholic practice of the veneration of saints, since we would then be left without any guarantee concerning any saint.

53. R&R ERROR # 18: Catholics are free to ignore and even publicly repudiate the solemn canonizations of the Catholic Church.

This error is refuted by the same testimonies adduced in the preceding point.

It is also refuted by the writings of pope Benedict XIV, who (as a private theologian) made a lengthy investigation on the subject of the Church's infallibility in the canonizations of saints. The learned pope concluded that although a few authors of the past had denied it, the Church's infallibility on this matter was already, at his time, the common sentence of theologians, to which he subscribed. The matter of discussion was not anymore whether the Church was infallible or not on this matter, but rather if canonizations were objects of faith, to such a point that someone rejecting a canonization would be considered a heretic. Benedict XIV explains that all theologians agree that such

theologians go one step further: if need be, God would directly illuminate the mind of the pope about to make a false definition, or even allow him to die, that he may not define falsely. For the principle must be held, no matter what: the Church is infallible, on account of the assistance of God, and she could not err.

a person would be wrong anyway, and would become the object of the most severe censures:

If we do not call him a heretic, we would however say that anyone who would dare to say that a pontiff has erred in this or that canonization, and that this or that saint canonized by him ought not to be venerated by the worship of *dulia*, is rash, bringing scandal to the whole Church, injurious to the saints, favoring the heretics who deny the authority of the Church in the canonization of saints, savoring heresy, inasmuch as he paves the way for infidels to laugh at the faithful, asserting an erroneous proposition and subject to the gravest penalties. To this, even those authors would agree, who say that it is not of faith that this or that one canonized is a saint.⁹²

54. R&R ERROR # 19: Catholics are free to refuse obedience to the authority of the Catholic Church as long as they profess this duty of obedience with sincerity and piety.

As a consequence of Christ's continual assistance to the Church, St. Augustine assures us that there can never be a situation where schism would be necessary in order to preserve the true religion instituted by Christ:

There is nothing more grievous than the sacrilege of schism... There can be no just necessity for destroying the unity of the Church.⁹³

⁹² Benedict XIV, *De Can. Sanct.*, l, c. 43, n. 27.

⁹³ St. Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, lib. II, cap. II, n. 25. This teaching of St. Augustine is endorsed by Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 10.

St. Maximus the Abbot gives obedience and submission to the pope as an absolute condition of Catholicity:

Therefore if a man does not want to be, or to be called, a heretic, let him not strive to please this or that man...but let him hasten before all things to be in communion with the Roman See. If he be in communion with it, he should be acknowledged by all and everywhere as faithful and orthodox. He speaks in vain who tries to persuade me of the orthodoxy of those who, like himself, refuse obedience to his Holiness the Pope of the most holy Church of Rome: that is to the Apostolic See.⁹⁴

55. R&R ERROR # 20: Bishops are free to refuse obedience to the Roman Pontiff if they think they have a good reason.

St. Augustine explained that there could never be a good reason to go into schism from the Catholic Church:

There is nothing more grievous than the sacrilege of schism... There can be no just necessity for destroying the unity of the Church.⁹⁵

56. R&R ERROR #21: Catholics are free to judge the value of the decisions of the authority of the Catholic Church.

This is so contrary to all Catholic tradition that it hardly needs to be addressed. To emphasize how much obedience is part of the constitution of the Church, let us here adduce

⁹⁴ St. Maximus, in *Defloratio ex Epistola ad Petrum illustrem*. This teaching is endorsed by Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 13.

⁹⁵ St. Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, lib. II., cap. II., n. 25)

the words of St. Catherine of Siena:

Even if the Pope were Satan incarnate, we ought not to raise up our heads against him, but calmly lie down to rest on his bosom.⁹⁶

And again, she writes:

I know well, that many think they do God a service by persecuting the Church and its servants, and they say, to justify themselves: “The priests are so bad,” but I say to you that God will and has commanded so, that even if the shepherds of the Church and Christ on earth [meaning the pope] were incarnate devils, while the Pope that we have is a good and gentle father — yet we must be submissive to him and obedient, not for what he is personally, but out of obedience to God, because the Pope is the Vicegerent of Christ.⁹⁷

These words of St. Catherine of Siena must be understood properly, and the author reporting them indeed makes this distinction:

In the same way Catherine distinguishes between the person and the office.⁹⁸

Indeed, while the pope and the bishops might behave badly, as private persons, and not live up to the laws of morality of the Church, this has no bearing on the fact that the laws of the Church themselves are holy

⁹⁶ St. Catherine of Siena, *Lett.* 28, quoted by Johannes Jorgensen, *St. Catherine of Siena*, Bk. II, London, 1942, p. 201. This book is a goldmine on the Catholic attitude towards the papacy, and could have been referenced as an answer to almost all the errors presented in this syllabus.

⁹⁷ *Lett.* 207, quoted by Johannes Jorgensen, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁹⁸ Jorgensen, *ibid.*

and sanctifying, and must be obeyed, even when they are promulgated by sinners. Popes and bishops sin when they do not live up to the laws of God and of His Church, but it cannot ever happen that the laws of the Church themselves are sinful. Hence the same author comments:

Catherine maintained unswervingly the theocratic standpoint: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses,” it is said in the Gospel, “all things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not.”⁹⁹

57. R&R ERROR #22: Catholics are free to judge the value of the declarations of nullity of matrimony issued by the Holy See, and constitute their own assemblies to confirm it.

This is explicitly contrary to the traditional law of the Church, as it is sanctioned, for example, in the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

Matrimonial cases between the baptized pertain to ecclesiastical judgment by proper and exclusive right.¹⁰⁰

58. R&R ERROR # 23: Catholic priests are free to administer the sacraments in any diocese without the delegation of the legitimate bishop, and even despite his prohibition, if they deem it to be necessary. Catholics are free to access any priest for the sacraments, even against the will of the legitimate hierarchy.

This error is contrary to the tradition of

⁹⁹ Jorgensen, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Canon 1960.

the Church. The Fathers did not even so much as explain that the clergy should obey their bishop, but would rather often explain how they should obey. Nonetheless, a few monuments of the early Church attest to this principle, such as the *Apostolic Canons*:

Let not the priests or deacons do anything without the sanction of the bishop; for he it is who is entrusted with the people of the Lord, and of whom will be required the account of their souls.¹⁰¹

This constant tradition of the Church is expressed by the *Roman Pontifical* in the very ceremony of ordination of the priest, at the end of which the newly ordained priest, having placed his folded hands between the hands of his bishop, promises him obedience in the use of his holy orders.

A priest traveling outside of the diocese in which he is incardinated¹⁰² is bound to ask permission from legitimate authority, where he travels, to be able to offer Mass.¹⁰³ In this case, he would then say Mass “*una cum*” the local ordinary, and not his own bishop, for it is the local ordinary of the place where this priest travels who gives him the right to offer Mass. It goes without saying that the traveling priest could not hear confessions or perform any form of apostolate without first receiving faculties to that effect from the ordinary of the diocese which he is visiting.

59. R&R ERROR #24: Catholics are free to establish parishes, schools, seminaries, convents and monasteries without the authorization of the diocesan bishop or of

¹⁰¹ *Canones Apostolorum*, n. 38.

¹⁰² That is, in which he is employed and has a canonical status.

¹⁰³ This law is presently found in canon 804.

the Holy See, and even despite their prohibition, if they deem it be profitable to the salvation of souls.

This error is refuted by the principles of obedience to the legitimate hierarchy of the Church, presented above. Following the instruction of the Council of Trent, the 1917 Code of Canon Law explicitly reserves the right and duty of establishing a seminary exclusively to the bishop in his diocese. Canon 1357, for example, dictates the following:

It belongs to the bishop to decide each and every thing that affects the correct governance of the diocesan Seminary, its governance, and what seems opportune for its necessary progress, and to see that these things are faithfully observed, with due regard for the prescriptions of the Holy See given for particular cases.¹⁰⁴

It is a particular application of the general principle that the instruction of ministers is exclusively reserved to the Church's authority:

The Church has the proper and exclusive right of instructing those who wish to devote themselves to ecclesiastical ministry.¹⁰⁵

A similar right and duty of establishing, directing, and approving Catholic schools is reserved to the Church's hierarchy by the canons 1381 and 1382 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law.

This is perfectly traditional, and has been practiced since the earliest centuries of the Church.

¹⁰⁴ Canon 1357, §1.

¹⁰⁵ Canon 1352.

60. R&R ERROR #25: It is perfectly licit and even virtuous to consecrate bishops despite the express prohibition of the reigning Roman Pontiff.

St. Cyprian confounds Novatian with these words:

Novatian is not in the Church; nor can he be reckoned as a bishop, who, succeeding to no one, and despising the evangelical and apostolic tradition, sprang from himself. For he who has not been ordained in the Church can neither have nor hold to the Church in any way.¹⁰⁶

61. R&R ERROR #26: Catholics are free to despise sentences of excommunication, if they deem it to be unjustly given.

St. Gregory the Great indicates that sentences given by the Church's authority are not to be despised, even if they are unjustly given:

The sentence of the pastor is to be feared whether it be just or unjust.¹⁰⁷

St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of a valid (although unjustly given) sentence of excommunication, adds further:

This takes effect, and the person excommunicated should humbly submit (which will be credited to him as a merit), and either seek absolution from the person who has excommunicated him, or appeal to a higher judge. If, however, he were to despise the sentence, he would by that fact sin mortally.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 76.

¹⁰⁷ St. Gregory, *Hom. XXVI in Evang.*

¹⁰⁸ *Suppl.*, Q. XXI, art. IV.

62. R&R Error #27: Catholics priests and bishops are free to administer the sacraments, despite having been suspended or excommunicated, if they deem the sentence to be unjust and the faithful in need of the sacraments.

St. Thomas Aquinas, as we have seen precedently, takes excommunications from the Church very seriously, even when they are unjustly given. He explicitly teaches that the unjustly excommunicated person should humbly submit to the Church's law, and obtain absolution from his excommunication. In another article of the *Summa*, he explicitly teaches what the law of the Church is, in regards to communication with someone who has been excommunicated:

The commandment of the Church regards spiritual matters directly... Hence by holding communion in Divine worship one acts against the commandment, and commits a mortal sin.¹⁰⁹

The sentences of the Church must be observed, whether they are just or unjust, and whether the one sentenced is personally guilty or not, teaches St. Thomas:

Sometimes a man is debarred from the Eucharist even without his own fault, as in the case of those who are suspended or under an interdict, because these penalties are sometimes inflicted on one person for the sin of another who is thus punished.

A priest who has been forbidden by the Church's authority to administer the sacraments must indeed abstain from it, lest he commit a sacrilege. Absolutions given

¹⁰⁹ *Suppl.*, Q. XXIII, art. III.

would be invalid. Masses offered would be fruitless.

In the teaching of St. Thomas it is clear that to be of any benefit, the Mass has to be offered not only by Christ, but also by the Church.¹¹⁰ The priest offering Mass offers Mass validly if he truly is a minister of Christ, through the sacrament of Holy Orders. He thus acts *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. He offers Mass licitly, however, and therefore fruitfully, only if he is also a minister of the Church. He then acts also *in persona Ecclesiae*, in the person of the Church. This is regularly ensured by an explicit delegation coming through canonical faculties given by the Church's hierarchy.

When discussing the value of Masses offered by heretics and schismatics, St. Thomas Aquinas uses precisely this argument to prove that their Masses are fruitless:

The priest, in reciting the prayers of the mass, speaks in the person of the Church, in whose unity he remains; but in consecrating the sacrament he speaks as in the person of Christ, Whose place he holds by the power of his orders. Consequently, if a priest severed from the unity of the Church celebrates Mass, not having lost the power of order, he consecrates Christ's true body and blood; but because he is severed from the unity of the Church, his prayers have no efficacy.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ This is also explicitly taught by Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Mystici corporis*, n. 82: "In this Sacrifice the sacred minister acts as the viceregent not only of our Savior but of the whole Mystical Body."

¹¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 82, a. 7, ad 3^{um}.

FOURTH ARTICLE

**ANSWER TO OBJECTION #1:
“KNOWING IF THE ‘VATICAN II POPES’
ARE REAL POPES OR NOT DOES NOT MATTER.”**

63. Objection #1: To know whether or not the “Vatican II popes” are true popes does not matter.

This objection argues that fidelity to the tradition of the Church is for us a certain criterion that we must resist and reject the Vatican II religion, independently of the question of authority. One can hold the traditional faith and frequent the traditional Mass, as it was done until Vatican II. One must ignore everything coming from the Holy See or the local ordinary, since it is tainted with modernism and dangerous for the faith; hence in the practical order it does not make much difference whether the pope is indeed or not a real pope.

64. Answer: The identity of the pope does matter.

Against the objection #1, we will argue that indifference to this question

(1) can exist only in the mind of someone imbued with condemned ideas about the indefectibility of the Church;

(2) is incompatible with Catholic doctrine according to which the pope is the source and principle of unity in the Church;

(3) is in open contradiction with the dogma of necessary submission to the Roman pontiff;

(4) cannot be justified by the fact that the “Vatican II popes” are misbehaving;

(5) is contrary to the principles established by theologians that the papacy of a reigning pope is a dogmatic fact.

65. The identity of the Roman pontiff does not matter only if one completely overturns and ignores the very constitution of the Church.

Indeed, in order to conclude that whether or not the “Vatican II popes” are true popes does not matter, one has to accept and practice on a daily basis all of the erroneous and condemned propositions presented above. We invite the reader to consult the list established in the first article of this chapter. Let it suffice here to mention a few.

In order to defend indifference, therefore, one has to maintain, at least in the practical order, the following:

(1) That the Church could become unfaithful to her divinely entrusted mission.

(2) That the Church’s universal magisterium could become unfaithful to the faith.

(3) That the Church could give evil universal discipline.

(4) That the Church could give an evil and deficient rite of the Mass.

(5) That the Church could define false canonizations.

(6) That the faithful can reject in good conscience the universal teaching, discipline, and liturgy established by the legitimate authority of the Church.

(7) That bishops, priests, and lay Catholics, are allowed to establish a global apostolate in defiance of the legitimate hierarchy.

We have already seen how these

propositions have been condemned as erroneous, and in some cases heretical, by the Church's magisterium. We have seen how they entirely contradict the Church's tradition. These propositions cannot in any way be maintained and defended by Catholics. Hence the question of authority of the "Vatican II popes" cannot be evaded.

66. The Roman Pontiff is the source of unity in the Church.

Another flaw of the objection presented above is to mistakenly look for unity outside of the principle of unity established by Christ in the Catholic Church.

The reason why it is often said that whether the "Vatican II popes" are real popes or not does not matter, is a desire to promote "unity" among those who resist the new Vatican II religion. It fails to see that in the Church the source of unity is none other than the authority divinely entrusted to the Roman Pontiff. For the Church has a threefold unity: unity of faith, unity of discipline (government), and unity of worship. But in these three things, the principle of unity is the authority of the Roman Pontiff. For it is his right and duty to determine with his supreme authority, the Church's faith, discipline, and liturgy.

That the authority of the Roman pontiff is the principle of unity of the Catholic Church is taught explicitly, and with insistence, by Pope Leo XIII, who dedicated to this subject an entire encyclical, *Satis cognitum*. In this encyclical, Pope Leo XIII refers to the papacy as the principle of unity of the Church, and the principal element of the constitution of the Church:

It was necessary that a government of this kind, since **it belongs to the**

constitution and formation of the Church, as its principal element - that is as **the principle of unity** and the foundation of lasting stability - should in no wise come to an end with St. Peter, but should pass to his successors from one to another.¹¹²

Pope Leo XIII shows this principle to be found in the tradition of the Church:

St. Cyprian also says of the Roman Church, that "it is the root and mother of the Catholic Church, the chair of Peter, and the *principal Church* whence sacerdotal unity has its source" (Ep. XLVIII., *ad Cornelium*, n. 3. and Ep. liac., *ad eundem*, n. 14). He calls it the *chair of Peter* because it is occupied by the successor of Peter: he calls it the principal Church, on account of the primacy conferred on Peter himself and his legitimate successors; and the **source of unity**, because the Roman Church is the efficient cause of unity in the Christian commonwealth.¹¹³

It is evident that one cannot establish any unity of the Church outside of the principle of unity established by Christ, which is the primacy of the Roman pontiff. Since this primacy is the "principal element of the constitution of the Church" it follows that any gathering based on the rejection of this principle of unity is ultimately based on the rejection of the very constitution of the Church.

67. The objection ignores the Catholic dogma of the necessity of subjection to the

¹¹² Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*. Emphasis added.

¹¹³ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*. Emphasis added.

Roman pontiff.

The principles presented above can all be summarized in one article of our Catholic faith, solemnly defined by Pope Boniface VIII:

This authority, however, (though it has been given to man and is exercised by man), is not human but rather divine, granted to Peter by a divine word and reaffirmed to him (Peter) and his successors by the One Whom Peter confessed, the Lord saying to Peter himself, “whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven” etc. Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God... Furthermore, **we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.**¹¹⁴

This dogma of our faith is based on the very essence of the Church and of the papacy. Christ entrusted His mission to the Church, just as His Father sent Him to redeem the world:

As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.¹¹⁵

Christ sent His Apostles just as the Father sent Him, and He promised His assistance until the end of times:

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days,

¹¹⁴ Boniface VIII, Bull *Unam sanctam*, D. 469.

¹¹⁵ Jn. XX, 21.

even to the consummation of the world.¹¹⁶

As a direct consequence of this divine institution, Our Lord also tells His disciples:

He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.¹¹⁷

Commenting on these solemn words of Christ, Pope Pius XII reminds explicitly the necessity for Catholics to profess the doctrine taught in papal encyclicals:

Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in Encyclical Letters does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such Letters the popes do not exercise the supreme power of their teaching authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary teaching authority, of which it is true to say: “He who heareth you, heareth me”; and generally what is expounded and inculcated in Encyclical Letters already for other reasons appertains to Catholic doctrine. But if the supreme pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the mind and will of the pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians.¹¹⁸

The same submission must be given to the supreme authority of the Church not only in doctrine, but also in discipline and liturgy. To ignore this, or to claim indifference, is to despise Christ Himself:

He that heareth you, heareth me; and he

¹¹⁶ Mt. XXVIII, 18-20.

¹¹⁷ Lk. X, 16.

¹¹⁸ Pius XII, Encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950).

that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.¹¹⁹

It is also in open contradiction to the solemn definition of Pope Boniface VIII:

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.¹²⁰

68. The necessity of submission to the Roman pontiff in a time of crisis.

One might be tempted to rashly repudiate the doctrine presented above, on the pretext that we are living in a time of crisis, where things are not as evident and clear than, say, during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

But, although this necessity to submit to the Roman pontiff may vary in its practical application, such as when, for example, the pope is dead, yet the principle itself always remains true, and cannot become suspended. Even the time of an interregnum (between the death of a pope, and the election of his successor), for example, Catholics are still bound to the decisions taken by the Roman pontiffs, up to the present, which remain the universal norm of faith, discipline, and liturgy for the universal Church. Still then, therefore, Catholics can and must apply the dogma defined by Boniface VIII.

The history of the Church has seen different times of crisis of authority. One of the most dire crises of the papacy was certainly that of the Great Western Schism. Two to three claimants to the papacy divided Christendom, and since the problem was canonical in nature, it was not always evident

¹¹⁹ Lk. X, 16.

¹²⁰ Boniface VIII, Bull *Unam sanctam*, D. 469.

for the people to find out for themselves who was the true pope. To this day, the Church has not issued an official determination of this question. But even then, Catholics were bound by the same duty of obedience, and were obliged in conscience to adhere to and defend whomever they considered to be the real pope.

St. Vincent Ferrer, living at this difficult time, did not consider it irrelevant to determine who was the true pope:

Then for the faith of Christianity and to reach salvation it is necessary to determine the legitimate pope, universal vicar of the Savior.¹²¹

The Dominican saint sharply rebukes indifferentism in this regard:

The one that is indifferent and in doubt of [who] is the true pope, is also indifferent and in doubt of the true Church of Christ, that is of the true apostolic college, since the Roman and Apostolic Church cannot be known if the true pope is not known.¹²²

It is interesting to note that St. Vincent Ferrer himself was wrong about who was the true pope, since he followed Benedict XIII, who is now commonly considered by historians and theologians to have been a false pope.

What the saint condemned was indifference to this question. One might be wrong, and if in good faith, could actually still be a saint (and in this case, one of the greatest miracle-workers of history), because **error in good faith is excusable before God. What is not excusable, however, is indifference.**

¹²¹ *De moderno Ecclesiae schismate*, cap. V.

¹²² *Op. cit.*, cap. IV.

It must also be said that the issue at the time was a canonical issue, quite difficult to resolve for people distanced from the happenings of conclaves. The issue of authority is not difficult to solve, however, in our crisis, since it is obvious to all that the “Vatican II popes” are in fact teaching a false religion.

69. The objection further argues that “it still does not matter”, since the “Vatican II popes,” although they are likely to be true popes, do not accomplish in the practical order, it is claimed, anything the pope is supposed to do and be obeyed for by Catholics.

As an answer to the problems indicated above, people who maintain this objection will often argue back by pointing out that, although they agree that in principle Catholics should obey the pope, and that the pope is for them a living rule of faith, they acknowledge (and rightly so) that the “Vatican II popes” have not been for Catholics an infallible rule of faith, that they do not care about defending the faith and saving souls, but are rather busy with the establishment of humanitarian agenda. In other words, the “Vatican II popes”, it is argued, cannot be followed and obeyed as other popes ordinarily were, since the “Vatican II popes” are not behaving like a pope should.

We share indeed this observation: it is openly evident to all Catholics that the “Vatican II popes” are not doing the “job of a pope.” By this we mean that they are not upholding the traditional faith, discipline, and liturgy of the Church, but instead their works are objectively established against these very things.

We shall answer this further objection by two observations.

70. First observation: if the “Vatican II popes” do not want to be the pope, as Christ meant it, then they cannot be popes.

First, if it is true (and we also think that it is) that the “Vatican II popes” are not doing the work that the pope is supposed to, then it means that they do not, objectively (independently of personal motives), tend to the normal carrying out of the office of the papacy. In accepting to be “the pope” they intended something different from what the papacy is supposed to be about. If this is true, then they cannot be true popes. Because to be a true pope, one must intend to become a pope, which implies to be in the Church, what the pope is supposed to be: the guardian of the traditional faith, discipline, and liturgy. We refer the reader to the chapter on the lack of proper intention to accept the papacy, for a further understanding of this argument.

71. Second observation: it is false and absurd to claim that the “Vatican II popes” have never asked for obedience in religious matters.

Second, while it is true that the “Vatican II popes” do not behave as a true pope is supposed to, it would be patently false, however, to think that they never demanded obedience in matters of doctrine, discipline, and liturgy. We are not faced here with the case of a “pope” who does not say or enact any ecclesiastical law, and is content merely with a temporal government of the papal states.¹²³ In this instance, it would be true to

¹²³ Theologians of the past have studied this hypothesis, discussing the case of a possible

affirm that one cannot obey anything coming from such a “pope” since he would have demanded nothing which must be obeyed, in matters of faith and morals. But we are facing something much different. We are facing the case of a supposed pope who is demanding that you adhere to and teach doctrines which are contrary to the Catholic faith (such as religious liberty); he is demanding that you implement and practice disciplines contrary to divine law (such as ecumenism); he is demanding that you celebrate a liturgy tainted with modernist and protestant principles, alien to Catholic doctrine (such as the *Novus Ordo Missae*). “Saints” are constantly canonized, to whom veneration is required from the universal Church.

One cannot therefore pretend that the “Vatican II popes” simply never commanded anything to be obeyed for. Indeed, if that were true, why would we not be able to continue frequenting our own parish? Why would we have to seek out a traditional Catholic priest, for Catholic doctrine and Catholic sacraments?

The very existence of the “traditionalist movement” gives the lie to such a false claim. The “Vatican II religion” is real, and is imposed by the “Vatican II popes” with tenacity and without any possibility of escape. Its demands touch on every aspect of the religion: doctrine, discipline, and worship.

72. The objection #1 entirely ignores the common doctrine of theologians saying that the papacy of a reigning pope is a dogmatic fact.

The entire question of the universal schismatical pope. This has been presented in the chapter on the lack of intention.

acceptance of a reigning pope will be discussed in a proper chapter. Let it suffice to present here the heart of the theological argument presented therein.

Theologians clearly establish a necessary connection between the legitimacy of an ecumenical council or a Roman Pontiff, and the infallibility of its dogmatic pronouncements. This is the key principle on which we have previously established, based on the indefectibility of the Church in her doctrine, discipline, and liturgy, that the “Vatican II popes” were not true popes, and that Vatican II could not be a legitimate ecumenical council.

The principle is presented succinctly by the Jesuit theologian Pesch:

A dogmatic fact is a fact connected to dogma in such a way that, if the fact is affirmed, dogma is affirmed, but if the fact is denied, dogma is denied. For example, the definitions of some ecumenical council are valid if the council is legitimate, hence the legitimacy of the council is a dogmatic fact.¹²⁴

Pesch affirms: **“The definitions of some ecumenical council are valid IF the council is legitimate”** (emphasis added).

We could formulate a similar condition for the pope: “The definitions and decisions of a Roman pontiff are valid IF he is a true Roman pontiff.”

From a conditional proposition of this sort, the traditional rules given to us by logicians could draw a valid argument in two ways, thus summarized by Msgr. Glenn, in his famous *Dialectics*:

From the truth of the antecedent follows

¹²⁴ Pesch S.J., *Compendium Theologiae Dogmaticae*, T. I, Freiburg, 1913, n. 343, p. 250.

the truth of the consequent, but not vice versa; and from the falsity of the consequent follows the falsity of the antecedent, but not vice versa.¹²⁵

We thus can make two valid arguments based on the conditional principle given by Pesch:

(1) By affirming that the condition is verified, one must *necessarily* conclude that the consequent is also verified.

Let us consider the example of the following conditional proposition: “If it rains, we shall not play.” It is clear that when the condition is verified (i.e. “it is in fact raining”), then the consequent must be affirmed: “we shall not play.”

Thus, if indeed a council is recognized as legitimate, then its definitions must necessarily be valid.

Similarly, if the Roman pontiff is a true pope (endowed with the authority of Christ), then his definitions must necessarily be valid.

This method of argumentation is referred to by logicians as the “put-method”: by affirming the antecedent (the condition) one *must* affirm the consequent (the conclusion).

It is the method used by theologians to argue that it is necessary for the Church to be certain of the legitimacy of a council (or Roman Pontiff) in order to accept its decisions.

But the other side of the coin, based on the same starting principle, is:

(2) By denying that the consequent is verified, one must *necessarily* deny that the antecedent (the condition) has been fulfilled.

Let us apply this rule to the example given above: “If it rains, we shall not play.” When

¹²⁵ Glenn, *Dialectics*, St. Louis, 1954, pp. 140-141. This law of conditional syllogism is universally recognized and accepted.

the consequent is denied, then the antecedent is denied. This means that if “we shall not play” is false, then “it rains” is necessarily false as well. In other words, we could rephrase it thus: “if we shall play, then it is not raining.”¹²⁶

Thus, to deny that the pronouncements of a council (or of a Roman Pontiff) are valid is to logically and necessarily deny the very legitimacy of the said council (or Roman Pontiff).

This method of argumentation is referred to by logicians as the “take-method”: by denying the consequent one *must* deny the antecedent (the condition). This method of argumentation has the same strength as the first one.

Hence, indifference and rejection of the religion promulgated by an ecumenical council or a Roman pontiff necessarily argues for the absence of authority in the said council of Roman pontiff.

In discussing this question, theologians do certainly agree on the same key principle which necessarily binds the legitimacy of pronouncements, laws, and decisions to the legitimacy of the authority promulgating these pronouncements, laws and decisions.

To apply it directly to the case at hand, and to extend it to all aspects of religion at once (doctrine, discipline, and liturgy), the principle can be thus established:

¹²⁶ These two methods of argumentation are the only legitimate ones. Thus, from the example provided, “if it rains, we shall not play,” we can deduce only two arguments: “it rains, therefore we shall not play”; and “we shall play, therefore it is not raining.” Other arguments, such as “we shall not play, therefore it is raining,” are not legitimate and are not necessary, since we could cancel the game for another reason than the rain. But it is absolutely certain that if we indeed play, then it necessarily means that it is not raining.

If the “Vatican II popes” are true popes, then the Vatican II religion is the Catholic religion.

We could now build an argument on this principle in two ways (and two ways only), as explained above:

(1) *One affirms the antecedent, and therefore affirms the consequent (“put-method”)*: One affirms that the “Vatican II popes” are indeed true popes. From this would *necessarily* flow that the Vatican II religion is the Catholic religion.

(2) *One denies the consequent, and therefore denies the antecedent (“take-method”)*: One denies that the Vatican II religion is the Catholic religion. In this case one must *necessarily* conclude that the “Vatican II popes” are not true popes.

The strength of these two arguments is actually the same, in terms of logic.

73. Conclusion: indifference on the identity of the Roman pontiff is a grievous error.

We have shown such an indifference to be in direct opposition to Catholic dogma, which asserts the absolute necessity of submission to the Roman pontiff for salvation. We have shown such an indifference to be possible only in a mind imbued with very serious errors concerning the indefectibility of the Church. We have explained how Catholic unity cannot be achieved, but is rather destroyed in its very foundation, by such an indifference. We have shown this indifference to be contrary to the teaching of theologians, who necessarily binds the legitimacy of pronouncements, laws, and decisions to the legitimacy of the authority promulgating these pronouncements, laws and decisions.

74. “Why then did you not believe him?”

This necessary connection between the legitimacy of authority and the legitimacy of the religion which this authority promulgates is not only a traditional principle of Catholic doctrine and Catholic theology. It is also clearly articulated by Our Blessed Lord Himself in the Gospel:

And it came to pass, that on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes, with the ancients, met together, and spoke to him, saying: Tell us, by what authority dost thou these things? or, Who is he that hath given thee this authority? And Jesus answering, said to them: **I will also ask you one thing. Answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?** But they thought within themselves, saying: **If we shall say, From heaven: he will say: Why then did you not believe him? But if we say, Of men, the whole people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.** And they answered that they knew not whence it was. And Jesus said to them: Neither do I tell thee by what authority I do these things.¹²⁷

The scribes and the priests did not receive the baptism of St. John, which was a call to penance as a preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Now that they are arguing against Him on the question of authority, Our Lord turns the argument against them, since their attitude is not itself conform to a religious understanding of divine authority. He therefore presents the priests and the scribes with a dilemma, by asking them

¹²⁷ Lk. XX, 1-8. This dialogue is also recorded in Mk. XI, 27-33.

whether the baptism of St. John was from heaven or from man. The two alternatives of the dilemma are as follow:

Either (1) the scribes and the priests answer that the baptism of John is “from heaven,” thus recognizing implicitly St. John to be a true prophet of the Most High. But in this case, they directly denounce their own attitude, since they did not obey St. John, and never sought to receive the baptism of penance. Thus they knew that Our Lord would immediately ask them: “*Why then did you not believe him?*”

Or (2) they answer that the baptism of John is “of men,” which means that it was false and invented by man, and not asked for by God. In this case, they would directly imply that St. John the Baptist was a false prophet, a liar, and a deceiver. They do not want to admit this, for fear of the people: “*The whole people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.*”

Hence they prefer to not answer Our Lord, by professing ignorance: “*They answered that they knew not whence it was.*”

Our Lord rebukes them sharply, since their ignorance was culpable, and affected. They are asking Our Lord about His authority,

while they themselves trample the very notion of divine authority under foot. Hence Our Lord answers them: “*Neither do I tell thee by what authority I do these things.*”

In this passage of the Gospel, therefore, it was clear both to Our Lord and to the scribes that rejecting the baptism of John as false meant rejecting St. John himself as a false prophet.

Following the logic used by Our Lord, we could in turn put the same question to R&R adherents who feign ignorance on the question of authority: *Is the religion of Vatican II from heaven, or of men?* In other words, is the Vatican II religion the true Catholic religion, given by God through the Church, or is it a human invention, a deceit, a lie? *Is the New Mass from heaven, or of men? Is ecumenism from heaven, or of men?*

Anyone refusing to answer these questions, and refusing to follow their logical and immediate implication cannot claim ignorance and indifference without by that very fact placing an obstacle to the knowledge which Our Lord gives to us, by the virtue of faith, on the notion of divine authority: “*Neither do I tell thee by what authority I do these things.*”

FIFTH ARTICLE

ANSWER TO OBJECTION #2:

“THE POSITION OF ARCHBISHOP LEFEBVRE IS PRUDENTIAL”

75. Objection #2: The position of Archbishop Lefebvre, who refused to determine whether the “Vatican II popes” were true popes or not, was a prudential position.

Since the Church has not itself decided the issue, it is argued, neither should we, and in this situation of doubt, it is better to suspend our judgment. The R&R system is thus presented as a prudential position, since it refuses to “abandon the Church” by proclaiming fidelity to him who appears to be the successor of St. Peter, and on the other hand it refuses and resists the modernist changes imposed upon the Church.

76. Answer: The R&R system is very imprudent.

Against the objection #2, we will argue that:

(1) one cannot prudently remain in doubt in matters which are necessary for salvation;

(2) R&R have already decided the case, by rejecting Vatican II and the New Mass;

(3) the R&R system is certainly imprudent, since it is certainly wrong, and forces one to follow, at least in one’s behavior, doctrines and attitudes already condemned by the Church.

77. One cannot remain in doubt in matters which are necessary for salvation.

Indeed the virtue of prudence asks us to never remain in doubt about something necessary for salvation. Hence, for example, if someone is doubtfully baptized, the priest

will confer baptism on that person again, conditionally.

This is a fundamental principle of moral theology: *Nulla nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur aeternitas*, that is, “There is never too much safety when eternity is endangered.”

Thus St. Alphonsus teaches:

We say that it is never licit to follow an opinion probable by a probability of fact with the danger of harm either to oneself or to someone else, since such a probability does not at all take away the danger of harm: if indeed this opinion is false, the harm of oneself or of our neighbor will not be avoided. Indeed, for example, the probability that a baptism conferred with saliva might be valid will not make it valid, if baptism conferred with saliva is in fact null, and thus the child remains unbaptized.¹²⁸

The argument of the holy doctor is that in things which are absolutely necessary for salvation, one cannot take a chance. For the mere probability of an opinion will not save you if it turns out that this probable opinion was false. In such a case, therefore, moral theology establishes the principle *tutius est agendus*, “one must follow the safer course.” In the example given by St. Alphonsus, therefore, one would have to abstain from baptizing with saliva, and rather use water; and if someone has been baptized with saliva, the baptism must be conferred again, with water, for the sake of safety. To do otherwise

¹²⁸ St. Alphonsus, *Th. Mor.*, l. I, n. 42.

is playing with someone's salvation, which is a serious sin of imprudence.

Now, we have already proven that submission to the Roman pontiff (not merely in words, but in deeds) is absolutely necessary for salvation:

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.¹²⁹

Hence, one cannot remain indifferent in determining whether or not the “Vatican II popes” are true popes:

The one that is indifferent and in doubt of [who] is the true pope, is also indifferent and in doubt of the true Church of Christ, that is of the true apostolic college, since the Roman and Apostolic Church cannot be known if the true pope is not known.¹³⁰

To remain in doubt or indifference about the legitimacy and authority of a reigning pope is thus to remain in doubt or indifference about one's salvation, which is a serious mortal sin of imprudence.

78. On the necessary connection between the obligation to be subject to the Roman pontiff and the obligation to determine who is the Roman pontiff.

We have indicated that in case of a doubt about something necessary for salvation, one must either solve the doubt or follow the safer course. But one could object that the obligation of submission asked for by Pope Boniface VIII is only an obligation to submit

¹²⁹ Boniface VIII, Bull *Unam sanctam*, D. 469.

¹³⁰ St. Vincent Ferrer, *De moderno Ecclesiae schismate*, cap. IV.

to a Roman Pontiff who is certainly pope. One could argue that nowhere is it said by Boniface VIII that one is also thereby obliged to inquire about the identity of the Roman pontiff.

This fallacy is equivalent to claiming that one would be obliged to become member of the true Church of Christ without actually also being obliged, consequently, to find out which is the true Church of Christ.

Against this type of fallacy, we must answer with the moralists: *Lex agendi legem sciendi importat*, that is, “The obligation to act involves the obligation to know.”

Thus the obligation to become a member of the true Church of Christ implies the obligation to inquire which is the true Church of Christ.

In the same way, and with the same strength, the obligation to be subject to the Roman pontiff necessarily implies the obligation to find out who is the true Roman pontiff.

If it is “absolutely necessary for salvation” (Boniface VIII) to be subject to the Roman pontiff, then it is “absolutely necessary for salvation” to determine who is the Roman pontiff, in virtue of the fundamental principle of morality, *Lex agendi lex sciendi importat*.

It becomes therefore necessary to resolve any doubt on this issue, with due diligence. Someone voluntarily remaining in doubt on this matter could not act in good faith. Nor is the R&R system a “safer course” as shall be made clear a little further.

79. The R&R system has already implicitly resolved the doubt.

On account of the necessary connection existing between the divinely instituted authority of the Church and the religion it

promulgates, we have explained above how one rejects the authority of the “Vatican II popes” by rejecting the Vatican II religion.

Let us here add that the same people who claim uncertainty and ignorance on this question do not have any scruple in rejecting decisions issued by what is apparently the supreme authority of the Church, either in doctrine, discipline, and liturgy.

The same people who would accuse us, saying, “you do not have any authority to say that the Vatican II popes are not true popes” seem to have no difficulty of conscience to affirm that the religion of Vatican II is not Catholic, that the New Mass should be avoided, that ecumenism must be rejected, and that the “Vatican II popes” ought to be ignored on a daily basis.

Yet it is much more bold to assert that the *authority of the Church* must be resisted, than to say that the modernists do not in fact possess this authority. **For the latter would, if wrong, contradict directly a fact, and would contradict doctrine only indirectly (by a necessary connection), while the former, certainly, directly contradicts principles of the faith.** For both agree that the Vatican II religion must be rejected, but the latter position (ours) ascribes defection to fallible men who are false shepherds, while the former system (R&R) directly ascribes defection to an indefectible Church. This brings us to the last point, which discusses the (un)safety of the R&R system.

80. One thing is certain, whether the “Vatican II popes” are real popes or not: the R&R system is wrong in either case.

While the R&R system is diffused under the disguise of being a “prudential position,” it cannot be further from the truth.

For, in virtue of the same principle, already insisted upon time and time again, that there is a necessary connection between the legitimacy of the authority of the Church and the legitimacy of the religion promulgated by the same authority, we could return to the consideration of the dilemma faced by the R&R system:

(1) Either the “Vatican II popes” are true popes, and in this case, the Vatican II religion **must necessarily** be the true Catholic religion, and therefore *to resist it is wrong*, all the way through;

(2) Or the Vatican II religion is a false modernist religion which must be rejected, and in this case one **must necessarily** conclude that the “Vatican II popes” were and are not true popes, and therefore *to recognize them is wrong* all the way through.

In other words, if the “Vatican II popes” are true popes, then the R&R system is wrong. But if, on the other hand, the “Vatican II popes” are not true popes, then the R&R system is also wrong.

Again, put in another way, if the Vatican II religion is Catholic, then the R&R system is wrong. But if the Vatican II religion is not Catholic, then the R&R system is wrong again.

In either case, both alternatives of the dilemma arrive at the same conclusion: **the R&R system is certainly wrong.** And if it is certainly wrong, **then it is certainly imprudent to follow.**

To follow a mere probability, on an issue necessary for salvation, would already be a serious sin of imprudence, as we have mentioned. What kind of imprudence would it be, therefore, to follow a position *which is certainly wrong in either case?*

In addition, as we have proven, it forces the mind to logically adhere to condemned doctrines, *which ascribe defection to an indefectible Church*, and it forces one to follow an attitude incompatible and entirely alien to the attitude of reverence and

obedience asked from Catholics to their legitimate pastors.

This certainly is imprudent, which is certainly wrong, certainly contradicts the doctrine of the faith, and certainly leads one to behave in a manner unbecoming of Catholics.

SIXTH ARTICLE

**ANSWER TO OBJECTION #3:
“SAINT PAUL RESISTED SAINT PETER.”**

81. Objection #3: The duty to resist evil commands of popes is a common traditional teaching, hence R&R is correct in resisting evil commands of the “Vatican II popes” while recognizing their legitimacy and authority.

The duty to resist evil commands can be seen in the example of St. Paul resisting St. Peter, and in the writings of many theologians such as St. Robert Bellarmine and Cardinal Cajetan.

82. Answer: The R&R system cannot be justified by the duty to resist evil commands.

Against the objection #3, we will argue that:

- (1) the example of St. Paul does not support the R&R system;
- (2) the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine does not support the R&R system.

83. St Paul resisted St. Peter.

This event is reported by St. Paul himself, in his epistle to the Galatians:

But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that some came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And to his dissimulation the rest of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the gospel, I

said to Cephas before them all: If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?¹³¹

84. This event has already been falsely used by the protestants to contest St. Peter’s primacy. Therefore the Fathers and the doctors have already explained it repeatedly.

This objection is not new, and is commonly addressed and explained by exegetes and theologians. Let it suffice us to consult the teaching of approved authors.

We will present below a summary of the explanation given by the Jesuit theologian Palmieri, very famous for his theological work on the Roman pontiff.¹³² To this explanation we shall add references from Fathers and doctors of the Church.

85. Explanation given by Palmieri S.J.

It is clear that St. Paul did not give to St. Peter a correction of authority, but rather a correction done out of charity. And did Peter err in the faith? No, for even protestants agree that the Apostles were all infallible. The act of Peter, for which he merited to be reprehended, was rather a sin against prudence (which sin could very easily have been done with inadvertance, and therefore

¹³¹ Gal. II, 11-14.

¹³² Dominico Palmieri S.J., *Tractatus de Romano Pontifice*, Editio altera, Prati, 1891, pp. 377-380.

be only material), but **it was not a sin against the faith.**

St. Peter certainly knew, and had himself taught in the Council, that it was not necessary either for the gentiles or for the Jews to observe the Jewish laws anymore. And St. Peter himself was not following the Jewish laws anymore, according to the rebuke of St. Paul: “thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do...”

But when some Jews, disciples of St. James, Apostle of the Jews, had come, St. Peter stopped eating with the Gentiles so as to not be an occasion of scandal for the Jews. Moved by charity, Peter feared that he would alienate the Jews by eating with the Gentiles. Thus it is clear that Peter’s intention was pure and praiseworthy. With regard to the objective action, it must first be reminded that legal observances, although defined as no more necessary, were still allowed for the Jews, and were therefore not in themselves sinful. Thus **St. Paul himself circumcised St. Timothy**, for the sake of Jews (Acts XVI, 3). There would be a *formal simulation*, which is a kind of lie, if Peter wanted to manifest that the acts of the Jewish law were still necessary, but there is no proof of such an accusation. It rather is, then, a *material simulation*, that is, something which can be misunderstood, despite the agent’s good intention, and which is done for a proportionate reason. Hence, whether Peter was justified in doing this, is only a question of prudence. **It was not a defection of the faith by any means, but what St. Paul judged to be an imprudence.**

This event is **actually a confirmation of Peter’s primacy**, because the mere example of St. Peter was not only an invitation to

others to do the same, but was **taken as a tacit command to do the same** as he did. The fact that his mere example led Barnabas and the other disciples to instantly imitate him is a clear sign of his dignity and authority.

Thus the Fathers have never seen in this event an objection to the primacy of St. Peter.

86. This was not an error in the faith, nor does it touch upon the infallibility of the Roman pontiff, but it was an error in personal behavior.

This is clear to the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church. When discussing this objection, St. Robert Bellarmine explains the following:

When St. Peter compelled the Gentiles to Judaize, this was not an error of preaching but of conduct, as Tertullian suggests in his work *de Praescriptionibus adversus haereticos*. **St. Peter did not ratify by some decree that they must Judaize, rather, he formally taught the contrary in Acts XV.** Nevertheless, when he was still in Antioch, he separated himself from the dinner table of the Gentiles lest he would give offense to those recently converted to the faith from the Jews and by his example compelled them to Judaize in a certain measure, even Barnabas. **But we do not deny that Popes can offer the occasion of erring through their own bad example, rather, we deny that they can prescribe the whole Church to follow some error *ex cathedra*.** Moreover, the examples and doctrines of the Pontiffs are not equally pernicious to the Church, seeing that the Lord instructed them, saying: “Do what

they say, but do not do what they do.”¹³³

Thus, at the most St. Peter sinned by giving the impression of not following what he himself had determined before in his office of supreme pastor: that the Jewish observances were no longer binding.

He did not make a definition binding the universal Church to believe that these Jewish observances were still binding. He did not issue a universal discipline obliging the Church to follow these abrogated observances. He merely did something objectively indifferent, as a condescension for the weak who still believed the observances of the Jewish law to be binding, which was a personal imprudence.

Sadly, Roman pontiffs can sin, and can even openly offend against the very laws which they themselves promulgate to the Church. As he is the supreme pastor, a pope will infallibly give salutary doctrine and salutary discipline to the universal Church. As a private individual, in his daily behavior, however, a pope is subject to the same weaknesses that we are.

87. Did St. Peter sin?

It is possible that by this imprudence St. Peter sinned venially. This opinion is held, notably, by St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Cyprian, and St. Thomas Aquinas, who explains that it is possible for St. Peter to sin:

But it might be objected: This took place after they received the grace of the Holy Ghost; but after the grace of the Holy Ghost the apostles did not sin in any way. I answer that after the grace of the Holy Ghost the apostles did not sin mortally,

¹³³ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, L. II, c. 8. Emphasis added.

and this gift they had through the divine power that had strengthened them: “I have established the pillars thereof” (Ps. 74:4). Yet they sinned venially because of human frailty: “If we say that we have no sin,” i.e., venial, “we deceive ourselves.” (1 John 1:8)¹³⁴

88. St. Paul did a charitable correction, and it might sometimes be necessary to similarly admonish a scandalous pope.

The resistance of St. Paul was not a resistance to the supreme authority of St. Peter over the Church. Rather it was an act of fraternal charity, which sometimes compels us to correct even our superiors, when they sin. This is particularly true when they sin publicly, and are an occasion of scandal.

Thus St. Thomas Aquinas teaches the following on this point:

Apropos of what is said in a certain Gloss, namely, that I withstood him as an adversary, the answer is that the Apostle opposed Peter in the exercise of authority, not in his authority of ruling. Therefore from the foregoing we have an example: prelates, indeed, an example of humility, that they not disdain corrections from those who are lower and subject to them; subjects have an example of zeal and freedom, that they fear not to correct their prelates, particularly if their crime is public and verges upon danger to the multitude.¹³⁵

We are not therefore entitled to deduce from this event that it is legitimate to resist universal doctrines and disciplines of the Church, which are always safe to follow. Rather we are alerted to the possibility that a

¹³⁴ *Ad Gal.*, c. 2, l. 3.

¹³⁵ *Loc. cit.*

pope may be in need of a correction, should he become an occasion of scandal for the faithful, by his depraved morals.

Hence the same doctors and theologians, who teach us that universal doctrines and disciplines emanating from the Roman pontiff and imposed on the whole Church are always infallible and safe to follow, have sometimes considered the possibility of the gathering of a council in order to admonish the Roman pontiff to correct his behavior, if he were to lead a scandalous life.

Thus, St. Robert Bellarmine himself mentions, among the possible reasons of convoking a general council, the duty of fraternal correction towards a scandalous pontiff:

A general council ought to be gathered... to admonish the pope, if he seemed incorrigible in morals.¹³⁶

89. This does not take away the obligation of obedience and submission to the Roman pontiff.

A pope can be very immoral in his private life, and yet issue pristine doctrine and disciplinary laws to the Church. In such a case, it is well to remember the words of Christ:

All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not.¹³⁷

This implies no disobedience to the universal commands of the pope, as we have said previously. In fact, St. Catherine of Siena presents this principle in very vivid

¹³⁶ St. Robert Bellarmine, *On the Church*, Vol. I: *On Councils*, ch. IX.

¹³⁷ Mt. XXIII, 3.

language. One of her biographies points out how much St. Catherine understood this distinction:

In the same way Catherine distinguishes between the person and the office.¹³⁸

St. Catherine of Siena explains indeed the following:

I know well, that many think they do God a service by persecuting the Church and its servants, and they say, to justify themselves: “The priests are so bad,” but I say to you that God will and has commanded so, that even if the shepherds of the Church and Christ on earth [meaning the pope] were incarnate devils, while the Pope that we have is a good and gentle father — yet we must be submissive to him and obedient, not for what he is personally, but out of obedience to God, because the Pope is the Vicegerent of Christ.¹³⁹

To emphasize how much the personal behavior of the pope has no bearing on the obedience we owe him in his office of supreme pastor, she uses the strongest words:

Even if the Pope were Satan incarnate, we ought not to raise up our heads against him, but calmly lie down to rest on his bosom.¹⁴⁰

By these words, the saint did not mean that fraternal correction ought not to be done towards the pope, and indeed she herself, a simple nun, did not neglect to let the pope

¹³⁸ St. Catherine of Siena, *Lett.* 28, quoted by Johannes Jorgensen, *St. Catherine of Siena*, Bk. II, London, 1942, p. 201.

¹³⁹ *Lett.* 207, quoted by Johannes Jorgensen, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁴⁰ *Lett.* 28, quoted by Johannes Jorgensen, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

know his duty. But by these words she emphasizes how much obedience and submission to the Roman pontiff belongs to the very constitution of the Church, and how much a scandalous private life would not take away this obedience and submission due to the Roman pontiff in his office.

90. Conclusion on this point.

The particular commands, and the personal actions of the pope, are not the object of the special assistance promised by Christ to His Church through the divine institution of the papacy. They may sometimes be legitimately resisted and denounced.

What cannot be resisted, and what is always guaranteed by the assistance of the Holy Ghost are decisions on faith and morals, imposed on the universal Church, as well as universal disciplinary and liturgical laws, such as the promulgation of a new rite of the Mass. These have always been recognized as infallible by the doctors of the Church, and on that account, could never become the object of a “resistance.” For in these the faithful cannot be misled, lest the words of Pope Leo XIII become true:

If it could in any way be false, an evident contradiction follows; for then God Himself would be the author of error in man. “Lord, if we be in error, we are being deceived by Thee.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, n. 9.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

ANSWER TO OBJECTION #4:

“AN ABUSIVE FATHER IS STILL ONE’S FATHER; SO IS THE POPE.”

90. Objection #4: “Even if your father is abusive, he is still your father. Similarly, even if the pope is destroying the Church by evil doctrines and disciplines, he is still the pope. It is not up to you to say otherwise.”

You do not choose your father, and you do not choose your pope. The pope, even if he misbehaves, is still your pope. You must merely ignore his evil commands.

91. Answer: The analogy is refuted.

Against the objection #4, we will argue that:

(1) the analogy of the abusive father wrongly compares different kinds of relations;

(2) the analogy of the abusive father supposes that the authority of the Roman pontiff is a merely natural authority.

Concerning the last point of the objection, saying that it is not up to us to judge the pope or the bishops, we will address it in the next article.

92. The analogy of the father must be carefully analyzed, to avoid a false comparison.

In a relation of a child to his father, there are two things to consider:

(1) the child is *biologically* dependant on his father in his generation, at conception;

(2) the child is dependent on the *authority* of his father.

When one compares a relation of dependance on authority, therefore, one

should not confuse it with *biological paternity*.

Indeed, being the son of a particular man can never be lost, it is a historical fact which cannot be suppressed. But this paternity establishes only a dependence *in becoming*, and not *in existence*. In other words, one was dependent on a father in order to be conceived, but is no longer dependent on him, biologically, in order to continue to exist.

Hence it is clear that this biological dependance can be lost, and in fact is lost and finished as soon as conception is terminated in the procreation of a son. The fact of having been conceived by one’s father remains, indeed, but this is not a permanent state of things.

It would be equivalent, if we were to make a fitting comparison, to the fact of having been absolved through the jurisdiction delegated by a reigning pontiff. Certainly this fact cannot be erased, and will always be true. But it has no bearing on the present. In fact, he who was then pope could have died and lost the papacy. While our biological father remains our father, the pope, when he dies, is no longer pope. Paternity cannot be lost. The papacy can be lost, for many reasons, the most frequent being death.

Thus one must not compare biological paternity with the papacy.

93. Can we compare the authority of the father to the authority of the pope?

Since biological paternity is not an adequate comparison with the papacy, we

should now analyze a comparison of the authority to the pope.

Under this aspect, it is evident that “paternity” can be lost. By this we mean that an abusive father can indeed lose the responsibility of a child, if it is shown that the said father does not guarantee the basic necessities of the child. There is therefore some truth to the comparison, but contrary to what the objection says, it actually confirms the possibility of losing authority and responsibility by being abusive.

This analogy, however, certainly has its limits. For the authority of a father, just like that of a civil government, is a natural authority. The authority of the Church is supernatural, and is assisted by Christ in its universal decisions, so that the Church may be an infallible means of salvation, and never become a means of damnation.

94. Comparison and differences between the papacy and a natural authority.

Any law issued against the common good is no law at all.

In civil powers, one illegitimate law would not however necessarily render its lawgiver illegitimate. One would have to ignore the illegitimate law and observe the other ones.

There is, however, this important difference with the supreme authority of the Church. The Roman Pontiff is infallibly assisted by Christ, and could never

promulgate a universal law which would be harmful to the Church.

Hence, while it is sometimes justified to “recognize” a civil government while “resisting” its unjust laws, this policy can never be justified with regard to the supreme government of the Holy Catholic Church and its universal laws.

As a consequence, the Roman Pontiff either possesses supreme authority, and his universal decisions are infallibly safe to follow; or he promulgates a false religion, and by this he shows that he is not assisted by the Holy Ghost, which in turn proves that he is no pope.

95. Conclusion: the analogy of the abusive father is false.

As it is presented in the objection, the analogy of the abusive father confuses together the fact of biological procreation, which cannot ever be lost, with considerations on a relation of authority, which can and does disappear for many reasons.

It also reduces the authority of the Church to a mere natural level, and ignores the divine assistance promised to the Roman pontiff in the exercise of his supreme authority over the universal Church.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

ANSWER TO OBJECTION #5: “YOU CANNOT JUDGE THE POPE”

96. Objection #5: “You cannot judge the pope and the bishops. Therefore they are still the legitimate pope and bishops.”

The objection points to the fact that the deposition of bishops and popes is reserved to the proper authority of the Church. By Church’s law, bishops can be deposed only by the Roman pontiff himself. In the case of a heretical pope, as we have explained in a dedicated chapter, the canonical deposition (even if one argues a former loss of authority by divine law) must be established by a general council.

91. Answer: Although it is true that canonical depositions must be accomplished by the Church’s authority, one is however able to discern and denounce the false shepherds.

Against the objection #5, we will argue that:

(1) an absence of authority in the “Vatican II popes and bishops” can be observed without having to usurp any authority;

(2) the lack of authority of the “Vatican II popes” is established in a way which does not conflict with the principle that “the first see is judged by no one.”

(3) the R&R system actually does contradict this principle, and continually exercises a judgment on authoritative acts, in a way irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine.

92. The principles are clearly established by Saint Robert Bellarmine.

In a part of his works where St. Robert

Bellarmino establishes that by divine law the lay people are barred from electing the pope and the other pastors of the Church, he also addresses the question of the deposition of pastors, since it may be argued that Our Lord Himself asks the faithful themselves to flee evil pastors:

The second argument is as follows: The Lord commands us, in St. John, chapter X, to not listen to the voice of the strangers. And again in St. Matthew, chapter VII, He commands us to flee the false prophets, and the apostle in his epistle to the Galatians, I, orders us to anathematize those who teach anything besides the Gospel. Hence the christian people have a divine mandate, by which it is bound to search and call for good pastors and reject pernicious ones.¹⁴²

The holy doctor is not impressed with this argument and gives a clear answer:

I answer: The people must indeed discern a true prophet from a false one, but not by any other rule than by a diligent attention as to whether he who is preaching says anything contrary to what was said by his predecessors, or to what is said by the other ordinary pastors, and particularly by the apostolic see, and the principal Church. For it is commanded to the people to listen to its pastors. Luke X: *He that heareth you, heareth me.* And in Matthew XXIII: *Whatsoever they shall*

¹⁴² St. Robert Bellarmine, *De controversiis*, T. II, *De membris Ecclesiae*, L. I, *De clericis*, c. 7, Sforza edition of the *Opera Omnia*, Naples, 1837, p. 139.

say to you, observe and do. The people should not therefore judge its pastor unless it hears novelties, and things different from the doctrine of other pastors.¹⁴³

St. Robert Bellarmine further establishes an important distinction:

Besides, it must be observed that the people may recognize a true prophet from a false one by the rule which we have established, but the people cannot depose a false pastor, if he is a bishop, and substitute another one in his stead. For the Lord and the apostle only command that false prophets be not listened to by the people, but not that the people depose them. And certainly the usage of the Church has always been that heretical bishops be deposed by councils of bishops or by the supreme pontiffs.¹⁴⁴

Thus, in the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine, two principles are very clearly established:

(1) By the command of Christ and of St. Paul, the Christian people must flee the bishop who preaches heresy as a false prophet and a false shepherd. St. Paul asks us to *anathematize* such a pastor, which literally means to cut the links of communion with him.

(2) On the other hand, the people are not entitled to depose their pastors. Heretical bishops can be deposed and replaced only by legitimate authority.

These are two essential principles which the Thesis applies in regard to the “Vatican II popes and bishops.”

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

93. The principle by which the faithful may discern false shepherds is a negative principle.

The faithful have an obligation, as explains St. Robert Bellarmine, to listen to their pastors. The learned cardinal also explains how the faithful are usually not educated enough to judge the doctrine taught by their pastors. But they may be able to discern a false prophet by the principle given by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians:

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.¹⁴⁵

The fact that St. Paul mentions himself as an example is quite significant. For the apostles were all endowed with the personal charism of infallibility, which is now the exclusive privilege of the Roman pontiff, successor of St. Peter. Hence, this same principle is valid even for pastors *who should be infallible, in virtue of their office.*

The principle of discernment given by St. Paul, and explained by St. Robert Bellarmine, is an indirect and negative principle.

We are not asked to determine canonical appointments, and to decide who will be chosen to be the pastor. But we are merely entitled to notice a possible contradiction between what is being imposed on us and what we must already hold to by our Catholic faith.

As St. Robert Bellarmine says:

¹⁴⁵ Gal. I, 8-9.

The people should not therefore judge its pastor unless it hears novelties, and things different from the doctrine of other pastors.

And he clarifies:

The Lord and the apostle only command that false prophets be not listened to by the people, but not that the people depose them.

94. What is the foundation of this negative right?

St. Robert Bellarmine teaches that the faithful have a negative right to observe a contradiction between the teaching of a false prophet and the traditional teaching of the Church.

Yet, the faithful have, directly, only the right and duty to *listen to their pastors*, and are not entitled to judge them. How can this be reconciled?

The answer is very simple. The very obligation which we have to hold fast to the doctrine of faith handed down to us *obliges us* to reject anything contrary to it.

For if the mind is obliged, by divine authority, to adhere to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, for example, that God is one in three Persons, it is impossible for the mind to accept a doctrine which contradicts this, such as the heresy that there are four Persons in God.

For the mind cannot hold, by divine faith, as true, two propositions which exclude each other. Thus the mind cannot assent both to “God is one in three Persons” and to “God is one in four Persons.” This is impossible, even if one wanted to.

Thus, the very duty of obedience to the divine authority of God revealing, which makes us hold as absolutely true that God is

one in three Persons, is the same duty which makes us repudiate any contrary teaching.

The exclusion and repudiation of novelty contrary to our Catholic faith is therefore accomplished in the very light of divine faith, and thus provides an absolute certainty, of a higher order than any human knowledge.

The authority which obliges us to adhere to revealed truths is the same divine authority by which we repudiate novel teachings contrary to faith.

In this “judgment” therefore we are not ourselves making the call to decide whether or not a given doctrine is indeed revealed by God and conform to Tradition. Rather, in the light of divine faith, we observe the divine command to repudiate the heresy which is being taught.

95. How do we arrive at the conclusion of absence of authority in the pope teaching heresy?

When the Roman pontiff issues decisions of doctrine, discipline, and liturgy, binding the universal Church, we have the assurance of the assistance of Christ to this supreme authority.

Thus Our Lord said:

He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.¹⁴⁶

Pope Pius XII applied these very words to the doctrine taught in pontifical encyclicals:

It is not to be thought that what is set down in Encyclical Letters does not demand assent in itself, because in this the popes do not exercise the supreme

¹⁴⁶ Luke X, 16.

power of their magisterium. For these matters are taught by the ordinary magisterium, regarding which the following is pertinent: “He who heareth you, heareth me”; and usually what is set forth and inculcated in the Encyclical Letters, already pertains to Catholic doctrine.¹⁴⁷

According to the words of Our Lord, therefore, we listen to Him when we listen to the supreme authority of the Church.

Now, as we have explained, the divine authority of God revealing, which is the very motive of our faith, commands us to repudiate any new heretical teaching. When we are in a situation of contradiction between our faith and a new teaching, we must exclude the heresy as contrary to the divine authority of God revealing.

But, if that novel teaching is itself given in circumstances which would normally be guaranteed by divine authority, not only is the new teaching excluded, but also the very claim of divine authority which is supposed to guarantee it.

Thus, in the light of divine faith, and founded on the very authority of God revealing, which commands us to adhere to our faith and repudiate its opposite, **we are bound not only to repudiate the false teaching, but also the claim of divine guarantee which is meant to accompany it.**

Hence it is, that by the repudiation of the Vatican II religion we must also repudiate the authority of those who promulgated it, as we have explained above. This we do, not as usurping any authority which we do not have, but rather as an exercise of obedience to the divine authority of God revealing, motive of our faith.

¹⁴⁷ Pope Pius XII, *Humani generis*, n. 18.

96. The faithful are thus not judging a superior, but merely observing that someone is not the superior.

The objection indeed fails indeed to consider the following:

(1) The principle according to which “the pope is judged by no one” supposes someone to indeed be the pope. But if it is proven that that person is not the pope, then it is not the pope who is judged, but a false pope. In this way, St. Robert Bellarmine himself, one of the strongest defenders of the rights of the Roman See, does not see a problem in conceding that an ecumenical council would judge a heretical pope to not be longer pope, **since he would have already lost his authority:**

A general Council ought to be gathered to depose the Pope if he should be found to be a heretic.¹⁴⁸

(2) The judgment which is forbidden to the lay people is one of the juridical or legal order, and that is true. But it is not true of the theological order, and the order of reality, which requires us to have no jurisdiction, but only to apply simple logic, in the light of divine faith: “If something supposed to be indefectible, such as the authority of Christ, in fact defects, then it is not indefectible. Therefore it cannot be the authority of Christ.”

97. Conclusion: The “right to judge” the absence of authority in a claimant to the papacy is rather a *duty* commanded by our faith, which itself is motivated by the authority of God revealing.

¹⁴⁸ St. Robert Bellarmine, *On the Church*, Vol. I: *On Councils*, ch. IX.

The Thesis perfectly respects the tradition of the Church which leaves to proper authorities the duty to canonically depose heretical pastors, as is evident in the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine. Nonetheless, one is able, and actually *obliged* to conclude that the “Vatican II popes and bishops” cannot possibly be endowed with the authority of Christ to teach, govern, and sanctify the faithful.

Indeed, just as we are bound, by the obedience of faith, to repudiate any teaching contrary to the faith, so also, and with the same strength, are we obliged to repudiate any claim of divine authority meant to accompany this false teaching.

To do otherwise would be to attribute contradictions to the divine authority of God revealing, which is a blasphemy.

We may therefore say that just as the Sanhedrin condemned itself in the very act of judging Truth a liar, and Innocence guilty, namely Our Lord; so also the “Vatican II popes” have condemned and disqualified themselves by contradicting the faith under the guise of the divine institution of the papacy. **For in condemning Truth, the**

Sanhedrin has judged itself a false tribunal; and by contradicting the Faith, the “Vatican II popes” have judged themselves false judges of the faith. Because in condemning God we condemn ourselves, and in judging as false the truth of God we infallibly show ourselves to be false judges.

We had already proven before that the Vatican II religion cannot be repudiated without at the same time repudiating any claim of authority in those who promulgated it, by a necessary connection which is underlined by Our Lord Himself in the dilemma presented to the scribes and chief priests in St. Luke XX, 1-8. We now have shown how this is applied in the very psychology of the act of faith.

We thus refer anyone asking us by which authority we may judge the “Vatican II popes” to not be true popes, assisted by Christ, to the very words of Our Lord:

Who is he that hath given thee this authority? And Jesus answering, said to them: I will also ask you one thing. Answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

NINTH ARTICLE

CONCLUSION:

THE R&R SYSTEM AND THE THESIS

98. The R&R system is loaded with principles, conclusions, and corollaries in open contradiction with the doctrine of the Church.

It is a sad paradox that those who had the light to see Vatican II for what it is, namely a change of religion, and who had the will to resist it out of fidelity to the traditional doctrine and discipline of the Church end up themselves openly contradicting the same traditional doctrine and discipline of the Church, in areas concerning the indefectibility and infallibility of the Church and of the Roman Pontiff, and the obedience owed by all Catholics to the Church's magisterium and disciplinary decisions.

If in order to resist certain errors (of Vatican II and the modernists), one is logically committed to defend other errors (concerning the Church), which are just as pernicious and have been repeatedly condemned, one must conclude that his theological reasoning was somehow faulted.

The main error of the R&R system is to ascribe defection to an indefectible Church.

All of the errors listed in our syllabus are a direct consequence of this first faulty step.

99. The answers to the objections have been helpful to clarify the intrications of the Thesis.

As we have explained, the Thesis does not judge the "Vatican II popes and bishops" to be canonically deposed. On the contrary it is well known for maintaining the opposite. This is common with the R&R system.

Nonetheless, the Thesis insists on the necessity to conclude the absence of authority in the "Vatican II popes". It is not lawful for the faithful to be indifferent on this issue, nor is it compatible with the virtue of faith. In virtue of the necessary connection existing between authority and infallibility, one must necessarily associate a repudiation of Vatican II with a repudiation of those who promulgated it.

We have shown how this happens by a simple analysis of the psychology of the act of faith. Far from being an usurpation of authority, we have shown it to be an act of submission and obedience, namely the obedience of faith, by which our mind is bound to repudiate any heresy, and to repudiate the attribution of this heresy to the authority of God.

100. The Thesis is the theological answer to the deficiencies of the R&R system.

Many Catholics wrongly think that they logically have to arrive at this erroneous R&R system, in order to maintain the simple observation that Vatican II represents a substantial departure from the Catholic faith. But this is false. We hope that more and more Catholics will appreciate the value of the Thesis as the theological explanation of the crisis presently affecting the Church.

The Thesis preserves indeed perfectly the basic observations on which the R&R system is based, namely that (1) Vatican II and the New Mass are a false new religion, which must be resisted, and that (2) it is not up to

simple Catholics to depose bishops and popes. The Thesis, however, is able to reconcile these observations in a way which does not offend Catholic doctrine, whereas, as we have seen, the R&R system is seriously at odds with dogmas of our Catholic faith on the nature and divine attributes of the Church.

Since to theologially justify a resistance to Vatican II is absolutely necessary, the reader

may better understand our striving to promote and explain the Thesis. It is not enough to realize that Vatican II must be resisted, but principles on which this resistance may happen and be carried out must needs be openly established and upheld, lest one ascribe to us the schismatic attitudes and doctrines condemned in the above syllabus.

TENTH ARTICLE

APPENDIX:

BISHOP GUERARD DES LAURIERS ON THE RIGHT TO JUDGE

101. Explanation of Bishop Guerard des Lauriers on the negative right to judge authority.

One cannot but notice a striking parallel between the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine and the explanation given by the French Dominican theologian, the then Fr. Guerard des Lauriers, in a note to the first explanation of the Thesis. The Dominican theologian gives a deeper, but more difficult, understanding of the principles involved. May the reader allow us to reproduce it here, as an appendix:

In the human collective “Church”, whose Authority and norms are divinely instituted, the right to oversee belongs to subordinates only *a posteriori* and *negatively*.

We say *A POSTERIORI*, since the object of this “right to oversee” is neither the Authority in itself, nor the form of its decrees; the object of this right are the consequences of the acts posited by the Authority. *The “right to oversee” bears formally on the CONSEQUENCE. It works a posteriori.*

We say *NEGATIVELY*, since it does not belong to the faithful to *positively* judge that a given act of the Authority is indeed conform to the “notes” of the Church. But *IT IS EXCLUDED* that what emanates *truly* from the Authority, whether in words or in deeds, be in an opposition of *contradiction*, or in an opposition of *contrariety* in the practical order, with the “notes” of the Church. The faithful have a right to oversee on

that *exclusion*; in other words they have the right to observe that this exclusion is concretely manifested, in the form of antagonisms and tensions, in reality. Thus the *CONSEQUENCES* of what *TRULY* emanates, whether in words or in deeds, from the Authority, *MUST NOT* imply contradiction or contrariety to the notes of the Church. In this sense then, the “right to oversee” can be exercised; and it can be so, as we see, *NEGATIVELY: MUST NOT.*

It must be added that this “right to oversee” being thus precisely understood, to exercise it is not only a right, it is a *duty*; duty commanded by the instinct of faith, and expressed in the testimony of faith.

To fulfill this duty never implies that the faithful have *positively* and *a priori* a “right to oversee” over the Authority. Indeed if the opposition thus excluded in right happens, manifestly and continuously, that is if it becomes evident that there is *truly* contradiction and in fact *contrariety*, between on the one hand the notes of the Church, on the other hand what emanates from what appears to be the Authority, then the faithful must conclude that, *in reality*, there is no exercise of the Authority, or even that the Authority is no longer there. The “right to oversee” of the faithful therefore bears *not on the Authority, but on the fact that the Authority is not there.*

This right and this duty consist in observing that such a “subject” is no longer *metaphysically able*, according to

the ontology proper to the divine institution, to exercise the Authority, although he is indeed occupying the Seat of Authority. This subject possesses *materialiter* the “authority”, but he does not have it *formaliter*. The faithful never have, consequently, to oppose the Authority, considered *formaliter*.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ *Cahiers de Cassiciacum*, n. 1, Nice, 1979, note 66, p. 92.

