

*I Will Visit My Sheep and Deliver Them
in the Dark and Cloudy Day*
(Ezek. 34:12)



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Preface

To me nothing is more comforting than the words Christ spoke to the Apostles regarding His love for His sheep. Mother Mary Potter paints a beautiful word picture of this love in her little book *To Jesus Through Mary*, where she describes Jesus lovingly freeing a lamb from a bramble bush and smoothing the fur back down over its skin torn by the brambles. This, she explains, will Jesus do for all of us who come to Him bloodied by the world and in need of care. Many there are in need of that care today.

“I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring. And they shall hear my voice: And there shall be one fold and one shepherd... My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me” (John 10: 14-16; 27). Before speaking these words, Christ tells of those who are not good shepherds, those who lead the sheep astray. “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers: and the sheep heard them not. I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly... But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and flieth: and the wolf casteth and scattereth the sheep. And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep” (John 10: 7-10; 12-13).

If you are reading this work, it is very likely that you have already suspected, at least, that Francis and his five predecessors are false popes. You have experienced the neglect of the hirelings and been attacked by the wolves; you have found yourselves caught in the brambles and abandoned on the rocky ledge. The reason so many are wandering and confused, at odds with each other and are divided into so many different camps is solved by the words of Holy Scripture, which teaches that once the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered, (Zach.13:7; Matt. 26:31). But God promises in Zacharias 13:7 to turn His hand to the littles ones, and in Ezekiel 34:12 to visit His sheep and deliver them. “My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever. And no man shall pluck them out of my hand. That which my Father hath given me is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one” (John 10: 27-30).

St. Paul tells us in 2 Thess. 2 that when the Great Revolt comes, “...he who withholdeth” will be taken out of the way.” Henry Cardinal Manning and others believe this is the papacy. We do not have a true pope in these dark and cloudy days, but we will always have our Lord. He is the invisible Head of the Church, the Good Shepherd, and we are members of His Mystical Body. He has promised to be with us “unto the consummation.” In John 17: 21 He tells us: “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also maybe one in us, that the world will believe that thou has sent me.” Therefore may all hear the voice of that Good Shepherd so eager to gather His lost sheep and comfort them.

Introduction

Out in the Deep!

Are you saddened and disturbed by what you see happening in Rome and/or among any one of the Traditionalists sects, (Sedevacantist or otherwise)? You probably feel like you are being thrown from a sinking ship into turbulent waters without a life preserver, and few who have never had that experience can imagine how frightening it must be. If this is where you currently stand topside and you are thinking about jumping ship, know that I have been there before you. It took many converts to Catholicism years of soul-searching before they took that final leap. The journey to truth is a long and arduous one, often littered with disappointments, heartache and broken dreams, not to mention a wounded soul.

Healing and praying — taking a break from everything that was once a part of one's previous spiritual existence — and practicing recollection is a very necessary component of making the right decision regarding what one must do next. The mind must be cleared of all confusion and clutter that inevitably results from involvement in groups that claim to be Catholic and yet in doctrine and practice, fail in every respect to deliver. What you are experiencing now can be likened to spiritual starvation, because where truth is lacking, no spiritual growth is possible. Christ Himself is Truth, and without this life-sustaining nutrient and the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the soul withers and begins to fade away.

So spend the time necessary to refresh yourself, pray for guidance from the Holy Ghost and reflect. And when you feel you are ready to consider the next step, after you have prayed to find the truth, no matter how difficult that might be; once you have regained your peace of mind, we ask you to consider what is written below, especially the sections on conscience formation and certitude. For without this foundation, no decisions can be made and nothing can be resolved; God's will for you in all of this will remain obscured without following the laws and teachings of the Church in this regard.

What is Traditionalism?

But first let's define here what is meant by Traditionalist sects and sedevacantists. Rather than descend into too much detail, a quick look [here](#) should be enough to convince anyone that if the Catholic Church was meant to be one, then surely Traditionalism cannot be that Church. For as St. Robert Bellarmine defines the Church, "The Church is only one ...and that one and true [Church] is the assembly of men gathered in the profession of the same Christian faith, and in the communion of the same Sacraments, under the reign of legitimate pastors, *and especially of the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff.*" And none of the sects in that link can claim they all believe and practice the same faith under a Roman Pontiff everyone accepts as valid or no Roman Pontiff at all! The Church Herself teaches that without a validly elected Roman Pontiff She cannot exist; this was the voice of Christ speaking to His Church on earth, the essential bond of unity. The bishops cannot and do not possess that voice without their head bishop, the Pope, for it is Divine Revelation that Christ gave that privilege to Peter alone. If we are heartsick at the division among Catholics today, we must know that as Holy Scripture itself teaches, once the shepherd is struck the sheep will be scattered, (Zach.13:7; Matt. 26:31).

So clearly St. Bellarmine's definition is not reflected in those sects claiming to be "traditional" today. Like the Protestant sects, Traditionalists have fragmented helter-skelter into a confusing mass of individual sects, each holding some *variation* of Catholicism. Some sects are headed by bishops, others by independent priests. A certain number still recognize Francis as pope, others think he is not currently pope but could suddenly "convert" and become a valid pope and still others believe Benedict XIII is the true pope because he favored the Latin Mass. (Or was it truly the Latin Mass? Because what he favored was not the immemorial mass of St. Pius V but the "mass" of John 23, adding St. Joseph to the Canon of the mass, left unchanged for some 1300 years and making a few other changes). Then there are those who believe the See is currently vacant and (a very few) others who follow self-styled "popes." The first group are called sedevacantists (vacant see) and the second group conclavists. And there are still others outside Traditionalism who have chosen to distance themselves from all these groups and simply pray at home, keeping as close as possible to everything the Church taught prior to the death of Pope Pius XII.

Once your eyes have refocused after a quick glance at everything calling itself Traditionalist, we suggest you step back and take a truly objective look at all of this. Most of those reading this work are anxious not to repeat the mistakes they made in joining one of these sects or remaining with them. But once they began having doubts, those deciding to leave the Novus Ordo or a Traditionalist sect have no idea *how* they can avoid making the same mistakes again. This is why the following section is *essential* to help reorder the thinking process on a solid Catholic basis and bypass the exhausting process of trying to sift through these competing Traditionalists sects to discover the truth. As Orestes Brownson first said, "Truth Is one, error is many," and it *is* possible to determine that one, overriding truth. The moral theologians Rev. Dominic Prummer and Revs. McHugh and Callan cited below can help those reading this treatise to appreciate that concept and place it in its proper perspective.

McHugh and Callan on conscience formation

1. Man is bound to be guided by conscience, both negatively and positively. He must neither disobey when it forbids or refuse to obey when it commands.
2. Conscience obliges by reason of Divine command: "All that is not from conscience is sin," (Rom. 14:23).
3. Apart from revelation, there is no other way of learning what God wishes us to do here and now. (God's signified will).
4. **The function of conscience is not to establish law or pass judgment on it, but to apply the law as expounded by the Church to a present case... Conscience must aim to be true — that is, to agree with and express the objective law.**
5. Conscience is a judgment formed by evidence and firm conviction, not by our sentiments, emotions or one's wishes. (Sentiment and emotions may long for the Sacraments, but Church law must be observed.)
6. Conscience is a judgment to which intellect yields an **unhesitating assent**.
7. A conscience that is in invincible error must be followed when it forbids or commands, but he who follows an erroneous conscience is guilty if his ignorance is vincible, (i.e., is the result of a lack of due diligence or dishonesty with one's self — Ed.).

The signified will of God is His law and the laws of His Church, St. Francis de Sales teaches, and Rev. Tanquerey tells us in his *The Spiritual Life*. And yet how many Catholics are aware of the fact that there is more to God's will than His will of good pleasure? St. Francis de Sales writes: "Obedience to the Commandments, both divine and ecclesiastical, is of obligation for all, because there is question here of **THE ABSOLUTE WILL OF GOD WHO HAS MADE SUBMISSION TO THESE ORDINANCES A CONDITION OF SALVATION.**" And the Vatican Council teaches: "...the faithful... are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in those things which pertain to faith and morals, **BUT ALSO THOSE WHICH PERTAIN TO THE DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**, so that the Church of Christ, protected not only by the Roman Pontiff, but by the unity of communion as well as the profession of the same faith, is one flock under one highest shepherd. **THIS IS THE DOCTRINE OF CATHOLIC TRUTH FROM WHICH NO ONE CAN DEVIATE AND KEEP HIS FAITH AND SALVATION.**" (DZ 1827).

Rev. Martin Harrison O.P. tells us in his *Credo: A Practical Guide to the Catholic Faith*: "Too many allow themselves to be influenced by others who have not sufficient knowledge themselves to teach what is right or wrong or to give advice on matters of conscience. They can only guide us on their own conscience, and we have no evidence that their own conscience is a true one... Each must follow his own conscience, not another's; he will be judged by his own conscience. One may have a lax conscience, another a false, or scrupulous conscience; we cannot accept their advice... How can we place any reliance on others who probably know little more than we ourselves know and who are not able to direct themselves properly in many cases? If we cannot settle our own doubts, how can we be sure that another is giving correct advice without any personal prejudices, unless we are satisfied as to his qualifications?" Unfortunately this is what many have done in attempting to sort out the maze that is Traditionalism and the Novus Ordo today. But the way out of this dilemma is by arriving at certitude, as explained below.

The necessity of certitude

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia article on certitude, "Many truths, indeed, have to be accepted on authority; **but then it has to be made evident that such authority is legitimate, is capable of knowing the truth, and is qualified to teach in the particular department in which it is accepted.**" As Rev. A.C. Cotter S.J. also teaches in his *The ABC of Scholastic Philosophy*, (p. 284): "Authority **clothed with the necessary conditions** is true authority. False authority makes the same claims although it lacks these conditions." Cotter comments that those following self-styled teachers of any philosophic system have the **"duty to investigate for themselves. Authority is not the last criterion of truth or motive of certitude."** And the reason that so many blindly follow these men is precisely because they refuse to investigate, and even when they do, they are blindsided by threats of disobedience if they think for themselves, or they are told their lack of any training or authority to determine the truth prevents them from being able to make the right decision. As if those asserting such authority over them ever had it themselves!

It doesn't take long googling on the Internet to discover that all those claiming to be Traditional clergy today have never even seen the inside of a truly Catholic college or seminary! Some of them were even graduates of Novus Ordo schools or attended Novus Ordo seminaries for a time. And many Novus Ordo "seminarians" actually attended very liberal colleges and universities as part of their training, not to mention the heretical and often immoral "training" they received in NO seminaries. Does anyone really believe that these men would satisfy the ultra-strict theological standards and requirements for spiritual formation the pre-1959 Catholic Church demanded for future priests and bishops?! This does not even begin to cover the fact that none of these seminarians were ever vetted as **qualified** to even become Catholic priests using the Sacred Congregation's stringent rules for such qualification. Nor does it consider the fact they were.

In the case of the more likely and the less likely, the preponderance of evidence must be followed. And yet even when this preponderance of evidence exists, Traditionalists will ignore it and refuse to reconsider their position. A case in point is the Church's teaching on apostolicity and jurisdiction for the confection of valid Sacraments explained above. No matter how many truths from Divine faith are advanced to prove that Traditionalists absolutely cannot operate without either of these prerequisites laid down by Christ, they insist that they can and will despite all indications to the contrary.

of an act about to be performed here and now—for example, whether it is lawful to read this dangerous book.

148. PRINCIPLE. *No one is allowed to perform an act while in a state of positive practical doubt.*

The reason should be evident from what has been said already. For if certainty in the wide sense of the word is required for lawful action it is not lawful to act while in a state of positive practical doubt, since by so doing one exposes oneself to the immediate danger of committing formal sin. If, therefore, a man doubts the lawfulness of some action he must either refrain from acting or remove his practical doubt. There are two possible ways of removing the doubt, one direct, the other indirect. The *direct* method consists in diligently searching after the truth until at length certainty is attained. If this direct method is impossible, then the doubt may be removed *indirectly* by so-called reflex principles.

149. REFLEX OR INDIRECT PRINCIPLES are general directions which directly and of themselves do not prove the truth of the matter under investigation but nevertheless reflect, so to speak, their own clear light on the obscure practical doubt and dispel the darkness of that doubt while the act is being performed. The more important reflex principles are the following:

1. A doubtful law has no binding force.
2. In doubt one must stand by presumption.
3. In doubt possession is nine-tenths of the law.

1. *A doubtful law has no binding force* whenever the doubt concerns the lawfulness of an act and not its validity. Whatever may be said about the truth of this principle which is fiercely attacked by some theologians, all modern theologians are agreed that it cannot be applied in the following cases:

- a) when the doubt concerns the validity of the Sacraments;
- b) when the doubt concerns something which is absolutely necessary for salvation; so, for example, when there is risk of losing eternal life, the safer opinion must be followed;
- c) when the question involves an established right of a third party. Thus, for example, a judge would not be justified in giving judgement on the basis of a probable opinion while refusing to follow what is certainly the more probable opinion.

In his work, a *Compendium of Moral Theology*, (1940s) Fr. Pierre Gury S.J. writes: "One is bound to use diligence in keeping with the truth to be investigated **according to the importance of the matter** and the conditions of person and place. **One should consult able and conscientious men, investigate their practice and consider their reasons from the sole desire to discover the truth.** For otherwise one would expose oneself to the danger of violating the law by neglect of inquiry and thereby sin. If inquiry cannot be made or the reasons cannot be considered by oneself on either side or the doubt dispelled ...by reflex principles, one must choose the safer part." The Church is very clear on how this can be done and demands that Her members arrive at certitude regarding acts. The work on moral theology by Revs. McHugh and Callan, referred to above, is available at archive.org as a free download.

Conscience formation and certitude

The page shown here is taken from Rev. Dominic Prummer's *Handbook of Moral Theology* (1957). We see that

wherever doubts concerning the validity of the Sacraments and eternal salvation exist, the safer course must always be followed. In other words, where there is positive doubt one must neither receive or administer the Sacraments, period. Since recognition of the Novus Ordo usurpers as valid popes endangers one's eternal salvation, one must withdraw from obedience. These teachings are based on a decree by Bd. Pope Innocent XI that a probable opinion may never be used in conferring (or receiving) the Sacraments (DZ 1151). This is only the

reiteration of St. Alphonsus Liguori, who teaches in his *Theologica Moralis*, Book 1, Chapter 3, Of Probable Conscience: ***"In the administration of the Sacraments, a minister may use neither a probable opinion nor a more probable opinion concerning their validity, but is bound to follow a safe opinion; that is, one that is either very safe or morally certain."*** And nothing can be more certain than the teaching of the Roman Pontiff.

Regarding the *lawfulness* of acts, Rev. Prummer explains: "It is of the utmost importance that the conscience of man be free from error and embrace the truth. Nothing but the most grievous harm can result from a false conscience... It is not lawful to act in a state of positive practical doubt, since by doing so one exposes oneself to the immediate danger of committing formal sin. If therefore a man doubts the lawfulness of some action, he must either ***refrain from acting or remove his practical doubt***. There are two possible ways of removing the practical doubt, one direct, the other indirect. ***The direct method consists in diligently searching after the truth until at length certainty is attained. If this direct method is impossible, then the doubt may be moved indirectly by so-called reflex principles.***" But one is able to resort to such reflex principles only when the specific matter under consideration involves the *lawfulness* of some act. When such a matter concerns the *validity* of an act, ***one must not resort to reflex principles***, which are used to arrive at a probable opinion.

This is the principle that those first approaching any "Catholic" sect of any sort must consider. Very few indeed have diligently sought after the truth to even discover what the Catholic Church actually taught *before* the Vatican 2 era so they would even have a basis of comparison in order to determine what has been taught as Catholic since the Church began. Traditionalists rested on the *presumption* of their valid ordinations and consecrations by claiming due use of matter and form, ignoring the necessity of a right intention and using *epikeia* to dismiss the need for the papal mandate or approval necessary for the valid exercise of episcopal orders. Yet as will be seen below, their presumption was not solidly based on scholastic and canonical principles, and therefore, as Canon Law teaches, presumption must always yield to truth.

It is Rev. Prummer explains on the page above: Traditionalists are operating under the principle that a doubtful law has no binding force when it is only a *human law* that is in question. But it is *Divine law*, not human law, that declares such sacramental validity is guaranteed only when the minister conferring the Sacraments is in communion with, and subject to, the Roman Pontiff. This minister also must be ordained and consecrated according to all the laws of the Church by men the Church Herself deems to be competent (Can. 147). And it is more than clear that this most certainly does not apply to Traditionalists. A good number of decisions by the Holy See and Sacred Congregations prove that orders received from schismatics such as Lefebvre and Thuc cannot be validly exercised until dispensed by the Holy See. Traditionalist pseudo-clerics and those acting as their lay functionaries depended on the ignorance of their followers and their inability to navigate Canon Law and appreciate the absolutely binding nature of papal decrees.

All along, there was specific teaching regarding both the reception of the Sacraments and the conferring of Sacraments by Traditionalists that were ignored. It involved doubts regarding the validity of the Sacraments and the means necessary to eternal salvation. Such doubts must be resolved by abstaining from the Sacraments, or in the case of a doubtful pope whom one must obey to be certain of eternal salvation, one is not bound to obey such a person if positive doubt exists regarding his validity. A doubt must be based on solid motives; it cannot be a hunch or a gut feeling. Such a doubt is called a negative doubt. A practical doubt must be positive and objective. It must be supported by ***strong evidence*** from reliable sources to be positive and the motive for believing such sources must be valid. ***No sources can equal those provided by the Popes and the councils, especially when these issue from the extraordinary or the ordinary magisterium***, as we will hear from Abp. Cicognani below. Not even the theologians, used almost exclusively as "authorities" by Traditionalists, are to be held as superior to the documents issuing from the Holy See.

Failing to obey a unanimous theological opinion is a mortal sin

In such an extremely important matter regarding not only sacramental validity but also the salvation of one's soul, it is only logical that in coming to a resolution of such doubts one would wish to rely only on those proofs which come from the highest, not a lower, source. There is no higher source than that of the Apostolic See or Holy See, which when used in the Code of Canon Law includes the Sacred Congregations, Roman Tribunals and

other offices the pope uses to conduct business (Can.7). One thing that Traditionalists refuse to address is the **fact** that it is a mortal sin of temerity to fail to obey the unanimous opinion of theologians. This is the teaching of Fr. Sixtus Cartechini in his *On the Value of Theological Notes and the Criteria for Discerning Them* (note (g); 1951). According to Monsignor Joseph C. Fenton: "When the entire body of scholastic theologians asserts that some thesis is of Catholic faith, their testimony is absolutely reliable. Because of the particular function of the scholastics, **if all of them should be in error on a point of this kind then the Catholic Church would be deceived**. They are the qualified exponents of Catholic doctrine in the schools of the Church. Their unanimous testimony to the effect that a definite doctrine has been revealed by God and it is so to be accepted by all with the assent of divine faith mirrors the teaching of the Church itself" (*The Concept of Sacred Theology*, 1941).

And while it is true that Fr. Cartechini says that "proportionately grave reasons," can *sometimes* allow a person to dissent from a unanimous opinion, what would those reasons be? If it was just a matter of questioning the validity of these Sacraments based on the questionable orders of those claiming to confer them, that might be one thing. But that is not all that is in question here. **Traditionalists belong to a schismatic sect** which does not have for its head the Roman Pontiff; a sect that claims to be the true Catholic Church yet either perverts or ignores infallible teaching contained in the Deposit of Faith, the sum total of Catholic belief. They usurp pontifical authority and those who follow them are schismatics as well; they are no longer members of the Church. If they are convinced they are **not** schismatics, then under Canon 2200 they have the strict obligation to present **POSITIVE PROOFS** that Traditionalism is truly Catholic or they incur all the censures for schism, including infamy of law. Rev. Adolphe Tanquerey, whose works were used to instruct seminarians worldwide prior to Vatican 2, teaches that even material heretics and schismatics lose all membership in the Church. Is that really what any of them want? And shouldn't those following Traditionalist pseudo-clergy ask themselves why these men would expect them to commit mortal sin if their whole pretended mission is for "the salvation of souls?"

This is why a true pope is so essential to doctrinal purity, discipline and unity. A true and holy pope, seeing the disaster that has become the poor Church, would immediately demand that all those now functioning as clergy cease to function until a thorough investigation could be conducted. Then, after a sufficient interval was allowed to elapse, (and I consider this to be what he would actually do), a pope seeking to restore order and discipline would dismiss the whole lot as heretics without any investigation at all! Provisions would be made for the faithful in the meantime. That excommunications would undoubtedly be issued *en masse* against those previously acting as clergy is based on the practice of the Church. In his *Charitas*, Pope Pius VI likewise voided the actions of priests in France operating without his permission. But the prospects for such a pope ever appearing on the scene are slim to none. At one time, yes, we could have expected a reprieve of this kind, but Vatican 2 bishops saw to it that there was no possibility to elect a pope precisely because they feared what would follow. Now it would take a miracle to restore the papacy, a miracle none of us deserve. More on this below.

The man who never became pope

Those exiting the Novus Ordo and Traditionalist sects are generally fed a believable version of the truth, or actual tidbits of it here and there. Non-Catholic sects must do this to make it appear they are the real deal. But the context in which it is presented is based on a foundation of lies and half-truths — sand, rather than the Rock that is reality which all Catholics recognize as the **true** successors of St. Peter. As many now suspect, the Novus Ordo church is not headed by a true pope; Francis is only one in a long line of men who have reigned in Rome as usurpers. This began in 1958 with the invalid election of John 23, who could never have become pope because he favored Freemasonry, was from all accounts a Freemason himself and was also an ecumenist and Communist sympathizer. This has been known in Traditionalist circles since the 1970s. Freemasonry, ecumenism and Communism are all condemned as heresy and apostasy by the Church and automatically disqualify those seeking papal election. Roncalli also was a suspected Modernist dating back to the 1920s, as was Ratzinger.

An infallible papal bull written in 1559 by Pope Paul IV, *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio*, predicts exactly what happened with Angelo Roncalli's election in 1958 and explains that such elections, where a man is an apostate, heretic or schismatic **prior to election or his appointment**, be he bishop, cardinal or even the pope, never obtains office and is never elected. He has no authority or office whatsoever, cannot be obeyed and can be

deposed by the cardinals or bishops because he was never a pope to begin with. Traditionalists hold that this bull is not infallible even though it bears all the marks of infallibility and was confirmed by Pope St. Pius V. They say it is a law that has been abrogated and is no longer in effect. This has all been shown to be a lie but they do not accept that fact because it might mean that someone would ask them to resolve the situation and they know they are not capable of doing that. This will be explained in more detail below.

What else does the Church tell us about the remedies to be used when an election was suspect for some reason? It has happened before in Church history, and either the ones in doubt resigned or a council was called. This was the case during the Western Schism when all the cardinals and bishops gathered at Constance to ask for the resignation of three rival popes, since no one could be certain who was the true pope. This should have been the true purpose of the false Vatican 2 council but of course, when it was first convened, the faithful had no idea that John 23 was a doubtful pope and that he and Paul 6 would use the council to destroy the Church. The goal of those bishops who supported the council was the modernization, not the preservation of the Church. Once the true state of affairs became obvious, and certainly this was clear to all by the time Paul 6 introduced the Novus Ordo Missae in 1969, those remaining faithful bishops and priests — and these men did exist from all accounts — were obligated, according to Catholic faith and practice, to elect a true pope.

Undermining the papacy

That of course did not happen, as it would have foiled the plans of the Masonic element already in control. Once John 23 became “pope,” the doors of the Vatican were opened wide to Masons. This is documented by Comte Leon de Poncins in his work, *The Vatican and Freemasonry*. Traditionalist movements appeared as early as the mid-1960s, but their founders were later discovered to possess ties to Freemasonry as well. Lefebvre’s St. Pius X Society, also Masonically connected, surfaced in the early 1970s. Its persistent “resistance” to Rome did nothing more than instill in SSPX followers a distrust and even disgust of men they believed to be real popes, but evil ones, and this was by design. This general attitude fanned out into other Traditionalist and Sedevacante groups who believed the Vatican 2 popes to be bad, yet legitimate possessors of the See. They endorsed the insupportable material-formal idea, that these quasi-popes could “convert” and revert to genuine popes, presto-chango! That the leopard could change his spots rarely if ever happens, as St. Alphonsus Liguori notes, and certainly could never happen under the laws and Church teachings regarding the election of the Roman Pontiffs.

So the very idea of the papacy was successfully undermined and its authority and honor greatly diminished. And this was exacerbated by reports of financial scandals and especially clerical sex abuse allegations, often sensationalized by media outlets. How many of these allegations were founded or unfounded will never be known; but suffice it to say that foundation enough existed to convince the public that Rome had become a veritable cesspool, which had been the case long before the scandals broke. Add to this the claims of anti-Semitism leveled against Pope Pius XII and the circle was complete. Even Traditionalists have criticized Pius XII and have questioned his handling of early liturgical reforms and other issues. And the general lack of esteem for the papacy worked in their favor: Traditionalists felt no pressure whatsoever to explain their operation outside papal channels minus the necessary jurisdiction that would verify their claim as successors of the Apostles. After all, who needed these troublesome and embarrassing “popes” when they could establish mass centers and seminaries worldwide without them?

Bishops without the pope are not the hierarchy

But that bishops could function without the supervision and express permission of the Roman Pontiff has never been the teaching of the Church. The Vatican Council and Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, undeniably taught that the bishops possess their jurisdiction only as granted them by the Roman Pontiff and not from Christ directly. This was the teaching of the Church from the beginning, despite what Traditionalists might claim, as is proven below:

(Pope St. Innocent I, 417, Denz. 100): “In seeking the things of God... **preserving the examples of ancient Tradition**... you have strengthened the vigor of your religion with true reason, for you have confirmed that reference must be made to our judgment, realizing what is due the Apostolic See, since **all of us placed in this**

position desire to follow the Apostle from whom the episcopate itself and all authority of this name have emerged..."

(Condemned ***as heresy*** by John XXII, 1327, Denz. 496): "That Blessed Peter the Apostle had no more authority than the other Apostles had nor was he the head of the other apostles. Likewise that God did not send forth any head of the Church, nor did He make anyone His Vicar."

(Proposed for belief to Armenians returning to the Church by Pope Clement VI, 1351, Denz. 570c): "... ***Every power of jurisdiction which the Apostles had was completely subject to the authority and power which Blessed Peter received from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself***, in whomsoever are believers in Christ all over the world, and that ***no apostle or any other one whosoever received that very complete power except Peter alone.***"

(Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, 1896, Denz. 1960): "***The order of bishops, as Christ commanded, is to be regarded as joined with Peter if it be subject to Peter and obey him...*** For the proper preservation of Faith and unity... ***it is not enough to hold higher offices ... nor to have general supervision, but there is absolute need of true authority and a SUPREME AUTHORITY...***"

(The Vatican Council, 1869-70, Denz. 1831): "If anyone thus speaks that the Roman Pontiff has only the office of inspection or direction, but not the full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church... ***or that this power of his is not ordinary and immediate OVER THE PASTORS AND FAITHFUL ALTOGETHER AND INDIVIDUALLY; let him be anathema.***"

So what is to be said about the above? Only one observation is permissible from a doctrinal standpoint: These men have no authority if they are not in communion with and subject to the Roman Pontiff. These decrees are clear, and Pope Pius XII makes them even more so in his infallible encyclical below:

"Bishops must be considered as the more illustrious members of the Universal Church, for they are united by a very special bond to the divine Head of the whole Body and so are rightly called 'principal parts of the members of the Lord;' moreover, as far as his own diocese is concerned, each one as a true Shepherd feeds the flock entrusted to him and rules it in the name of Christ. ***Yet in exercising this office they are not altogether independent but are subordinate to the lawful authority of the Roman Pontiff, although enjoying the ordinary power of jurisdiction which they receive directly from the same Supreme Pontiff***" (*Mystici Corporis Christi*, 1943)

And from this same pope:

"...The power of orders (through which the ecclesiastical hierarchy is composed of Bishops, priests, and ministers) comes from receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders. ***BUT THE POWER OF JURISDICTION, WHICH IS CONFERRED UPON THE SUPREME PONTIFF DIRECTLY BY DIVINE RIGHTS, FLOWS TO THE BISHOPS BY THE SAME RIGHT, BUT ONLY THROUGH THE SUCCESSOR OF ST. PETER***, to whom not only the simple faithful, but even all the Bishops must be constantly subject, ***and to whom they must be bound by obedience and with the bond of unity***" (*Ad sinarum gentum*, 1954).

Traditionalists are not united with the Roman Pontiff and do not even obey the existing decrees and laws binding on them for belief, even though they have been repeatedly advised of these teachings for decades. And there are only two possible explanations for why these infallible teachings are ignored and dismissed: 1) Those poorly educated in the faith since Vatican 2 do not sufficiently understand that what the popes teach regarding Christ's institution of bishops is binding under pain of exclusion from membership in the Church, and/or 2) Those remaining with these Traditionalist "bishops" calling themselves the true successors of Christ's Church on earth accept the heretical proposition above: that the apostles had no real head and were all equal in authority. It seems that number 1) is the most probable answer regarding the majority of Traditionalist followers. But certainly number 2) is the only possible explanation regarding Traditional pseudo-clerics themselves, who cannot present the same plea of ignorance and have used their positions to not only fleece their followers but to

rob them of their faith. And there is yet another reason that is very unpalatable but must be considered as the only *real* explanation for what has happened here.

Those weighing their options must understand that the Traditionalist movement is nothing new or even traditional. If it is considered in all its aspects from a truly objective point of view, it can only be ranked as a continuation of the Jansenist, Gallicanist, Anglican, Orthodox, Theosophist and Gnostic "tradition," ***but certainly not CATHOLIC tradition!*** One book all should read if they wish to see a mirror image of Traditionalist practice and belief is Peter Anson's *Bishops At Large*. Written in 1964, it provides an amazing preview of what would soon become the Traditionalist movements and their many offspring. It is appropriate here to quote from the Introduction to Anson's book written by Henry St. John, O.P. which aptly sums up everything we know as Traditionalism today.

Traditionalism's true orientation explained

"[Anson's] story is one of the strangest and most fantastic religious movements to be found in the whole range of what may be described in general terms as the erratic 'goings-on' of the underworld. The use of the word underworld in this context must be taken as connoting an ecclesiastical eccentricity rather than roguery or crime, ***though neither of the latter is wholly absent from its records.*** The story is closely though not exclusively connected with movements of a Catholic type, mainly arriving from dissatisfied and unstable elements in Catholicism or Anglo-Catholicism. ***They stand as a rule for Catholicism without the Pope but their preoccupation amounting to obsession is the recovery of Christian unity by the widespread and in effect indiscriminate propagation of valid episcopacy and priesthood.***

"In almost every case, ***the leaders of these multiple movements have been at pains to obtain episcopal consecration from sources often remote and seldom wholly unquestionable which they hoped would be indisputable.*** Having obtained an episcopal character, they proceeded to found a church based upon it and their own particular version of what true Catholic orthodoxy is. In this way, so the visionary hope takes shape in the minds of these dreamers, that their church will become the center and foundation upon which the unity of Christ's Church could be rebuilt... ***Mr. Anson's story shows us a reductio ad absurdum of the divinely ordained hierarchical structure of the Church constituted by Apostolic succession when divorced from almost every consideration but a mechanical conception of validity... The obsession of the bishops at large and their followers with the validity of orders has brought them to the belief that such validity is a sole hallmark of the nature of the Church and its authority. Ubi ordines validi ecclesia*** is the principle upon which they, all of them, consistently act with a determined conviction," (valid orders make a strong Church).

"The result of this action is that ***they are in effect reduced to saying get valid orders and you can choose what you believe. They are unaware that they are saying this and consequently lay great stress on the supreme importance of an orthodoxy which turns out to be no more than their own particular and sometimes variable "doxy."*** What they have forgotten in their often wild and eccentric way is that even a valid Apostolic succession is of small value unless it is possessed by a believing community that is a visible organic society divinely preserved from the loss of its structural unity. This unity preserves and is preserved by its *sensus fidelium* and by the teaching authority of its united episcopate. This is the essential nature of the Church as taught by the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in common, in accordance with historic tradition from the earliest times" but in the Catholic Church, of course, the Roman Pontiff alone is the guarantee of this undivided unity as the head member of that "united episcopate."

The disturbing truth

Actions speak louder than words: Traditionalists are no different than those schismatic sects who preceded them in pretending that one can have a Church without a pope. The underworld has now become their norm, and far from striving for any sort of Catholic unity, which necessarily requires a true pope, they seem to glory in their diversity. Anson goes into great detail to describe the occult connections of these groups, also their interests in ancient heresies, which so many have now resurrected and even perfected. Catholic writer Mary Lejeune warned those joining Traditionalist sects that they were occult-based and Masonic in origin in the 1970s, but to no avail. Author Craig Heimbichner, in his *Blood on the Altar* (2005) notes that many of those

initially singing the praises of the Latin Tridentine Mass in the late 1960s, early 1970s were practicing theosophists, who succeeded in luring Traditionalists into “Latin Mass” groups.

He links the awe for the old Mass to C.W. Leadbetter, founder of the Liberal Catholic (Theosophical) church in Sydney, Australia in 1917, citing several quotes proving theosophic occultism later was introduced into Traditional circles. He quotes Wasserman as stating that “Persons of Gnostic-hermetic interests have more in common with traditionalist Catholics than with either modernist Vatican II Catholics or with Protestants...The Right-wing exploits a superstition among some Catholics who hold to a kind of unspoken “magic sacramentalism,” [condemned by Pope St. Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* against Modernism], i.e, the notion that being present at the Holy Mass itself, with its awe-inspiring solemnity and its bells, incense and candles — not one’s state of grace, fidelity to the Commandments of God or relationship with Jesus Christ — becomes the individual’s guarantor of sanctity.” Heimbichner calls this a “Satanic perversion” of Catholicism, mixing pagan elements with the true, much as is done in the Satanic rituals connected to Voodoo and Santeria. And if this is what those investigating Traditionalism really wish to expose themselves to, they definitely are not looking for the true faith as taught by St. Peter through Pius XII.

Traditionalists’ intense focus on perpetuating their shady lineages and defending their legitimacy occupies the time that, were they anything but pseudo-clerics, should be devoted to developing a true understanding of the entirety of Catholic existence and instruction in Catholic dogma, not just activities related to the Church’s exterior aspect. They all have developed their own ideas of orthodoxy, as St. John notes above, and this is illustrated by the recent controversies among themselves regarding *una cum* and the material-formal hypothesis. Also as noted above, ***their theory regarding the episcopacy reduces the Church’s establishment of a hierarchy based on true apostolic succession headed by a canonically elected pope to AN ABSURDITY.*** The only difference between those sects described above and Traditionalists is that Traditionalists have succeeded in convincing their ignorant followers that they are the true Church, and the “True Restoration” crowd pretends to be able to unite all these scraggly sects to present the appearance of a unity they can never possess without a true pope. But without true cardinals or bishops to elect, and all these men have passed away, this is no longer possible today.

Anson’s book is filled with photos of incredible pseudo-Catholic pageantry, clerical ostentation and simulated piety, found reproduced on nearly every Traditional “Catholic” website in existence. These sites feature full-color photos of alleged consecrations and ordinations, wide-eyed “seminarians” being ordained as “priests,” and pious congregations attending “high masses,” offered in vain. Such pretension is an insult to any true Catholic and should be recognized by all for what it truly is — the continuation of a long line of heretics and schismatics who wish to dethrone the pope indefinitely and usurp his authority. Apostolicity of origin, doctrine and mission must all be one, and they have none of these, as has been proven by the Church Herself time and time again. But the followers of these imposters are concerned only with appearances, not reality. Their thinking has become so disordered over time they can no longer accept or understand the truth. This is because in the process of rejecting the truth, they have abandoned the Church’s own method of determining that truth, as taught by St. Thomas Aquinas.

So why didn’t the remaining bishops elect a pope?

Good question. The only bishops eligible to do this under Pope Pius XII’s 1945 infallible papal election law [*Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis*](#) (VAS) were those consecrated under Pope Pius XII himself. Traditionalists never made any serious attempt to round them up, although they were begged to do so in the late 1980s. Now they have all passed away and only those *claiming* to be valid bishops are left. Why do I say claiming? Because VAS states that during an interregnum no one can usurp papal jurisdiction, meaning that anything only the pope could do cannot be done when there is a vacancy of the Holy See. Now one of those things is the consecration of bishops which requires the papal mandate or approval of the man to be consecrated as fit to be a bishop. Only the pope can issue this approval. Marcel Lefebvre and Peter Ngo dinh Thuc never received those mandates. The rite of episcopal consecration clearly states that the consecration must not be performed without the mandate. And once again, only the pope possesses the jurisdiction to make even minor changes to the rites of the Sacraments

(that is, proceeding to consecration without the mandate and thereby omitting the accompanying ceremonies). But there is yet another major issue here which must be addressed.

In addition to the invalidation of their acts by Pope Pius XII as found in VAS, Lefebvre, Thuc, et al., and all those seeking ordination and consecration from them also incurred something known as **infamy of law** by actively participating in the schismatic Novus Ordo sect and setting up their schismatic Traditionalist sects (Canon 2314 §3). **Therefore their acts are invalid** (Canon 2294, Revs. Woywod-Smith) **and the men they ordained and consecrated never received orders under the laws of the Catholic Church.** Revs. Woywod-Smith here explain the effects of infamy of law under Can. 2294 §1: “A person who has incurred infamy of law is not only irregular, as declared by Can. 984 n. 5, but in addition, he..., **must be restrained from the exercise of sacred functions of the ministry...** The person who has incurred... an infamy of law... cannot validly obtain ecclesiastical benefices, pensions, offices and dignities, **nor can he VALIDLY EXERCISE the rights connected with the same, nor perform A VALID, LEGAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACT.**”

As Abp. Amleto Cicognani points out; “...**All Catholics are subject to the dogmatic canons of Ecumenical Councils and pronouncements of the Holy See.** The decisions of the Roman Pontiff condemning propositions contra fidem et mores (contrary to faith or morals), the various instructions of the Holy Office, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, the Congregation for the Oriental Church and the Sacred Penitentiary, the prohibition of books and theories opposed to Catholic faith and morals, **all pertain to Catholic doctrine....** All the above pronouncements, although they do not strictly pertain to the divine law, follow, however, as deductions or declarations therefrom, **and they concern the doctrine of the Church, and not its discipline properly so-called...**” (Canon Law, 1935; Canon 1; pgs. 453-54). So don’t be fooled by those who try to dismiss certain papal decrees as disciplinary or no longer applicable “in these times.”

Canon Law itself is negatively infallible, and Msgr. Joseph C. Fenton comments on this as follows: “Canon law is formulated by the Holy Father as the Vicar of Christ on earth and by the ecumenical council which is subject to and in communion with him. It is thus the work of the hierarchy responsible for the direction and the instruction of the people of God. At present the Canon Law of the western or Latin church is codified into 2,414 canons which have been in force since Pentecost 1918. Among these canons we find several dogmatic pronouncements... The very law of the Church is an expression of that directive force which orders Christians toward the attainment of their final end.” The 1911 Catholic Encyclopedia under Discipline states that: “It is the unanimous opinion of the theologians that discipline enjoys a negative, indirect infallibility, i.e., the Church can prescribe nothing that would be contrary to the natural or Divine law, nor prohibit anything that the natural or Divine law would exact.”

Validity of Traditionalist orders gravely doubtful

No one is denying that **validly consecrated Catholic bishops who intend to validly ordain and consecrate, using the right matter and form, actually do ordain and consecrate**, a truth that is *proxima fidei*. But valid ordination and consecration also depend on the **INTENTION** of the one ordaining and consecrating, not just the matter and form used, and this is yet another matter to be considered here. The **intentions** of both Lefebvre and Thuc, who resigned positions held during Pope Pius XII’s reign and accepted offices under the Novus Ordo usurpers, openly participating in their rites and rendering these usurpers obedience, are gravely suspect. The matter and form used for the rite is addressed here **only** because it is so often raised as sole proof of validity by Traditionalists; VAS and the existence of the penalties for infamy of law **ALONE** invalidate all that Lefebvre and Thuc attempted to do and no other proofs are necessary to call the validity of Traditionalist operations into question.

But if someone wishes to consider the validity of the orders received by Traditionalists only on the basis of correct matter and form, there is something that has never been factored into the orders equation that needs to be considered here. **Using the old rite of consecration is not really a guarantee of validity in the case of Traditionalists. That rite was still in use under the usurpers for three years (1965-1968) following Vatican 2.** So where intention is concerned, did Lefebvre and Thuc **intend** to use that same rite to consecrate men into the pre-1968 Vatican 2 church or the true Church of Pope Pius XII? Because clearly their intention was to **appear** to operate outside the Novus Ordo and champion the Tridentine Mass, while maintaining their Novus Ordo clerical

status. Lefebvre in particular was loyal in every way to John 23, who was reputedly Grand Master of the “Catholic secret society” of which Lefebvre was a member. Thuc published his 1981 handwritten *Declaration* as the Bishop of Bulla Regia, a title received from Paul 6, and later returned to the Novus Ordo. The intention here to remain in the Novus Ordo seems quite clear. Was this the establishment of a “clandestine church,” meant to serve as a bridge between the old and the new, using the old rite as a cover?

There is definitely a serious question here regarding a lack of interior intention. When such a question arises, Rev. P. Pouratt, in his *Theology of the Sacraments*, 1910, notes: “According to Benedict XIV, when there is reason to believe that a sacrament which cannot be repeated and is of great importance, v. g. Baptism or Holy Orders, has been very probably conferred by a minister who had not the interior intention, **that sacrament is to be repeated conditionally...**” and not by Traditionalists, only truly Catholic bishops. One cannot belong in name to one Church (the Novus Ordo), while at the same time pretending to establish and adhere to a different Church (the churches of Traditionalism), neither of which is Catholic! The evidence against the validity of these orders is overwhelming, even outside their **certain** invalidation by Canon Law and VAS. Let us now examine the cascade effect of that evidence.

- Lefebvre and Thuc both suffer from censures and penalties owing to their schismatic and heretical adherence to the Novus Ordo that call their ordinations and consecrations in the 1970s and 1980s into grave doubt. Most concerning of these is infamy of law incurred under Canons 2314 §3 and 2294 §1 **which alone invalidates all ecclesiastical acts**. This vindictive penalty can be dispensed from only by the Roman Pontiff (Can. 2295).
- Add to this the prohibitions mentioned in VAS, which first of all **render invalid and of no effect whatsoever** any subsequent acts of those created “bishops” by Lefebvre and Thuc who never possessed the proper papal mandate. It prevents them from validly administering **any** Sacrament including orders.
- Both of the points above amount to this: any power Lefebvre and Thuc possessed to convey Holy Orders or episcopal consecration — the powers a bishop normally receives when approved for consecration, and is validly consecrated and assigned to a diocese erected under a canonically elected Roman Pontiff — were withdrawn. This has nothing to do with Lefebvre and Thuc’s own orders, if indeed Lefebvre was ever validly ordained or consecrated. **It had only to do with the EXERCISE of those orders, which the pope can rightfully withhold and negate.**
- Neither Lefebvre nor Thuc possessed a diocese assigned to them by Pope Pius XII.
 - a) First of all, those presenting for ordination also had incurred excommunication for schism and infamy of law for adhering to the Novus Ordo and Traditionalist sects. Schismatics, needless to say, cannot be accepted as candidates for the priesthood. Under Can. 984 no. 5 and 985 no. 1, such men cannot be ordained without a dispensation from the Holy See.
 - b) Secondly, Lefebvre and Thuc, possessing no diocese assigned them by a true pope, usurped papal jurisdiction in presuming papal approval and allowing seminaries to be erected. Therefore, all of their acts are null and void under VAS.
- There is grave doubt regarding Lefebvre’s own ordination and consecration by the Freemason Achille Lienart, also Lefebvre’s membership in a “Catholic” secret society. Thuc’s mental status, given his indiscriminate ordinations and consecrations, his vacillation between the Novus Ordo and Traditionalism and a sketchy ecclesiastical history in his native Viet Nam is also highly questionable. This, taken all together, establishes a preponderance of evidence.
- They also must be treated as heretics and schismatics for rejecting the authority of the papacy and usurping papal jurisdiction by ruling as true bishops in the Roman Pontiff’s absence!
- So here we see that the men presenting as Traditionalist bishops today were never even certainly validly ordained, far less consecrated as bishops, a double whammy.

- While only a canonically elected Roman Pontiff could issue a final decision on the matter, we can scarcely ignore the infallible law that was intended to prevail during this interregnum — *Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis*. Nor can we ignore Canon Law which is negatively infallible and automatically, without any need for declaration, excommunicates notorious heretics and schismatics.
- Refusal to recognize the prevailing laws of the Church and the authenticity and binding nature of papal decrees amounts to a denial of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff.

Authority in the Church the real issue

We have a crisis of authority here, and this is what has tripped up most of those seeking out Traditionalists as their Novus Ordo or Protestant replacement church, or who rummage through Traditionalist sects to find the better bishop or priest, more stable community, better school or whatever. The Catholic Church has only one sure authority, one unfailing guarantor of unity incapable of error in faith and morals, and that is an unquestionably, canonically elected pope. If Traditionalists are hopelessly divided among themselves — and they most certainly are — this is a clear indication they cannot be the true Church, because they lack the one who alone can provide them that unity. For whatever reason, God desires today that we do not have a true pope and at this time cannot elect one. This is apparently His signified will for us today, meaning that it issues not from His will of good pleasure, but can be determined by His laws — papal law and the Sacred Canons. Traditionalist groups usually insist that their followers obey their priests and bishops, but they have no right to do so. Why is this so?

Because the Church teaches we owe obedience only to our **lawful** pastors; and given VAS above, none of these men are lawful or have any right to rule Catholics. The Council of Trent teaches: “If anyone says that...those who have been neither rightly ordained nor sent by ecclesiastical and canonical authority, **but come from a different source, are lawful ministers of the word and of the Sacraments: let him be anathema**” (Denz. 967). In his “An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism,” #4, Fr. Thomas Kinkead writes in Q. 115: “What is the Church? A. The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same sacraments, **AND ARE GOVERNED BY THEIR LAWFUL PASTORS UNDER ONE VISIBLE HEAD.**” Also in his *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, written for religious congregations and Catholic institutions of higher learning, seminary professor Rev. John Joseph McVey wrote in 1926:

Q. 60: Who after the pope are lawful pastors of the Church?

A. The bishops who have been **canonically instituted**, i.e., **who have received from the Sovereign Pontiff a diocese to govern.**

Q. 73: Why is it not sufficient to be a bishop or priest in order to be a lawful pastor?

A. Because a bishop must also be sent into a diocese by the Pope, and a priest must be sent into a parish by the bishop. In other words, **a pastor must have not only the power of order, but also THE POWER OF JURISDICTION**, (emph. McVey’s).

Q. 77: How is the power of jurisdiction communicated?

A. Priests receive their jurisdiction from the bishop of the diocese; bishops receive theirs from the pope; and the Pope holds jurisdiction from Jesus Christ. A bishop who did not have his spiritual powers from the Pope, a pastor who did not have his from the lawful bishop, would be **AN INTRUDER OR SCHISMATIC**,” (emph. McVey’s).

Under the topic apostolicity in the Catholic Encyclopedia we find: “Apostolicity of mission consists in the power of holy orders and the power of jurisdiction derived by **legitimate transmission** from the Apostles. Any religious organization whose ministers do not possess these two powers is not accredited to preach the Gospel of Christ. For ‘How can they preach,’ asks the Apostle, ‘unless they be sent?’” (Rom. 10:15). And from Rev. E. S. Berry’s *The Church of Christ*: “**...Jurisdiction in the Church can neither be obtained nor held against the will of her supreme authority**; its transmission depends entirely upon legitimate succession. It is not sufficient, therefore, that a church have valid Orders; it must also have a legitimate succession of ministers, reaching back in an unbroken line to the Apostles, upon whom our Lord conferred all authority to rule His Church... **There can be no legitimate successor in the Church of Christ who has not received jurisdiction either directly or indirectly from**

her supreme authority.” And without a true pope there is no one to even indirectly supply such jurisdiction, despite Traditionalist claims to possess supplied jurisdiction.

Canon Law on offices

This is expressed in a more detailed and authoritative manner in Canon Law, which traces out for us exactly how we are to understand what is meant by lawful pastors. To validly ordain, one must have been assigned to a diocese by competent ecclesiastical authority, and this was not the case with either Lefebvre or Thuc. No papal mandates were issued to Lefebvre or to Thuc for their consecration of bishops. Without these mandates, Pope Pius XII teaches, the acts of anyone attempting to consecrate are null and void, i.e., they never create priests or bishops, and this in itself should satisfy anyone claiming to be Catholic. But in addition to this, Canon 147 states: “An ecclesiastical office cannot be **VALIDLY** obtained without canonical appointment. By canonical appointment is understood the **conferring of an ecclesiastical office by the competent ecclesiastical authority in harmony with the sacred canons.**” In the case of bishops, this authority is the Roman Pontiff; in the case of priests, jurisdiction is lawfully conferred by bishops in communion with the Roman Pontiff, possessing an office assigned to them by the Roman Pontiff, and no such office was ever assigned.

None of those ordained or consecrated by Lefebvre or Thuc can claim to have received an office from competent ecclesiastical authority in harmony with the sacred canons. At one time both Lefebvre and Thuc possessed offices under Pope Pius XII, but they resigned those offices to accept offices under John 23 and Paul 6. **So they cannot claim, either, to have received offices from the competent ecclesiastical authority, even presuming they were validly ordained and consecrated. Canon 147 is not concerned with the VALIDITY of orders received; it speaks only of offices, which have to do with jurisdiction, not orders.** This is explained in Can. 109, which states that all those degrees of jurisdiction outside those of the Roman Pontiff are received **“...by canonical appointment.”** The authentic interpretation of Can. 147 by the Holy See, (AAS 42-601), reminds the hierarchy that this canon proceeds from Divine law and the infallible decrees of the Council of Trent (DZ 960, 967), so that none can proceed against Can. 147 with impunity. It furthermore declares an excommunication reserved especially to the Holy See against those who violate this canon, **and that includes any among the laity who cooperate in any way in these crimes.** Under Can. 147 in the *Canon Law Digest*, Vol. 3, The Sacred Congregation of the Council declared:

“The Catholic Church is, in virtue of its institution by Christ Himself, a perfect society hierarchically established, whose full and supreme power of government and jurisdiction rests with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of the Blessed Apostle Peter in the primacy. **Hence no one can presume to intrude himself or others into ecclesiastical offices or benefices without a legitimate canonical investiture or provision...** The Council of Trent declared that, **“those who undertake to exercise these offices merely at the behest of and upon the appointment by the people or the secular power and authority, AND THOSE WHO ASSUME THE SAME ON THEIR OWN AUTHORITY, are all to be regarded not as ministers of the Church but as thieves and robbers who have entered not by the door,”** (Cap. IV, Session XXIII, *de reform*).

Traditionalists have assumed the title of bishops and priests on their own authority without being assigned to an office. They try to claim that either *epikeia* supplies jurisdiction or that Can. 2261 §2 supplies it, even if somehow they have excommunicated themselves. Can. 2261 §2 reads: “...the faithful may for any just reason ask the sacraments and sacramentals from an excommunicated person especially if there is no other minister available and the excommunicated person at their request may minister to them without any obligation to inquire into the reason for the request.” This is called supplied jurisdiction because in normal times the cleric is not allowed to exercise jurisdiction when under censure of excommunication. but for the sake of the faithful, the Church will supply it if no other minister is available. But who or what in the Church is said to supply such jurisdiction?

Certainly not the law itself, as Traditionalists claim. All jurisdiction arises from the Roman Pontiff as stated above, and as explained by Rev. Francis Miaskiewicz in his *Supplied Jurisdiction According to Canon 209* (1948; p. 143). What is being missed here is that Can. 2261 §2 **presumes** that the priests excommunicated, for whatever reason, once held a legitimately appointed office, for if they did not, they could not ever have obtained jurisdiction in the first place. Not only was there no pope to supply or confirm such offices, Traditionalists were

never assigned to an office by competent authority according to the sacred canons to begin with. For years Traditionalists sent those challenging them down rabbit holes with the jurisdiction argument claiming they didn't need an office to possess it. But to make such a claim entails a denial of an infallible teaching of the Council of Trent, one directly connected to Divine Revelation according to the Holy Office, and this is heresy.

These men pretending to be clerics, then, clearly have no authority issuing from the Church last ruled by Pope Pius XII because they did not descend apostolically from that Church. The real authorities and the **ONLY** authorities we are bound to follow today are Holy Scripture and Tradition, all the true popes and ecumenical councils that ever sat, decrees of the Holy Office, the early Fathers, and all the loyal theologians and canonists who faithfully follow all these same sources. Repeated demands, for decades, that Traditionalists prove they possess any authority beyond a reasonable doubt, as Canon Law commands them to do, have fallen on deaf ears, because they know they cannot prove it. From what is presented above, does it sound as though Traditionalists, or the Novus Ordo church following the election of John 23, have any authority? One cannot simply accept such things on another's say so, or on "funny internal feelings," but must develop certitude in such matters. And certitude tells us these men are questionably valid.

But where can we go?

Since the earliest days, and actually since the time of the Babylonian Captivity in the Old Testament, those who love God have kept their faith privately despite a lack of ministers to serve them. In the early centuries of the Church, the faithful hid in the catacombs of Rome where they had access to bishops and priests, until they were martyred or imprisoned. There later were those who were forced to keep the faith alive on their own during the Arian heresy because those clergy who remained Catholic were so few in number that they were able to minister to them only infrequently at best. The early monks, the Desert Fathers, had no sacraments available to them at first, until monasteries and later convents were founded and religious were ordained as priests. Until the faith spread across all of Europe, certainly there was a dearth of clergy to say Mass and confer the Sacraments. During the Protestant Reformation we know the English and Irish were forced to hear Mass secretly and that it was rarely available. This also was true for a time following the French Revolution, when St. John Vianney was a young boy. For over 200 years the Japanese were forbidden to practice their faith and so practiced it in secret; they had no bishops or priests. On the American frontier, especially in the Southwest, Catholics went for years, sometimes for a lifetime, without ever seeing a priest. Those behind the Iron Curtain following the Communist takeover of Russia, Eastern Europe and later China were forced to keep the faith secretly or suffer death or imprisonment. Catholics during those times would not seek the Sacraments from the Orthodox or national churches because they knew they were schismatic. Yet Traditionalists think nothing of attending Orthodox services today.

Today's Catholics deprived of Mass and Sacraments do nothing different than their persecuted forbearers did, only *their* persecutors are fellow "Catholics." They see that there are no certainly valid hierarchy or priests available and rather than consult schismatics, they simply pray the Mass in home chapels or at family altars in the home. They baptize each other's children and witness civil marriage. They make perfect Acts of Contrition and Spiritual Communions. They do all this to avoid *communicatio in sacris* and to keep the Deposit of Faith whole and unimpaired. They believe that we live in the time of Antichrist and that the Mass has ceased. They obey Canon Law and papal law, up to the pontificate of Pope Pius XII. Many homeschool their children and live in rural areas. Their main concern is keeping the faith alive for their children. They do their best to reach out to others interested in the faith and to work for the salvation of souls. Many feel isolated and unable to do as much as they could or should do. But their numbers are so few that it is difficult to accomplish anything on a larger scale.

What is being proposed here is not presented with the intent of herding anyone into praying at home as a commercial alternative to Traditionalism. This is not yet another attempt to practice group Catholicism minus the pope. If **anything** has been demonstrated here it is the impossibility of recreating a juridic Church unless a canonically elected Pope be the head of that Church. Catholics, however, who have completed the three-year probationary period suggested by Canon Law on embracing stay-at-home Catholicism often find themselves desirous of doing more on an outreach scale. Many have expressed the hope that they could convince

Traditionalists and even others of the need to truly convert and simply pray and watch together. But while it may have been possible to reach Traditionalists earlier on in the last century, today only prayer and sacrifices can possibly hope to deliver these people from the mighty delusions they have been subjected to by those who have entrapped them.

In commanding Catholic Action, the Popes have left a way open to work together for the salvation of souls, provided certain conditions are fulfilled. It would depend in large part on whether such Catholics can develop a true devotion to the interior life and a comprehensive understanding of the virtue of charity. And here we do not mean the liberal brand of charity practiced today by so many Traditionalists and even some of those who stay at home. For working for the salvation of souls IS true charity, although many believe it is a waste of time and an impossible dream. But it also requires the practice of charity among those who undertake this work, and this is where the need for delicacy and restraint enter in. If anything be done in the way of Catholic Action, Catholics must do this today on a one-on-one basis, because those praying at home generally do not live close enough to each other do it as a group. Many opportunities exist in the family circle, such as catechizing children, instructing those interested in the faith, providing marriage instruction, carrying for the ill and aged, etc.

As Pope St. Pius X says in this article, we have no excuse whatsoever not to obey the commands of the popes to spread the faith when and wherever it is possible. In a document entered into the *Acta Apostolica Sedis*, hence binding on Catholics, Pope Pius XII told lay apostles in 1957 that it is the **DUTY** of Catholics, in the absence of the hierarchy, to assume all their responsibilities. And if we fail to obey these commands, then we question their supreme authority. The successors of St. Peter who have gone to their eternal reward are as much members of the Mystical Body as we are today, for that Body encompasses the Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant. Infallible decrees bind perpetually, for the Church is the same forever: *Eadem Sempiternum*. Revs. Devivier and Sasia, S.J. wrote. "If we ascend the course of ages, even to Apostolic times, we see the same identical doctrine professed by the Faithful throughout Christendom... (We) say, with St. Vincent of Lerins: 'We hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all,' (*Christian Apologetics*). The Vatican Council (DZ 1800) and Pope St. Pius X in his oath against Modernism (DZ 2145) define the changelessness of the Church as dogma. From the earliest days of Christianity, Catholics have kept their faith and saved their souls in times of persecution without the clergy; they have cooperated with the bishops and priests or functioned in their stead to spread the faith; they have defied incredible odds to pass the faith onto future generations.

Catholics praying at home believe in all aspects of this timeless Tradition and know that they must observe the conditions set down by Pope Pius XII concerning their functions in the absence of the hierarchy. This means that they must follow all teachings on faith and morals (also discipline), obey all the laws of the Church, and never do anything against the implicit or explicit will of the Church. Those choosing to pray at home have their critics, but these critics have never been able to offer proofs that staying away from Traditional chapels is sinful in any way. On the contrary, as shown above, they are the ones who cooperate in sin by conferring Sacraments no one can prove are certainly valid. Those wishing to join us who pray at home can visit my blog at betrayedcatholics.com There, and on the website as well, books and some practical helps can be found that will support what has already been said above.

An important part of our Catholic Action apostolate is the founding on 2022 of the Society of Reparation to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary. We hope you will join us. Below is a list of beliefs held by those who pray at home in these trying times.

Statement of Belief

+ We live in the last times; the Church has entered upon a period that will end either in the Final Judgment or a brief peace that will see Her restoration.

+ Pope Pius XII was the last true pope. We are bound to obey all the teachings of the popes from St. Peter to Pius XII — the continual magisterium — even though we have no sitting pope today. This because their

teachings are the authentic expression of the Deposit of Faith, revealed truth found in the Scriptures and Tradition as interpreted and taught by the Roman Catholic Church for the belief of faithful Catholics till the end of time.

+ Therefore, the authority, infallibility and indefectibility of the Church remains, expressed in the Deposit of Faith as explained by all true popes throughout the ages.

+ Catholics are bound to accept with a firm assent even those things taught by the popes only as certain and this includes decisions of the Sacred Congregations. Such teachings are *always* superior to the opinions of theologians.

+ Pope Pius XII was the last true pope because John 23, as a public heretic, was ineligible for election in 1958 and never became pope — this according to Canon Law and papal law.

+ Doubts raised about the 1958 election in many quarters prove St. Robert Bellarmine's axiom, that "a doubtful pope is no pope" applies to his "election."

+ Bishops consecrated under Pope Pius XII and any remaining faithful cardinals were obligated to gather and elect a true pope once it became clear that John 23/Paul 6 were heretics. St. Robert Bellarmine in his *de Conciliis*, Pope Pius XII in his 1945 election constitution, also Pope Paul IV in his *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio*, made allowances for this. It is now impossible, however, to hold a papal election, because all those bishops consecrated under Pope Pius XII have passed away or their orders cannot be certainly verified.

+ Pope Paul IV's infallible bull *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio* (*Cum ex...*) and Pope Pius XII's infallible constitution *Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis* (VAS) are the governing documents for these times. *Cum ex...* is the annotated source of the Canons regarding heresy, canons which have been called into doubt for decades. Under Can. 6 §4 this old law is to be used as the prevailing law in dealing with heresy, apostasy and schism, especially in regard to papal elections and the appointment of cardinals and bishops. VAS determines what can and cannot be done during an interregnum. Canon 147 also provides an important guidepost regarding jurisdiction.

+ According to VAS, not even the college of cardinals may exercise papal jurisdiction during an interregnum. This law has been observed since the early Middle Ages. All must be left to the future pope.

+ This would include, then, the issuance of the apostolic letters and papal mandate, necessary for episcopal consecration. For VAS clearly states that if anyone attempts to exercise papal jurisdiction during an interregnum, such acts are null and void. Therefore, Traditionalist consecrations and ordinations are null and void, since ordinations may take place only by a bishop who has presented the papal mandate, been validly consecrated, been assigned a diocese and has received papal permission to erect a seminary.

+ VAS also renders null and void any attempt to dispense from or alter in any way papal laws, especially those governing elections. Traditionalists have violated numerous papal laws and canon laws, which have as their source papal law and the teachings of ecumenical councils, especially Trent. Hence their invocation of *epikeia* for jurisdictional acts is likewise null and void.

+ Because Catholics who now pray at home are obedient to the Roman Pontiffs, they must consider Traditionalists now calling themselves bishops as doubtful at best, for two reasons:

- 1) They are members of a schismatic sect by definition, since they act outside the authority of the Roman Pontiff; and
- 2) They are declared by Pius XII, in Vas and Can. 147, to possess no office or authority whatsoever, because their ordinations and consecrations are null and void.

+ In seeking to inform their consciences on such matters, i.e., what to do when there is no pope and no certainly valid bishops or priests, those wishing to remain Catholic follow the unanimous opinion of theologians, which

states: When it comes to the Sacraments, (or matters which involve the necessary means to eternal salvation), one cannot use a probable opinion regarding their validity (see Dominic Prummer's Handbook of Moral Theology, 1957).

+ This is solidly based on the teaching of Bd. Pope Innocent XI (Denz. 1151). Theologians teach it is a mortal sin of temerity not to follow the unanimous opinion of the theologians (Fr. Sixtus Cartechini, S.J., The Church's Theological Notes or Qualifications, 1951).

+ In order to obey the Roman Pontiffs and their decrees, since it is necessary to salvation to be obedient to the Roman Pontiff (Denz. 469); and in order to avoid mortal sin, certain Catholics resolved to pray at home rather than engage in the schismatic and sacrilegious services of Traditionalists, for "Obedience is better than sacrifices."

+ This can be best summed up by the following, taken from *Life of the Blessed Virgin*, by Rev. B. Rohner, O.S.B., Benziger Bros., 1897: "If you are deprived of the presence of your **lawfully appointed teachers**, then pray privately in your own house or in company of other faithful laity, to your divine Redeemer and ever Blessed Mother. In patience persevere in the faithful discharge of your duties till the dawn of better days in your Church affairs."

+ This has been the practice of Catholics down through the ages, including the English during the persecutions following the Reformation, the Japanese in the 1600s, The French during the French Revolution, Americans without priests on the American frontier and those forbidden to practice their faith behind the Iron Curtain. It is not a novelty, nor can it be condemned as forbidden by Traditionalists, who have no authority to command anyone to do anything.

+ Those who pray at home believe that the Head of their Church is Christ joined to all the popes and bishops in Heaven, and that they are members of His Mystical Body, as Catholics have always believed. They do NOT believe the Church Herself has ceased to exist since Pope Pius XII taught infallibly that She IS the Mystical Body. They accept the undeniable fact that we are without the visible hierarchy, at least for now. They believe the Church is still visible in Her physical (lay) members, is one in Her belief, is universal or Catholic in nature, (since there are those praying at home all over the world); is holy in her doctrines and Her saints, and is apostolic in origin, doctrine, and mission.

Those praying at home perform their daily duties, have a daily prayer routine, practice mental prayer and engage in spiritual reading. They recite the Mass of St. John or the Spiritual Mass daily as well as on Sundays and holydays, they are usually involved in some service to the Church and in helping others to understand the faith, and they pray together for others. It is a very simple and peaceful life, undisturbed by the inevitable and perpetual strife that plagues those in the Novus Ordo and Traditional sects. Even when in the catacombs the early Christians had to be witnesses to their faith in performing their daily duties in the world; they worshipped in the catacombs but did not live there. So it is with those of us living in the virtual catacombs.

We wish only for others what we have experienced ourselves, that blessed peace which surpasseth all understanding. And we pray for the conversion of all sinners, Traditionalists and Novus Ordo members included, that all be granted the light to see the Truth.

May the Holy Ghost guide and enlighten you!

Links to articles on BetrayedCatholics

<https://www.betrayedcatholics.com/free-content/reference-links/4-heresy/tracing-traditionalism-to-its-masonic-origins/>

<http://betrayedcatholics.com/articles/a-catholics-course-of-study/canon-law/trad-pseudo-clerics-only-simulating-mass-and-sacraments-pdf/heresy-in-canon-law/cum-ex-apostolatus-officio-the-old-law-governing-heresy>

<http://betrayedcatholics.com/articles/a-catholics-course-of-study/traditionalist-heresies-and-errors/heresies-concerning-papal-authority/judging-their-infallible-nature-and-the-assent-they-are-due/>

<http://www.betrayedcatholics.com/articles/a-catholics-course-of-study/the-church/the-popes-on-catholic-action/>

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