

FOR LOVE OF THE CHURCH

There is one thing in this world which is different from all other. It has a personality and a force. It is recognised and, when recognised, either loved or hated. It is the Catholic Church...

Hilaire Belloc

The dilemmas presented for the faithful by the actions of Pope Francis and the members of the Roman Dicasteries under his direction in—

- * removing bishops from their sees,
 - * suspending, or threatening to suspend, the faculties of priests,
 - * directing priests to refrain from celebrating Mass in the millennial rite,
 - * subverting the integrity of traditional contemplative religious orders by directing that their members depart from the liturgical principles forming their foundation, and so on—
- are each of them susceptible of explanation, if not of ready solution.

Such is the fallibility of human nature—from which no tenant of papal or episcopal office is free—abuses of theological and liturgical principle such as these are by no means unique in the Catholic Church's history. But because the current ones derive from a more vicious tendency, they bear a different character

Understanding the Issues

The key to understanding this lies in acknowledging what the vast majority of Catholics, regrettably, decline to acknowledge, that the bishops of the Second Vatican Council aided and abetted by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI under the claim they were engaged in an ecumenical, or general, council of the Catholic Church, endorsed a raft of heterodox teachings that render that claim impossible. Vatican II was a fraud.

There are precedents for a false council. The Second Council of Ephesus (449) convened by the Patriarch of Alexandria was condemned by the ecumenical council that followed it, the *Council of Chalcedon* (451), for erring on the nature of the hypostatic union and was damned by Leo the Great as 'the Robber Synod'. In 1786 a synod of bishops convoked by the bishop of Tuscany at Pistoia sought to compromise the integrity of the Church with a series of propositions which Pope Pius VI condemned for their heterodoxy eight years later in the Bull *Auctorem Fidei*. [Dz. 1501 - 1599]

Anyone prepared to weigh the worth of the Second Vatican Council dispassionately should read Pius VI's introduction to this Bull and, in particular, the following charge:

"In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, the innovators sought to hide their tortuous manoeuvres by seemingly innocuous words such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the subtlest manner. Once the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by gradual errors to their eternal damnation. Regardless of the circumstances under which it is used, this manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious. It can

never be tolerated in a synod for the reason that a synod's principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity and excluding all danger of error.

"Moreover, while this is sinful it cannot be excused in the way that one sees it being done, under the erroneous pretext that seemingly shocking affirmations in one place are developed along orthodox lines in others, while in yet other places they are corrected—as if allowing the possibility of either affirming or denying the statement, or of leaving it up to the personal inclination of the individual. Such has always been the fraudulent and daring method used by innovators to establish error. It comprehends both the promoting of error and excusing it.

" It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by our predecessor St. Celestine who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, [a device] he exposed to condemn it with the greatest possible severity..."

These words might have been written specifically of the popes who promoted, and bishops who attended, the Second Vatican Council.¹

Since Christ promised that He would never abandon His Church, we can be certain that the Council's errors—errors which have been endorsed by every pope since 1965—will in due course be condemned in like fashion. In the meantime the faithful who have suffered much from the Council's imposture will have much more to suffer.

Among the more grievous consequences of the Council was its invention of an entity which has come to exist in parallel with the Catholic Church to choke her salvific work, the 'Church of Vatican II'.² This 'Church', since it is but a secular entity, is bereft of God-given power. The bemusement that has afflicted the Catholic faithful since 1965 arises from the confusion of this ersatz 'Church' with the Church founded by Jesus Christ. The Pope, and every bishop, now exercises a man-made authority distinct from the authority given him by God. He may think, as he acts that he is doing so as pope, as bishop, when he is acting as superior of this un-Godly organisation.

It was inevitable that this entity would come to involve itself in the crucial issue of the choice of pope and this, it would seem, is what happened in March 2013 with the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Vatican II's dysfunction dominated the considerations of the cardinal electors who ignored their obligations as bishops of the Catholic Church. Archbishop Viganò has reminded us of the submission of various prelates of the Church to the imposition of freemasonry whose long established hatred of God is directed to taking control of His Church. There is much to be said for the Archbishop's argument that in Papa Bergoglio the masons achieved their end. He might have quoted Leo XIII in *Humanum Genus* (April 20th, 1884) n. 10:

"[N]o matter how great may be men's cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce

¹ A full copy is set forth in part II of the Appendix.

² For an elaboration of the distinction see the paper *Archbishop Viganò's Excommunication* at https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/archbishop-viganos-excommunication.pdf

good fruit.”[Matt. 7: 18] Now, the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savour...”

Who would deny that the fruits of the Bergoglian pontificate have been most bitter?

As the *Vatican Council* taught in 1870 the power of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff,—
“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 morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout 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.”
Dz. 1827

Once one understands the extent of the papal power in the life of the Church and the Catholic faithful, he realises the enormous ramifications in the papacy’s subversion. If one disagrees with Archbishop Viganò over his rejection of Bergoglio as Pope, he can understand how fidelity to Jesus Christ and the Church He established has driven him to such an extremity.

There is a prayer to Our Blessed Lady for conversion of unbelievers to Christ and His Church published by the predecessor of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* on December 30th, 1868 and re-endorsed on March 18th 1936 and on June 10th, 1949, which includes this line:

“Call them to the unity of the one fold, granting them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth...”

How, in the present situation, could a Catholic repeat this prayer without adding *in pectore* “God protecting them from the fraudulent present incumbent...”? The prayer illustrates the chaos in which the faithful find themselves as a result of that appalling synod. All the current Pope has done is bring to the surface the viciousness of its determinations and its protocols.

So where does this leave the victims of Vatican II and the importunity of the current Pope and his henchmen? Each of the following prelates has been degraded in office:

- Raymond Cardinal Burke, removed from the office of Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura (on November 8th, 2014).
- Gerhard Cardinal Müller, removed from his offices as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, President of the Pontifical Commission ‘Ecclesia Dei’, President of the International Theological Commission, and President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (all on July 1st, 2017).
- Bishop Joseph Strickland, removed from his diocese of Tyler in Texas (November 11th, 2023).

Such demotions are within the absolute power of the Pope and each of the bishops involved has accepted his demotion benignly. The treatment of Fr Janvier Gbénou, a priest of the religious organisation *Opus Dei* based on the Ivory Coast, is at another level of harm. Because he has “published texts and commentaries criticizing the Roman Pontiff” the principals of

Opus Dei have withdrawn his priestly faculties (March 4th, 2021) and his permission to celebrate Mass (February 1st, 2022). Fr Gbénou contends, with justice, that criticism of the Roman Pontiff is not a canonical infraction, has theological support as old as the Church, and that he has merely followed the advice of the Pope himself who stated publicly that anyone is free to criticise him.³ These reasons will avail him little. Adherence to logical principle is not a feature of the Vatican's current tenants as neither was it in the deliberations of the bishops at Vatican II. Many others, including Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Kazakhstan, have been as critical of the Pope as Fr Gbénou but have suffered no sanction.

In his *motu proprio, Traditionis Custodes* (July 16th, 2021), Pope Francis purported to impose restrictions on the celebration of Mass in the millennial rite "to promote the concord and unity of the Church". He claimed there that the liturgical books promulgated by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II "in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II are the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite". But "the concord and unity of the Church" to which he refers are not those of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church; they are those of 'the Church of Vatican II' an entity devoid of authority. The document contradicts the Catholic Church's teaching on the form of the Roman Rite canonised by Pope Pius V in the Bull *Quo Primum* (July 15th, 1570) following directions of the *Council of Trent*. This rite was accepted by every pope for the 400 years that followed, until Paul VI. Little wonder that its terms have been so comprehensively ignored throughout the Church.

Pope Francis has faced trenchant opposition from traditionalist groups and from various bishops over the celebration of Mass in its millennial form. The *Society of St Pius X*, which recognises neither the bans imposed (first impliedly, then explicitly) by Paul VI, nor the 'permissions' for its qualified celebration by Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, ignores the document. Its members insist, consistent with the directions of the *Trent* and the Bull *Quo Primum* that the mode of celebration of Mass is not a matter of discipline to be modified by this pope or that *ad libitum* but, as the essential act of the Church's worship, its form of celebration is *a matter of faith* binding all Catholics. They insist, moreover, that consistent with *Trent* and that Bull, any priest has the right to celebrate it *against any direction to the contrary*.⁴

Other societies, such as the *Fraternity of St Peter*, whose existence is also premised on celebration of Mass in its millennial form, have obtained (as their principals think) qualified 'permissions' to continue to celebrate it. Archbishop Viganò has highlighted the precarious position in which these societies are placed because of the concession demanded, as condition of such 'permissions', that they admit the spurious Council's validity.⁵

Since *Traditionis Custodes* Roman Dicasteries under the direction of the Pope have directed certain bishops to ban its celebration. This has occurred *inter alia* in St Patrick's Cathedral,

³ Some good has come from the evils involved in that Fr Gbénou has been excluded from the cultish *Opus Dei*. The organisation is beyond the pale, demonstrated *inter multa alia* by its demand of submission to Vatican II.

⁴ As *Quo Primum* states explicitly. The whole document set forth in part I of the Appendix.

⁵ A similar dilemma is faced by various orders of monks, canons and nuns, enclosed and non-enclosed.

Melbourne (Australia) and in St Henry's Cathedral, Helsinki (Finland), and at the shrine of Our Lady of Covadonga (Spain), each of which might be regarded as 'soft targets' for the apparatchiks in the Vatican. The severity of these 'bans' sounds with the treatment accorded Fr Gbénou where the Vatican can be seen to be exercising 'authority' in such a fashion as to limit adverse reactions.⁶

There was much rumour in July 2024 that a papal document was imminent which would 'ban' celebration of the millennial rite outright and it is known that certain members of the Curia and the episcopacy would support such an endeavour. If the plan has been shelved it is to prevent outright rebellion among the faithful. Its promoters are right to fear a reaction but they do so not out of a holy wisdom but motivated by the wisdom of the children of this world who fear loss of their authority.

A Solution?

So what, if any, is the solution for the Catholic faithful? In July 2017, some sixty two priests, religious and laymen – including one bishop, Bishop Bernard Fellay of the *Society of St Pius X* – endorsed a formal correction of Pope Francis, the *Correctio Filialis*, which condemned certain views the Pope had by then expressed and called on him to repent of his behaviour. The Pope ignored it.

On May 2nd, this year, 2024, the Feast of St Athanasius, a much smaller group (seventeen in number) with but one priest and lacking the support of Bishop Fellay, condemned the Pope for his teachings and behaviour and called on him to resign. They asserted, on reasonable grounds which they set forth *in extenso*, that he had committed criminal acts gravely damaging to the Church and to the faithful; that he had shown that he rejects the Catholic faith and that he had worked to destroy the faith of other Catholics. They urged the cardinals and bishops to ask him to resign and should he refuse, that they declare that he has lost the papal office. The only bishop who has been prepared to confront the Pope for his heterodoxy is Archbishop Viganò.

There are many others, such as Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Kazakhstan, who while pointing up the raft of theological errors in which Pope and Curia have engaged, counsel prayerful submission in the expectation that Almighty God will bring a solution in His good time—as indeed He will. Bishop Schneider counselled the Vatican against excommunicating Archbishop Viganò claiming that it would lead to further division, which it has.⁷

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes – Juvenal's satiric comment – might be levelled at the episcopacy of the Catholic Church generally. The Church's bishops are almost universally ineffectual, a consequence of the confusion in which they find themselves as a result of an inability to distinguish between the Catholic Church and 'the Church of Vatican II', and their failure to

⁶ Since *Opus Dei* is one of spurious Council's votaries, none of its members is going to come out in his support.

⁷ As it has. *LifeSiteNews* has a petition for Catholics who support the Archbishop with signatories numbering almost 20,000.

realise that the fidelity they owe to Christ and His Church is in radical conflict with the allegiance enjoined on them to the devil's mockery, 'the Church of Vatican II'.

One of the leading errors of Vatican II's bishops was their commitment to what Pius X in n. 27 of *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (September 8th, 1907) had labelled "that pernicious doctrine that would make of the laity the factor of progress in the Church".⁸ This error underpins *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council's 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World'.

It is ironical in the extreme that the chief source of opposition to Vatican II, to the popes who inspired it, and those who have promoted it, including Pope Francis, is the Catholic laity who enjoy a particular immunity from sanction. While Pope and Dicasteries have little hesitation in exercising of their perverted 'authority' over bishops, priests and religious for daring to disagree with their heterodox views, they are loathe to attempt the same with the lay faithful.

So, for love of Christ's Church we members of Christ's faithful must persist in our prayers and fastings. We laity, in particular, should persevere with our criticisms of the dysfunction coming out of the Vatican and, should Pope or Dicastery heads dare to attempt to ban the millennial form of the Mass, their 'bans' should be treated with the contempt they deserve. More than a century ago Catholic poet Francis Thompson provided profound insight into the reality that is the Catholic Church, the one *thing* in this world different from all other, when he gave it the unique title that appears in the following stanza of his last poem—

The Angels keep their ancient places ;—
Turn but a stone and start a wing !
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.⁹

Michael Baker

September 8th, 2024—*Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
& *Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

⁸ The document was inspired by the founder of *Opus Dei*, Mons. Jose Maria Escrivá, who was fixated on the laity throughout his priestly life.

⁹ *The Kingdom of God*, op. posth., 1907

Appendix

Part I

BULL OF POPE PIUS V

QUO PRIMUM

July 14th, 1570

PIUS, BISHOP OF ROME, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD;
IN PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THE ISSUE

From the very first, upon Our elevation to the chief Apostleship, We gladly turned our mind and energies and directed all our thoughts to those matters which concerned the preservation of a pure liturgy, and We strove with God's help, by every means in our power, to accomplish this purpose.

1. For, besides other decrees of the sacred Council of Trent, there were stipulations for Us to revise and re-edit the sacred books: the Catechism, the Missal and the Breviary. With the Catechism published for the instruction of the faithful, by God's help, and the Breviary thoroughly revised for the worthy praise of God, in order that the Missal and Breviary may be in perfect harmony, as fitting and proper (for it is most becoming that there be in the Church only one appropriate manner of reciting the Psalms and only one rite for the celebration of Mass) We deemed it necessary to give our immediate attention to what still remained to be done, namely, the re-editing of the Missal as soon as possible.

2. Hence, We decided to entrust this work to learned men of our selection. They very carefully collated all their work with the ancient codices in Our Vatican Library and with reliable, preserved or emended codices from elsewhere. Besides this, these men consulted the works of ancient and approved authors concerning the same sacred rites; and thus they have restored the Missal itself to the original form and rite of the holy Fathers.

3. When this work has been gone over numerous times and further emended, after serious study and reflection, We commanded that the finished product be printed and published as soon as possible, so that all might enjoy the fruits of this labour; and thus, priests would know which prayers to use and which rites and ceremonies they were required to observe from now on in the celebration of Masses.

4. Let everyone everywhere adopt and observe what has been handed down by the Holy Roman Church, the Mother and Teacher of the other churches, and let Masses not be sung or read according to any other formula than that of this Missal published by Us. This ordinance applies henceforth, now, and forever, throughout all the provinces of the Christian world, to all patriarchs, cathedral churches, collegiate and parish churches, be they secular or religious, both of men and of women, even of military orders, and of churches or chapels without a specific congregation in which conventual Masses are sung aloud in choir or read privately in accord with the rites and customs of the Roman Church. This Missal is to be used by all churches, even by those which in their authorisation are made exempt, whether by Apostolic indult, custom, or privilege, or even if by oath or official confirmation of the Holy See, or have their rights and faculties guaranteed to them by any other manner whatsoever. This new rite alone is to be used unless approval of the practice of saying Mass differently was given at the very time of the institution and confirmation

of the church by Apostolic See at least 200 years ago, or unless there has prevailed a custom of a similar kind which has been continuously followed for a period of not less than 200 years, in which most cases We in no wise rescind their above-mentioned prerogative or custom. However, if this Missal, which we have seen fit to publish, be more agreeable to these latter, We grant them permission to celebrate Mass according to its rite, provided they have the consent of their bishop or prelate or of their whole Chapter, everything else to the contrary notwithstanding.

5. All other of the churches referred to above, however, are hereby denied the use of other missals, which are to be discontinued entirely and absolutely; whereas, by this present Constitution, which will be valid henceforth, now, and forever, We order and enjoin that nothing must be added to Our recently published Missal, nothing omitted from it, nor anything whatsoever be changed within it under the penalty of Our displeasure.

6. We specifically command each and every patriarch, administrator, and all other persons or whatever ecclesiastical dignity they may be, be they even cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, or possessed of any other rank or pre-eminence, and We order them in virtue of holy obedience to chant or to read the Mass according to the rite and manner and norm herewith laid down by Us and, hereafter, to discontinue and completely discard all other rubrics and rites of other missals, however ancient, which they have customarily followed; and let them not in celebrating Mass presume to introduce ceremonies or recite any prayers other than those contained in this Missal.

7. Furthermore, by these presents, in virtue of Our Apostolic authority, We grant and concede in perpetuity that, for the chanting or reading of the Mass in any church whatsoever, this Missal is hereafter to be followed absolutely, without any scruple of conscience or fear of incurring any penalty, judgment, or censure, and may freely and lawfully be used.

8. Nor are superiors, administrators, canons, chaplains, and other secular priests, or religious, of whatever title designated, to be obliged to celebrate the Mass otherwise than as enjoined by Us: We likewise declare and ordain that no one, whosoever he be, is to be forced or coerced to alter this Missal, and that this present document cannot be revoked or modified, but remains always valid and retain its full force notwithstanding previous constitutions and decrees of the Holy See, as well as any general or special constitutions or edicts of provincial or synodal councils, and notwithstanding the practice and custom of the aforesaid churches, established by long and immemorial prescription – except, however, if of more than two hundred years' standing.

9. It is Our will, therefore, and by the same authority, We decree that, after We publish this constitution and the edition of the Missal, the priests of the Roman Curia are, after thirty days, obliged to chant or read the Mass according to its terms; all others south of the Alps, after three months; and those beyond the Alps either within six months or whenever the Missal is available for sale.

10. Wherefore, in order that the Missal be preserved incorrupt throughout the whole world and kept free of flaws and errors, the penalty for non-observance for printers, whether mediately or immediately subject to Our dominion, and that of the Holy Roman Church, will be the forfeiting of their books and a fine of one hundred gold ducats, payable ipso facto to the Apostolic Treasury. Further, as for those located in other parts of the world, the penalty is excommunication *latae sententiae*, and such other penalties as may in Our judgment be imposed; and We decree by this law that they must not dare or presume to print, to publish, to sell or in any way to accept, books of this nature without Our approval and consent, or without the express consent of the Apostolic Commissaries of those places, to be appointed by Us. The said printer must receive a standard Missal and agree faithfully with it and in no wise vary from the Roman Missal in its large type.

11. Accordingly, since it would be difficult for this present pronouncement to be sent to all parts of the Christian world and simultaneously come to light everywhere, We direct that it be, as usual, posted and published at the doors of the Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, also at the Apostolic Chancery, and on the street at Campo Flora; furthermore, We direct that printed copies of this same edict signed by a notary public and made official by an ecclesiastical dignitary possess the same indubitable validity everywhere and in every nation, as if Our manuscript were shown there.

12. Therefore no one, whosoever he be, is permitted to alter this notice of Our permission, statute, ordinance, command, precept, grant, indult, declaration, will, decree, and prohibition; nor is he allowed temerarily to act against it.

Accordingly, should anyone presume to commit such an act, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at St. Peter's in the year of the Lord's Incarnation, 1570, on the day preceding the Ides of July (July 14th), in the Fifth year of Our Pontificate.

Part II

BULL OF POPE PIUS VI

AUCTOREM FIDEI

August 28th, 1794

Introduction

PIUS, BISHOP, Servant of the Servants of God. Greetings and [my] apostolic blessing to all the Christian faithful. The Apostle Paul [1] commands us, who look on Jesus as the author and finisher of the faith, to consider diligently the nature and magnitude of the opposition against Him, which He endured from sinners, so that from time to time we, wearied by labours and dangers, do not lose heart and fall almost lifeless. It is of utmost necessity that We strengthen and refresh ourselves with this most wholesome thought when the raging heat of the dreadful and never-ending conspiracy against the very body of Christ which is the Church [2] takes fire, so that, strengthened in the Lord and in the might of His power, and protected by the shield of faith, we may be able to resist in the evil day and quench the fiery darts of the most wicked one. [3] Truly in these tumultuous times, in this revolutionary upheaval, all good men must join the burdensome struggle against any and all enemies of the Christian name. The guardianship and guidance of the entire flock entrusted to our pastoral care are a more serious matter for Us, upon whom greater zeal for the Christian religion is enjoined, than upon all others. [4] But despite the heavy responsibility set upon our shoulders to bear the burden of all who are heavily laden, the more aware We are of our own frailty, the more We harbour a more robust hope. The divinely established ruling principle in the person of Blessed Peter lightens the apostolic duty so that he, who never intended to abandon government of the Church once it has been given by Christ, might not cease to carry on his shoulders the burdens of the apostolic governance of those whom God had given to him as heirs to protect and safeguard with a perpetual succession.

And indeed in these hardships that surround us on every side a heap of other troubles have mounded up, as it were, so that what should have been for us a source of joy is the source of a greater sadness. For in fact, when a leader of God's holy Church under the name of Priest turns the very people of Christ away from the path of truth toward the peril of an erroneous belief, and when this occurs in a major city, then clearly the distress is multiplied, and a greater anxiety is in order. [5]

To be sure this has not occurred in far-off lands but in the full blaze of Italy, under the eyes of the City [viz. Rome], and near the threshold of the Apostles [viz. the tombs of Ss. Peter and Paul]. There was a bishop, distinguished by the honour of two Sees (Scipione de' Ricci, formerly the bishop of Pistoia and Prato), whom we embraced with paternal love as he approached Us to take up his pastoral duty. In the very text of the rite of his sacred ordination he, in turn, bound himself by means of a scrupulous, solemn, oath to the fidelity and obedience due to Us and to this Apostolic See. And yet this same man in the short space of time after he had left our embrace with the kiss of peace, on going to the people entrusted to him, surrounded himself with the deceits of a pack of teachers of a perverse school of thought.

He began to apply himself but not in the measure he should have, that is to say, by defending, nurturing, and perfecting the praiseworthy and peaceful form of Christian teaching that his bishop predecessors had introduced long ago and had almost secured. Instead, he set about confusing, destroying, and utterly overturning that teaching by introducing troublesome novelties under the guise of a sham reform. Further, when at our urging he had decided upon a diocesan synod, it happened that by inflexible pertinacity in his own way of thinking a more severe occasion of ruin grew out of the source from which we should have looked for some kind of remedy for the wounds [he had precipitated].

Truly, after the Synod of Pistoia emerged from the hiding places in which it had lurked concealed for some time, there was no one with pious scruples and good sense who did not at once warn that the plan of the authors had been to unite into one whole, like a body, the seeds of the vicious teachings they had scattered through numerous pamphlets; to revive errors not long since condemned; and to detract from the faith and authority of those apostolic decrees by which they stood condemned.

When we perceived that the more serious were the problems, the more considerably they demanded the support of our pastoral care, we did not delay to take those counsels that seemed appropriate, both in healing and suppressing the emergent evil. Being first mindful of the sage advice of our predecessor St. Zosimus, *Those things that are of great importance call for a weighty examination* [6], We directed four bishops and their personal theologians from the secular clergy to examine the Synod that this bishop had produced. Next we assigned a committee of several cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church and other bishops to study diligently the complete collection of [the Synod's] acts, to compare with each other the widely scattered passages and to discuss the opinions formally identified. We personally received their decisions, both orally and in writing.

They decided that the Synod must be universally condemned and that very many of its propositions must be reprov'd with more or less serious censures, some indeed in and of themselves, and others in connection with the formally expressed opinions. After hearing and

considering their observations, We also took care that certain leading statements of wrongful teachings taken from it—ones to which the condemnable opinions spread by the Synod directly or indirectly referred—were reduced to a certain order for the future, and that each one of these should be subject to its own special censure.

However, in case obstinate men should seize an opportunity for detraction, notwithstanding either the very carefully conducted comparison of passages or the investigation of the formal opinions, to meet this probable calumny We determined to make use of the wise counsel, duly and cautiously applied, which several of our most holy predecessors, as well as highly esteemed bishops, and even general councils, had provided, larded with notable examples when they had had cause to restrain the rise of dangerous or harmful novelties of this sort. They knew the capacity of innovators in the art of deception.

In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, the innovators sought to hide their tortuous manoeuvres by seemingly innocuous words [7] such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the subtlest manner. Once the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by gradual errors to their eternal damnation. Regardless of the circumstances under which it is used this manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious. It can never be tolerated in a synod for the reason that a synod's principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity and excluding all danger of error.

Moreover, while this is sinful it cannot be excused in the way that one sees it being done, under the erroneous pretext that seemingly shocking affirmations in one place are developed along orthodox lines in others, while in yet other places they are corrected—as if allowing the possibility of either affirming or denying the statement, or of leaving it up to the personal inclination of the individual. Such has always been the fraudulent and daring method used by innovators to establish error. It comprehends both the promoting of error and excusing it.

It is as if the innovators had pretended they always intended to present the alternative passages, especially to those of simple faith who come to know only some part of the conclusions of such discussions, published in the common language for everyone's use. Or again, as if the same faithful had the ability, without getting confused and avoiding all risk of error, to examine such documents and judge such matters for themselves.

It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by our predecessor St. Celestine [8] who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, [a device] he exposed to condemn it with the greatest possible severity. Once these texts were examined carefully, the impostor was exposed and confounded, for he expressed himself in a plethora of words, mixing things which were true with others which were obscure; in such a way, at times, that he was able to confess those things which were denied while at the same time possessing a basis for denying the very sentences he confessed. In order to expose such snares, a thing which is frequently necessary in every century, no other method is required than the following: whenever it becomes necessary to expose statements that disguise some suspected error or danger under the veil of ambiguity, one must denounce the perverse meaning under which the error opposed to Catholic truth is camouflaged.

The more freely We embraced a program of complete moderation, the more we foresaw that, in order to reconcile souls and bring them to the unity of spirit in the bond of peace (which, we are glad to say, has by God's favour already happily occurred in many), it would be of enormous assistance to be prepared in case pertinacious sectarians of the synod—if any, God forbid, still remain,—should be free in the future to bring in as allies the Catholic schools and make them partners of their own just condemnation and set in motion new disturbances. They endeavour to entice to their side the clearly unwilling and resistant schools by a kind of distorted likeness of similar terms, even though the schools profess expressly different opinions. Then, if any previously imagined, milder opinion about the synod has hitherto escaped the notice of these imprudent men, let every opportunity of complaining still be closed to them. If they are sound in doctrine, as they wish to appear, they cannot take it hard that the teachings identified in this manner—teachings that exhibit errors from which they claim to be entirely distant—stand condemned.

Yet We did not think that We had sincerely proved our mildness, or more correctly, the charity that impels us toward our brother whom we wish to assist by every means, if We may still be able. [9] Indeed, We are impelled by the charity that moved our predecessor Celestine. [10] He did not refuse to wait with a patience greater than seemed necessary, even against what the law demanded, for priests to mend their ways. For we, along with Augustine and the Fathers of Milevis, prefer and desire that men who teach perverse things be healed in the Church by pastoral care rather than that they be cut off from Her without hope of salvation, if necessity does not force one to act. [11]

Therefore, so it should not appear that any effort to win over a brother was overlooked, before We progressed further. We thought to summon the aforementioned bishop to Us by means of very cordial letters written to him at our request, promising that we would receive him with good will and that he would not be barred from freely and openly declaring what seemed to him to meet the needs of his interests. In truth, We had not lost hope of the possibility that, if he possessed that teachable mind which Augustine, [12] following the Apostle, required above all else in a bishop, [We would find him amenable to Our direction]. As soon as the chief points of doctrine under dispute, which seemed worthy of greater consideration, were proposed to him simply and candidly, without contention and rancour, [We hoped] he could explain more reasonably what had been proposed ambiguously, and would openly repudiate the manifestly perverse notions displayed. And thus, with his name held in high regard amid the acclaim of all good men, the turmoil aroused in the Church would be restrained as peaceably as possible by a much-desired correction. [13]

But now since he, alleging ill health, has decided not to avail himself of the kindness offered, We can no longer postpone fulfilling our apostolic duty.

It is not a matter of the danger to one or other of the dioceses: any novelty at all assails the Universal Church. [14] For a long time, from every side, the judgment of the supreme Apostolic See has not only been awaited but earnestly demanded by unremitting, repeated, petitions. God forbid that the voice of Peter ever be silent in that See, where, living and presiding perpetually, he presents the truth of the faith to those in search of it. [15] A more lengthy forbearance in such matters is not safe because it is almost as much a crime to close one's eyes in such cases, as it is to preach their offences to religion. [16]

Therefore, such a wound must be healed, a wound which harms not just one member, but the entire body of the Church. [17] With the aid of divine piety We must take care that, with the dissensions removed, the Catholic faith is preserved inviolate and that, once those who defend perverse teachings have been recalled from error, those whose faith has been proved may be fortified by our authority. [18]

After beseeching the light of the Holy Ghost both with our own incessant public and private prayers and also with those of the pious Christian faithful, and after considering everything fully and seasonably, We have resolved to condemn and reprove the several propositions, doctrines, and opinions of the acts and decrees of the aforementioned Synod, either those expressly taught or those conveyed through ambiguity, with their own appropriate notes and censures for each of them (as was said above), just as We condemn and reprove them in this our Constitution, which will be valid in perpetuity.

They are as follows...

[There follow the terms of the condemnations which may be read in the 30th edition of *Denzinger* at the locations cited in the text.]

Footnotes

Note: the references to Coustant are to the works of the French Benedictine, Pierre Coustant (1654 – 1721).

1. Hebrews 12
2. Colossians 1
3. Ephesians 6]
4. Pope St. Siricius, To Himerius of Tarragona, Epistle 1 in Coustant.
5. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 12, in Coustant.
6. Pope St. Zosimus, Epistle 2 in Coustant.
7. Pope St. Leo the Great, Epistle 129, in the edition of Baller.
8. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 13, no. 2 in Coustant.
9. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 14, To the Clergy and People of Constantinople, no. 8, in Coustant.
10. Epistle 13, To Nestorius, no. 9.
11. Epistle 176, no. 4; 178, no. 2 in the Maurist edition.
12. Book 4, On Baptism Against the Donatists, ch. 5, and Book 5, ch. 26.
13. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 16, no. 2 in Coustant.
14. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 21, To the Bishops of France.
15. St. Peter Chrysologus, Epistle to Eutyches.
16. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 12, no. 2.
17. Pope St. Celestine I, Epistle 11, To Cyril, no. 3.
18. Pope St. Leo the Great, Epistle 23, To Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople.