

WHY SHOULD WE STAY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Recently, Dr Peter Kwasniewski penned a response to a correspondent who sought an answer to this question:

Why... should we remain in communion with the Catholic Church—you know, the one that most people (reasonably?) think is headed by Pope Francis and the bishops in communion with him? If Vatican II was faulty and the popes from John XXIII on have all been Modernists in varying degrees, as you and others convincingly argue; if full-blooded true Catholicism is found elsewhere than in unity with what was, by all accounts, an ecumenical council and the putative popes who have uncritically endorsed it; then why would any right-thinking believer remain in communion with *that* entity?¹

The query raises nicely three issues—

1. Who is head of the Catholic Church?
2. What is the nature of the reality of that institution?
3. Was Vatican II a valid ecumenical council?

Back in 1993 or so, Fr John Parsons, the Australian priest who translated into English for us Romano Amerio's *Iota Unum*, dealt with the issues in an article in the Australian Catholic journal, *AD 2000*. He pointed out that while the Pope is, from time to time, infallible, he is not indefectible; he can make mistakes. The Church, in contrast, is both infallible and indefectible. Why the difference? The reason is that while the Pope is human, the Church is divine, a divine thing in the midst of the mundane.

The Catholic Church is, as Belloc wrote more than 100 years ago, the one thing in this world which is different from all others.² Though it is comprised of men (and to assist those bewildered by the terminology of the modern world, this *generic* expression comprehends members of both *genders*), it is not a human thing. The Catholic Church is not of man but of God Who founded it, Jesus Christ, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity become man. It is He Who is the Head of this Church. He is, moreover, its *Living* Head. Since His Resurrection—as St Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans—*mors illi ultra non dominabitur*, death no more has dominion over Him (Ch. 6 v. 9). Pope Francis is not the head of the Catholic Church. He is but Christ's Vicar; one is tempted to say *merely* His Vicar.

Strictly then, it matters not that Pope Francis is a thorough-going Modernist who fulfils perfectly the indicia of the heresy identified by Pope Pius X in the encyclical *Pascendi* (September 8, 1907). It matters not that he behaves like an apologist for Freemasonry; that he refuses to provide guidance to those who seek it; that by his attitude and silence when he should speak he diminishes Catholic principle at every turn. "Pride," said Pius X, "sits in Modernism as in its own house—

finding sustenance everywhere in its doctrines and an occasion to flaunt itself in all its aspects.

It is pride which fills Modernists with that confidence in themselves and leads them to hold themselves up as the rule for all, pride which puffs them up with that vainglory which allows them to regard themselves as the sole possessors of knowledge, and makes them say, inflated with presumption, *We are not as the rest of men*, and which... leads them to embrace all kinds of the most absurd novelties; it is pride which rouses in them the spirit of disobedience and causes

¹ Cf. <https://onepeterfive.com/why-remain-catholic-in-spite-of-everything/>

² https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/belloc_inge.pdf

them to demand a compromise between authority and liberty; it is pride that makes of them the reformers of others, while they forget to reform themselves, and which begets their absolute want of respect for authority, not excepting the supreme authority.”

The superiority engendered by this vice is the singular characteristic of Francis’s conduct and behaviour in the Chair of St Peter. There has never been a pope to match him in lack of concern for those he was appointed to serve, and willingness to pervert the office to private ends.

Consistent with its unique reality among earthly things, the Catholic Church is something living. And as living things have a soul and an end towards which they tend, so does the Church. Its end is union of those who accept the teachings of Jesus Christ and His promises of salvation with God the Father, their Creator, here on earth and forever in heaven. Its soul is the Holy Spirit, Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are, thus, intimately involved in this *thing*, the Catholic Church, which God created for the salvation of men.

This brings us to the third issue raised by the enquirer, the validity of Vatican II.

The Pope who convoked that Council, John XXIII, was in no doubt that he did so under the aegis of the Holy Spirit, whose Authority he invoked at every step. Did such an invocation determine the issue of whether it was, in truth, an ecumenical or general council of the Church? Does *assertion that a council is an ecumenical council* make it an ecumenical council? Does invocation of the Holy Spirit make it so? Or is something more required?

The chief argument against the validity of Vatican II is the argument from causes, an argument *a priori*. This focusses on the question: *What is required for a council to be an ecumenical council?* It seems that no current commentator has considered it. The *essence* of a thing—*what the thing is*—follows on the end that it exists to serve. *Formality follows finality*. An ecumenical council must serve the good of the Church, must enhance the Church’s health and life, by settling some disputed question, by refining some element of doctrine, by resolving some heretical inclination, by instituting some course which will conduce to the good of its members. Did Vatican II do any of these things? We will not repeat the arguments which have been set forth on this website over the last ten years to show that the Council was not convoked for any such reason, nor addressed any such reason in its three year course. The reader can explore those arguments himself.

The lesser argument against Vatican II’s validity is the argument from its effects, the argument *a posteriori*. Though secondary and derivative, this argument is understandably the basis on which most of the criticism of the council has been mounted. As Pope Leo XIII said of the works of Freemasons,

“[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 good fruit.*” [Matt. 7: 18]³

Had Vatican II been a valid (and legitimate) ecumenical council, it is impossible that there could have occurred effects as evil as those it has produced among the Catholic faithful and among the world’s peoples generally.

³ *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), n. 31

Consider just one of these evils, the Council bishops' naïve endorsement of the Masonic protocol of 'religious freedom' which operated to diminish to the point of obscurity the Church's millennial claim to be the only religion on earth by which men can be saved. That act of folly opened the gates to the flowering of the evil of atheism in the world, the rejection of God and His authority. The descent into atheism (which is true 'religious freedom', the freedom to believe in no-God!) has reached the point where its protocols threaten the very endurance of human society throughout the world—wholesale abortion and euthanasia, rampant homosexuality, drug indulgence and abuse, rejection of the natural order and of any acknowledgement of man's dependence on an all-seeing and all provident God.

One of the evils let loose by that appalling Council is the adoption of language since 1965 even among the orthodox which would reject the indefectibility of the Church and attribute to her, the Spotless Bride of Christ, the systematic failures of her popes, bishops and clergy.⁴

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⁴ For instance, historian Henry Sire does it repeatedly in his monumental *Phoenix from the Ashes*. So does Archbishop Vigano in his otherwise memorable paper 'Scapegoating Francis...' reproduced on this website https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/abp-vigano-revolution-of-vatican2.pdf