The Authority of the Traditional Clergy

By Griff Ruby

This document consists of the preface and introduction of a 20-piece case for the apostolic authority of traditional Catholic clerics as priests and bishops sent by Holy Mother Church. It was prepared because I had been challenged on this basic and essential point of our Faith. Herein follows my response:

Preface: I now begin my response to those who take issue with my research findings about the Church and authority. I have decided to put this out in multiple segments so that I don't end up with one super long single post. This first post is merely an introduction to explain what I intend to do and how I intend to do it, as there is an awful lot of ground to cover.

But first, to illustrate: Suppose we are detectives who are tracking down a murderer. We know there is a murderer because there has been a murder. There are only two identified persons close enough to the victim to be considered specifically as suspects, whom we shall call Suspect A and Suspect B. But we can't rule out the possibility that it might have been done by someone else, "person or persons unknown," anonymously, perhaps as something that was intended to be a mere burglary but instead accidently turned into a murder, for example.

Suspect A has the means and the motive, and also the cleverness to carry out a murder. However, it quickly comes out that Suspect A has an alibi, causing most of the detectives to move on to either Suspect B (who basically just couldn't have done it) or the idea that it was some anonymous someone else. Suspect A was with friends and other people in a different part of town at the time of the murder.

But one detective, "Columbo"-like, chooses not to buy that alibi, even though he cannot explain – at first anyway – how it could have been faked. So he begins rounding up clues about the murder. And do these clues point in any specific direction? Oh yes, absolutely! In spades! All of them point to Suspect A. Granted, some of them are circumstantial, but others are quite substantial and persuasive, even if just short of being, of themselves as individual clues, absolute proof positive. And perhaps some one or more of them truly are "yea verily" "proof positive" "smoking gun" evidences – let a jury decide. But even if none of the individual clues quite pass that threshold, the bare fact of such there being such a preponderance of them, and all of them so startlingly aligned, does. Taken together, the clues all tell a single, clear, and cohesive story that hangs together with full consistency. If only it weren't for that alibi, our detective would have enough evidence regarding Suspect A to go to trial against him.

So now he turns his attention to the alibi itself. Suspect A was seen at the exact time in another part of town, not only by his friends, but also by enough other persons that it is unrealistic for all of them to have been bought. But Suspect A is known for his cleverness and could have tricked them, somehow. So he investigates further, and begins finding some anomalies in the eyewitnesses' testimony. No one could account for Suspect A for some time period shortly before the time of the murder, even though they all saw him conspicuously proposing a toast at the exact moment. One person noted that a scarf being worn by Suspect A at his arrival earlier was missing at the time of the toast and the murder. A

couple people, having looked at the clock in the room and thinking that their watches had stopped, had reset their own watches. And so it goes, bit by bit, as the alibi disintegrates under close scrutiny.

End of illustration. Of course, it is not a wicked murderer but a righteous Church we are seeking, which "must" exist as a visible and authorized hierarchy. Suspect A is of course none other than our familiar traditional clergy who, in practice anyway, have — with little or no known help — kept the Church going, in terms of valid and lawful sacraments and living congregations fully practicing and keeping the Faith. Suspect B is the Vatican apparatus, patently unqualified, but at least identifiable. Suspect A's alibi is the lack of having been personally appointed by any Pope (or designated Patriarch capable of same). The clues are a review of many of the ecclesiological doctrines, as they necessarily must always apply, even at such strange times as ours.

I ask your patience as I first grind through a rich selection of all these other clues which point quite clearly to the traditional Catholic community as being, itself alone but taken all together, the real Catholic Church in our own time. I will review here the doctrines of indefectibility, infallibility, visibility, the general nature of the seven attributes of the Church – four of which are also Marks, unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, the miraculous survival of the Church throughout all times, and perhaps a few more, before directly addressing the direct question of the role and authority of today's traditional clergy.

What I have to present here is not merely some ideas and principles, but a fully developed and fleshed out ecclesiology, which alone in this time of numerous weak and fragmented ecclesiologies as I have encountered in this time of crisis as attempts at an explanation for it, can fully reconcile with all the known ecclesiological doctrines and with the historical facts as we know them.

The points presented herein are gleaned from a much longer dissertation that I am working on (in two parts) which simply drills further into the same doctrines, and also into some other less well-known doctrines as well, but that is a work being prepared for publication which will probably not be seen by the general public for some time yet. The main points are important enough that they need to be seen now.

Introduction/General Principles: There are quite a number of doctrines which have bearing upon the circumstance of the Church today, and at all times. Some persons focus on the doctrine (for example) of the visibility of the Church, and one has to admit the Novus Ordo apparatus has done a far better job of recognizing its own visibility than we traditional Catholics have, which then drives these persons to that organization and its errors. Others focus more on the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope and, observing the blatant and unmistakable fallibility of the recent and current Vatican leadership, come to accept the Sede Vacante finding. But those are just two doctrinal categories. What I came up with had to reconcile with all of the applicable doctrines, and with the current historical events, and it does.

What I claim for the Church is merely "old principles," based solidly upon what is found in standard theological texts of the theologians, which I will be citing at length and ex professo in the posts to follow. I will be giving these quotes in some length so as to avoid any misquotes or accusations of the same. All sorts of crazy things can be "proven" with short quotes, taken out of context, and have been at times. But with the context provided (as I do) the meaning is clear and unmistakable. I urge anyone reading this series of posts to avoid the temptation of "bleeping" over the quotes so as to focus merely on what I have to say about them. Their content is essential to what I have to say, its very basis in fact.

Before getting to the sources (to commence next post), there is one other matter to address. I have been accused of inventing or applying "new principles," an accusation I adamantly deny. However, there are a small number of things which cannot be found in the theological sources which have to be brought into the mix, which I am going to itemize here up front in full. If someone wants to call any of these things "new principles," then so be it, but I also point out that these "principles" (or whatever one calls them) are already generally known and accepted by traditional Catholics, and by that I don't mean merely "the general run of the pious and humble Faithful" but also the bloggers here and on other forums. Let us step through them so you can see what I am talking about:

- 1) The extreme and extraordinary fall of the Vatican apparatus, most evident and dire during and since Vatican II, into irreverent liturgies, heresies, and so forth. This is probably the primary driving reason we are traditionalists instead of merely "going with the flow" like all too many others who are not traditionalists. Of course, none of Bellarmine, Cajetan, Suárez, Dom Guéranger, Van Noort, Ott, Berry, Pohle, and so many others (excepting Journet who is a special case, since he, sadly, went along with the madness, apparently unable to recognize what was really going on around him or the true nature of his own part in it) ever saw such a thing happen. But of course it is a historical fact now and must be taken into account.
- 2) The rise of a group, movement, or community of traditional Catholics striving to preserve all the traditions and doctrines and dogmas of the Church, concurrent with the fall of the Vatican apparatus. Whatever one chooses to make of the rise of this group, movement, or community, one cannot doubt the historical fact of its emergence and clear connection with the previously unfallen Vatican apparatus. Once again, the bare fact that there would come to be Catholics, with no trace of disobedience, schism, heresy, or other nefarious agendas, but merely truly faithful and humble and pious sheep of the Church, yet forced to operate seemingly in the prolonged absence (or opposition?) of a Pope (?) is something

which has never been seen before in any period of history, and thus obviously not commented upon, one way or the other, by any of the theological writers.

- 3) The concept (in the philosophy of logic and deduction) of the "contrapositive." If the truthfulness of Statement A implies the truthfulness of Statement B (we write $A \rightarrow B$, the arrow meaning "implies"), then it is equally true that the falsity of Statement B implies the falsity of Statement A (we write 'B→'A, the preceding apostrophes meaning "not B" and "not A"). This is the fundamental logical deduction used by everyone who has accepted the Sede Vacante finding. Let Statement A be "So-and-so is a Roman Catholic Pope." That would imply that (B) "So-and-so is infallible in accordance with the conditions known and set by the Church." (I use the phrase "infallible in accordance with the conditions known and set by the Church" to summarize a great deal of information as to what infallibility means a Pope can and cannot do, and all that goes with it, e. g. a Pope cannot err when defining a doctrine for the Church, though he can err in the private capacity as one not speaking in the role of the Pope to the Church, but it also implies that he cannot impose invalid or sacrilegious "liturgies," etc. and many other things too lengthy to put in a neat clean statement.) As we know, from at least as far back as some point in Vatican II onward, the statement that "Montini (or Luciani, Wojtyla, Ratzinger, Bergoglio, etc.) is infallible in accordance with the conditions known and set by the Church" has been patently false. Ergo we can deduce that the statement that "Montini (or Luciani, Wojtyla, Ratzinger, Bergoglio, etc.) is a Roman Catholic Pope" is therefore also false.
- 4) At one rather minor and brief point some considerable distance into the study, I do mention a concept which seems to me rather axiomatic, though I cannot "prove" it or cite a source for it anywhere. It goes like this: "a wolf may wear the clothing of a sheep, but a sheep does not wear the clothing of a wolf." Anyone got a problem with that?
- 5) In one rather technical area, I have had to extrapolate from the known principles to a circumstance which the theologians could have addressed at some point (but I have not seen, one way or another), namely the scenario of the Church reduced to a tiny remnant, still scattered all over the world, but now way too few to constitute thriving dioceses. Picture some region, formerly with hundreds of bishops and dioceses, and many faithful nearly all killed off (or forced to defect, etc.), such that only one or two bishops remain, and far too few faithful throughout the region as to populate more than a single diocese or two (and also the Pope, in persecution, captured and being held incommunicado). What responsibility would the remaining bishops have towards the scattered faithful of the region of the many dioceses, now at least effectively vacated? Would only the few faithful of the bishops' own diocese(s) have a bishop or could he-or-they be the bishop(s) for all of the souls in the region, and if the latter then on what canonical basis? All I have is that the theologians admit the real possibility that, at least at the time just before the very end of the world, the Church really could be reduced to such a tiny remnant, and also that due to the Mark of Catholicity that tiny remnant would not be concentrated within any one small region but therefore scattered however thinly throughout the earth, even at the end of time. But I have nothing on how the ways prelates must act in such circumstances would be interpreted, canonically.

That's it. Everything else to follow is based directly on the teachings of the theologians to be quoted.

Part 1: One important thing is that we Catholics must disabuse ourselves of the notion that the Vatican apparatus in any way answers the description of the Catholic Church, as defined in the handbooks, apart from a residual worldwide presence resulting from their "appropriation" of at least some 99% of all the Church's former assets. Especially where it comes to the Marks and attributes of the Church, all of them are simply not found in the Vatican apparatus, apart from this residual "Catholicity-of-fact" shared by them and us in that both they and we exist in all parts of the world. After one more clarification, this post will be devoted to one such attribute, namely the Indefectibility of the Church.

Now then, who exactly are "we"? This gets to the other important thing, namely the traditional Catholic community. It is important to define precisely what is meant by "the traditional Catholic community." Who exactly does that consist of? For my dissertation, I have adopted this formula used by the CMRI: The communities of "those clergy and laity who adhere to the traditional Mass, liturgy, law, and teachings of the Catholic Church as they existed before the Modernist changes of Vatican Council II." This definition therefore encompasses not only those of the sedevacantist societies (CMRI, SSPV, Trento Priests, others), but also of the SSPX and other "Resistance" societies, and even — even those operating under the terms of the various indults of 1971, 1984, 1988, and finally the Motu Proprio of 2007.

This also includes the Eastern Rites (and other "Alternate Rites" which include a few non-Latin Western Rites, such as the Ambrosian or the Dominican), but with the understanding that at least some of them have been corrupted since Vatican II, the corruption of the Maronite Rite already having been admitted by a Te Deum moderator, and a couple (admittedly unconfirmed) reports of similar corruptions made to other Rites, one from johnthebaptist and the other overheard by me personally at a Byzantine Mass about 17 years ago. I also note that Abp. Lefebvre (and/or his episcopal successors) ordained some priests for whatever Rite was being used by the Transalpine Redemptorists, as that Rite had also been corrupted, and needed true priests who would say it right. Furthermore, some Eastern Rites have been compromised by the Balamand agreement (and perhaps there are other similar things affecting other Rites). Not being certain what has been changed in the Alternate Rites, and where those changes were made, to what degree they impacted the validity or doctrinal content or reverence thereof, I must take refuge here in the more general statement that "the Alternate Rites, insofar as any of them have not been corrupted by Vatican II and post-Vatican II changes, are also to be counted as part of the traditional community." Even in some Rite which has been corrupted to the point of destruction, any individual cleric and/or congregation of that Rite who resists and opposes the changes (and does not comply with them) is also part of the traditional Catholic community.

I note the overlap between part of the traditional community and part of the Vatican apparatus. Though separate from each other, their difference has not, as of yet, required a total exclusion of one from the other. For now, we need only note this as one other rather curious historical observation.

Indefectibility of the Church: Msgr. G. Van Noort notes actually two separate aspects of this attribute, the first being well-known to many Catholics that the Church cannot be corrupted or turned into something destructive to the spread of the Gospel and sanctity of souls. As we traditionalists have one and all (even if only to varying degrees) observed the outright defection of the Vatican apparatus, we either reject it outright, resist its erroneous and evil directions, or seek some excuse from its ravages by

which some of us can be (only most grudgingly) tolerated by them despite our open Catholicism. But no matter what means we take so as to avoid its erroneous and evil directions, we recognize the need to do this, and with that fact we observe its outright defection. The Church cannot defect, but the Vatican apparatus has.

The other aspect of this attribute, much less well-known, is that neither can the Church disappear. Despite the defection of the Vatican apparatus, "the Church" continues on, indefectible, real, and visible. Now to the first quote (Msgr. G. Van Noort, Dogmatic Theology, Volume 2, Page 25):

PROPOSITION: In founding His Church, Christ made it indestructible.

This proposition is *certain*.

The present question has to do with the perpetuity of that Church which alone was founded by Christ, the visible Church. Any society can fail in either of two ways: it can simply cease to be, or it can become unfit for the carrying out of its avowed aim through a substantial corruption. The Church cannot fail in either way. Since its aim, namely, the supernatural sanctification of mankind, cannot be achieved except through the proper administration and practice of the religion of Christ, the Church would corrupt and fall apart if it either abandoned or adulterated Christ's religion in its dogmatic or moral content. Hence indestructibility comprises two elements: (a) that the visible Church will endure until the end of the world, and (b) that, right up to the end of time, it will keep Christ's religion incorrupt. "Right up to the end of time," for as long as there are men wandering about on earth, they will depend for their sanctification on Christ working through His Church. After that, the kingdom of glory will take the place of the Church Militant.

We also note here that even right up to the very end of the world, "men wandering about on earth ... will depend for their sanctification on Christ working through His Church." I also note that the Church will endure as a "visible Church" until the end of the world, but more about visibility in a later part.

What visible community of persons exists today as true and full Catholics, and which has not defected? Can it possibly be anything other than the traditional Catholic community as defined here above? Can anyone else truly possess a full and proper right to the name of Catholic, in the true and eternal sense of that word? Van Noort states here that some visible Church community must be continuing to endure into all ages and therefore even today, without having "become unfit for the carrying out of its avowed aim through a substantial corruption," or having "abandoned or adulterated Christ's religion in its dogmatic or moral content." It is my position that the traditional Catholic movement alone fits the bill.

I realize that other questions remain regarding the origins, continuity, authority, and so forth of the traditional Catholic community, all of which will be addressed here in later parts. But with regard to the doctrines pertaining to THIS one attribute, the traditional Catholic community as it has endured thus far, has at least the superficial characteristics of a visible Church, and most principally, has not defected but remains truly fit for the carrying out of its avowed aim as it continues to carry out the proper administration and practice of the religion of Christ.

Part 2: Before getting into the topic of infallibility, I must again reiterate and clarify that the Vatican apparatus as a society (group, club, organization, community, whatever), having truly defected from the Catholic Faith not merely in some, or even a great many, of its chief officers, but itself as a society, therefore positively cannot be the Church today. A most highly informative historical precedent is the English Church which defected into schism under Henry VIII, but before being fully reformed into the new schismatic and heretical model, it was bodily brought back into the Catholic Church under Queen Mary, but then under Queen Elizabeth I it was returned to schism and heresy such that by the end of her reign, the Church of England had truly reached a point of no return. A truly Catholic King or Queen, even were such to have appeared, would have been perfectly incapable of restoring the Church of England whole and entire to the Catholic Church; either he would be neutralized and rendered powerless (much as British royalty is today with no real authority) or else assassinated. Even Queen Mary hadn't been entirely successful in restoring the English Church to the real Catholic Church.

Now with fully two generations having been born and raised in the Novus Ordo religion and having never seen the old Faith as was known by all back on the day of my own birth (while Pope Pius XII was still alive), today's Vatican apparatus has pretty much similarly passed that point of no return. Also, Vatican II did far worse than merely spout out reams of heretical blather; it redefined, reconfigured, and refashioned the whole Vatican apparatus into what it is today, a killing machine designed for the destruction of souls. Even were a real Catholic to find himself in charge of it, he would be neutralized or else assassinated before being able to do much of any good. In short, on (at least) the practical level it is intrinsically impossible for the leader of today's Vatican apparatus to function as a real Roman Catholic Pope, even were he to possess within his own mind and heart the spiritual qualifications and orthodoxy to be a true Pope. And such a one would never be deliberately elected by their "cardinals."

Infallibility of the Pope: It is interesting to note that the Infallibility of the Pope is part of a slightly larger doctrine known as the Infallibility of the Church. The infallibility of the Church consists not only of the "active infallibility" of the Pope, but also of the "passive infallibility" of his subjects. Msgr. G. Van Noort introduces the subject thus (vol. 2, pages 102-103):

The word infallibility itself indicates a necessary immunity from error. When one speaks of the *Church's infallibility*, one means that the Church can neither deceive nor be deceived in matters of faith and morals. It is a prerogative of the whole Church; but it belongs in one way to those who fulfill the office of teaching and in another way to those who are taught. Hence the distinction between *active* infallibility, by which the Church's rulers are rendered immune from error when they teach; and *passive* infallibility, by which all of Christ's faithful are preserved from error in their beliefs.

Passive infallibility depends on and is caused by active infallibility: for the faithful are kept free from error in religious matters only by loyally following their rulers. Consequently, it is limited by the same restrictions as is active infallibility, and it will therefore suffice to treat only the latter. Active infallibility may be defined as follows: the privilege by which the teaching office of the Church, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, is preserved immune from error when it defines a

doctrine of faith or morals.

The words through the assistance of the Holy Spirit indicate that this freedom from error is something derived; the words when it defines a doctrine of faith or morals limit this inerrancy to definite subject matter.

Note the doctrine of passive infallibility on the part of the Church as touched upon briefly by Van Noort: He points out that "Passive infallibility depends on and is caused by active infallibility: for the faithful are kept free from error in religious matters only by loyally following their rulers." But the existence of passive infallibility is no mere inference from the existence of active infallibility, but rather is in fact rooted in Sacred Scripture itself: "And when he has let out his own sheep, he goes before them: and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers."—John 10:4-5.

Every traditional Catholic has taken his stand specifically as such, due to having detected the contradiction between what the Church had already quite infallibly taught him (and to which he loyally adheres in obedience to the Church's rulers) versus what he was being taught now, on topic after topic. One sees this passive infallibility of the Church dynamically at work each time any Catholic or Catholic-at-heart ever said to himself, of some new innovation being foisted upon him, "Hey wait a minute; this can't be right." The traditional Catholic community presently lacks the active infallibility of a Pope (because there isn't one), but its passive infallibility is quite dramatically demonstrated.

Note how "the Church can neither deceive nor be deceived in matters of faith and morals." Once again, this time under the category of the doctrine of infallibility, the falsity of the Vatican apparatus on the one hand and the truth of the real Catholic Church (as being the traditional Catholic community), and therefore the societal distinction between the two respective societies is amply shown. Today's Vatican apparatus both deceives (with its false and heretical teaching) and is deceived (in its peaceful acceptance of its false leaders with their false teachings). But the traditional Catholic community is not deceived, having detected and avoided the false teachings of the false leaders of the Vatican apparatus.

And no one would be capable of being accepted by the whole traditional Catholic community as a Pope unless they manifested the full active infallibility which characterizes a real and true Roman Catholic Pope. Hence it would be safe to say that anyone accepted by the whole traditional Catholic community would truly have to be a true and real Roman Catholic Pope.

Now, what of those traditional Catholics who mistake the Vatican leader for a Pope? Yet every traditional Catholic, of whatever stripe, knows better than to take the Vatican crackpots as any rule of faith or source of infallible or authoritative teachings and mandates. They call him "pope" because their minds are confused and uncertain, or perhaps in some superficial sense that in no wise is intended to imply the man's being an infallible rule of Faith for Catholics. But on an intuitive and inarticulate level they know he is not a pope (at least in the true and Petrine sense of what that means), and it shows in their actions, as they seek to avoid, or at least be excused from, his erroneous ways, teachings, and mandates.

3 Infallibility of the Pope, continued: There is more to the infallibility of the Pope, much of which is known to sedevacantists, but not everyone is familiar with these further details. First and most obvious is that when they speak infallibly, they cannot be wrong. Msgr. G. Van Noort explains (vol. 2, page 104):

PROPOSITION: When the teaching office of the Church hands down decisions on matters of faith and morals in such a way as to require of everyone full and absolute assent, it is infallible.

This is a dogma of faith.

The teaching office of the Church or, as they say, "the teaching Church," is made up of those to whom God entrusted the right and the duty to teach the Christian religion authoritatively. The words "in matters of faith and morals in such a way as to require of everyone full and absolute assent" are included in the proposition because, according to Catholic teaching, the Church's rulers are infallible not in any and every exercise of their teaching power; but only when, using all the fullness of their authority, they clearly intend to bind everyone to absolute assent or, as common parlance puts it, when they "define" something in matters pertaining to the Christian religion. That is why all theologians distinguish in the dogmatic decrees of the councils or of the popes between those things set forth therein by way of definition and those used simply by way of illustration or argumentation. For the intention of binding all affects only the definition, and not the historical observations, reasons for the definition, and so forth. And if in some particular instances the intention of giving a definitive decision were not made sufficiently clear, then no one would be held by virtue of such definitions, to give the assent of faith: a doubtful law is no law at all.

This is of course the basic statement regarding what statements of a Pope positively cannot be in error, per the definition of what infallibility means. Fr. Eugene Sylvester Berry has a little bit more to add to this in *The Church of Christ* (page 248):

Infallibility does not exclude, but rather presupposes, the use of natural means to avoid error. The divine protection is only to supply the deficiency of natural means and thereby preclude the possibility of error, but since the exclusion of error is the end to be obtained without fail, neglect on the part of the human agent will not prevent the Holy Spirit from realizing that end. Hence if the person endowed with infallibility fails to use the natural means at hand for discovering the truth, he commits sin, but will be protected from error none the less, because infallibility is a *gratia gratis data*,—a gift freely bestowed for the good of others.

So in that sense, a Pope really and truly cannot err. And yet by the point at which Paul VI in the Vatican II council promulgated *Unitatis Redintegratio*, paragraph 16 of it stated, "To remove, then, all shadow of doubt, this holy Council solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while remembering the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to the disciplines proper to them, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful, and more for the good of their souls." With the phrase "To remove, then, all shadow of doubt, this holy Council solemnly declares," it invokes the fullest binding intention of a definition. It cannot be dismissed as mere "historical observations, reasons for the definition," or as something given "by way of illustration or argumentation." Were it a real Catholic Pope in a real Ecumenical Council of the real Catholic Church,

what followed would have to have been infallibly true, "ex cathedra." But follows is the statement that "the Churches of the East...have the power to govern themselves." In other words, the "Churches in the East," whether schismatic or Uniate, supposedly have no obligation to be subject to anyone, not to Paul VI (were it to have said that alone, it could have been legitimately interpreted either as a heresy or as an abdication on his part), not to any Pope, not to anyone at all. They can all just govern themselves, as the Eastern schismatics had been doing for nearly a thousand years. Such a blatant heresy, presented in a manner that should have framed an "ex cathedra" infallible and irrevocable teaching, constitutes proof positive that, a priori and antecedent to that promulgation of that document Paul VI was already not Pope and Vatican II was already not (or no longer) a valid Ecumenical Council of the real Catholic Church.

But infallibility also extends throughout a Pope's ministry and being, and though it does not prevent every possible mistake a man could make in his statements that are not of a specifically infallible nature, it does prevent him from wreaking real damage upon the Church, for example by imposing irreverent or invalid liturgies and sacraments. The following is from Van Noort, Vol. 2 Pages 114-115:

Assertion 3: The Church's infallibility extends to the general discipline of the Church. This proposition is theologically certain.

By the term "general discipline of the Church" are meant those *ecclesiastical laws passed for the universal Church for the direction of Christian worship and Christian living*. Note the italicized words: *ecclesiastical* laws, passed for the *universal* Church.

The imposing of commands belongs not directly to the teaching office but to the ruling office; disciplinary laws are only indirectly an object of infallibility, i. e., only by reason of the doctrinal decision implicit in them. When the Church's rulers sanction a law, they implicitly make a twofold judgment: 1. "This law squares with the Church's doctrine of faith and morals"; that is, it imposes nothing that is at odds with sound belief and good morals. This amounts to a doctrinal decree. 2. "This law, considering all the circumstances, is most opportune." This is a decree of practical judgment.

Although it would be rash to cast aspersions on the timeliness of a law, especially at the very moment when the Church imposes or expressly reaffirms it, still the Church does not claim to be infallible in issuing a decree of practical judgment. For the Church's rulers were never promised the highest degree of prudence for the conduct of affairs. But the Church is infallible in issuing a doctrinal decree as intimated above—and to such an extend that it can never sanction a universal law which would be at odds with faith or morality or would be by its very nature conductive to the injury to souls.

Certainly, such things as the Liturgy would come under this heading, and so of course the promulgation of such irreverent and invalid "liturgies" as that of the Novus Ordo is intrinsically impossible to a true and infallible Pope, even were the liturgy so imposed to have made no dogmatic claims, true or false.

4 Infallibility of the Pope, completed: One more thing has to do with a mistake commonly heard from many individuals of the traditional Catholic community, as well as throughout the conservative Novus Ordo community as well. While many easily acknowledge that things are out of whack there in Vatican City, they take a false refuge in the idea that "one day, the pendulum will swing back" or that "Rome will return to its senses." Implicit to such an expectation is the view that infallibility wouldn't mean that the Church could not go astray, but only that if it did, it would (hopefully fairly promptly) return to the truth. Msgr. G. Van Noort characterized such a view (along with the view, occasionally heard, that "Sees are one thing; those who sit upon them another") as being Gallican in the heretical sense, on pages 290-291:

3. The person endowed with the prerogative of infallibility is the currently-reigning Roman pontiff. That is why the Gallican theory could not possibly be squared with the Vatican Council definition. The Gallicans make a distinction between the see and its occupant. Thus the individual popes could err, but God would prevent "error from taking deep root" in the Roman see or Roman Church. In other words, God would see to it that an error committed by one pope would be swiftly repaired either by the same pope or at least by his successor. Obviously this opinion is not reconcilable with the statement of the council that "the Roman pontiff," is infallible when speaking ex cathedra; nor with the necessary conclusion of the same council: "and consequently definitions made by the same pontiff are of themselves, and not because of the consent of the Church, irreformable."

The Gallicans wrongly appeal to Leo the Great's epigram, "Sees are one thing, those who sit upon them another" (*Epistula* 106. 6). By that saying, Leo simply meant that the rights of a see do not depend upon the *holiness* of its occupant, "For even though those who occupy sees may differ at times in their merits, still the rights of the sees remain" (*Epistula* 119. 3).

Especially in the early days of the crisis, many took the view that the new aberrations were only temporary, some sort of bizarre liturgical experiment that would quickly end up in failure, to be followed by a return to how things had always been, and all before the Novus Ordo errors could take deep root. "The pendulum" was certain, they maintained, to swing back to normalcy soon. But as time drags on, year after year, and now even generation after generation, and the Novus Ordo errors are not retracted, but instead given time to "take deep root" (and they have!), such a view becomes inexcusable even from the purely practical standpoint. But doctrinally, such a thing was never possible in the first place. The very ability of the Vatican apparatus to take such a random, meaningless, and even destructive sideways step, and then commit its resources to such a perverted direction, and furthermore over such a period of time, is proof positive that infallibility simply cannot be attributed to its leader.

Father Eugene Berry, when discussing authoritativeness (in the context of authority) makes a similar point that there can be no authoritativeness where the possibility exists that a false step might be taken which subsequently needs to be taken back, in *The Church of Christ*, page 32:

Christ instituted the Church for the salvation of all men, and endowed it with certain powers and characteristics necessary for this work. If the Church should lose any one of these necessary qualifications, it would not be capable of doing what Christ intended it to do; in fact, it would cease to

be the Church instituted by Him. Moreover, if the Church could fail in any of its essentials, even for a time, it would lose all authority to teach and to govern, because the faithful could never be certain at any time that it had not failed,—that it had not ceased to be the Church of Christ, thereby losing all authority. But an authority that may be justly doubted at all times is no authority; it commands neither obedience nor respect as is evident in churches that reject the claim to indefectibility.

"If the Church could fail in any of its essentials (such as infallibility or indefectibility), even for a time (such as "until the pendulum swings back" or "Rome returns to its senses"), it would lose all authority to teach and govern, because the faithful could never be certain at any time that it had not failed." We go to the Church, not to get a good guess which is probably right, but to get the definitive answer (or at least, where such an answer does not exist as of yet, to be definitively informed of that fact) which we can rely upon, indeed, we can stake our very souls upon what it taught definitively, not merely "most of the time" (until they realize their mistake and correct it), but "all of the time." If things were not that way (and we know, things are categorically not at all that way in the case of the Novus Ordo), then it can have no authority, in turn meaning that it is not truly the Church.

So both the doctrines of indefectibility and infallibility clearly mark the Vatican apparatus as being an organization not merely riddled with bad and heretical persons, but itself an organization committed to the spread of error and the destruction of Catholicism. The same two doctrines do, however, point honest persons to the traditional Catholic community, as defined above. Taken in that full sense, the indefectibility of the traditional Catholic community, as being the real Catholic Church, is unmistakable, and in fact the principal reason persons have had recourse to it in our times. Of course, in the absence of a Pope, only that passive form of infallibility can be displayed, but that is appropriate and expected for any time of Sede Vacante, and again its presence among the traditional Catholic community is unmistakable, despite numerous questions raised regarding matters not confirmed by the Church.

A Note on those who remained in their schismatic parishes: The sense in which I speak of someone being a Catholic or not is not to be confused with the interior and subjective state of their souls. While the loss of England in the 1530's (and directly comparable, the loss of practically the whole world in the 1960's) can be seen as dramatic and shocking judgments brought on as divine chastisement or punishment, one has to admit that of course not everyone victimized by each event was complicit in the laxity or sin or whatever it was that had occasioned such a judgment. Not everyone who remained in their Anglican parishes back then, or their Novus Ordo parishes in our time, even as each began to show their true colors, is guilty of leaving the Church. The fact remains that materially they were brought outside the Church in their attachment to schismatic parishes now separated from the true Church.

While some realized their true position and sought the underground priests from Douay-Rheims (back then) or the traditional priests (these days), thus placing themselves truly and visibly within the real Catholic Church, others no less Catholic from their own subjective standpoint, did their best to live a Catholic life in their false parishes, and being "Catholic-at-heart," though no longer truly "Catholics" as such, they are not by any means to be considered "excommunicated" from the Church. They could still be judged by God as Catholics in their private judgments since they formally intended no disunion, even while materially they were disunited from the Church and no longer (visibly) Catholics.

Part 5, Visibility of the Church: The visibility of the Church is also key, for the Church does not ever exist as merely some invisible and unknown group, but as an identifiable society, with identifiable leaders and members, and identifiably Catholic in Faith, Morals, practices, and identity. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to the conversion of souls to the real Church and Faith has been the traditional Catholic community's sad but frequent lack of recognition of itself as a visible Catholic society, indeed when taken all together, the only possible visible (and visibly) Catholic society in existence today. Obviously, the Novus Ordo's false religion has done a great job at touting its visibility, and this has deceived many, keeping them in false and schismatic parishes, and thereby out of the true Church. Msgr. G. Van Noort explains the necessity and nature of the Church's visibility in Vol. 2, pages 7-8 and 12-13:

PROPOSITION 1: Christ personally founded a Church which is a true society.

This proposition contains a twofold assertion, *a*. Christ Himself *directly* founded a Church. This rules out any indirect founding through the agency of others to whom Christ would have entrusted or left the whole affair, *b*. This Church is, as Christ Himself founded it, *a society in the strict sense*, not merely a religious academy.

A society is a *permanent assembly of many people united for the attainment of a common goal*. Not any and every group of people is a society, but only one which pursues a common goal in a permanent manner. Now this stable unification of many people is effected by means of certain bonds which unite the minds and the active efforts of the group. The chief of these bonds is authority. And so the *matter* of a society is the group itself; its *form* is the unifying bonds, authority in particular; its founder or *author* is he who unites the group by applying the bonds.

This proposition is a *dogma of the faith* in both its parts, for it is contained equivalently in the Vatican Council, which asserts that "the eternal Shepherd and Bishop of our souls determined to build a holy Church." The council then proceeds to reproach those who pervert "the form of rule established by Christ the Lord in His Church," and, finally, adds the remark that "St. Peter was established by Christ as the visible head of the whole Church," and that he "directly and immediately received from the same our Lord Jesus Christ the primacy of real and genuine jurisdiction." So also the *Oath against Modernism*: "With unshaken faith I believe that the Church was immediately and directly established by the real and historical Christ Himself while He was living in our midst, and that this same Church was built upon Peter, the head of the apostolic hierarchy, and upon those who will succeed him to the end of time."

. . .

PROPOSITION 2: It is due to the institution of Christ Himself that the Church is visible.

This proposition is *certain*.

That the Church is visible follows necessarily from the fact that it is a real society, for there can be no genuine society in the world of men unless it be visible. But since Protestants constantly attack with might and main the visible character of the Church which Christ founded, it is necessary to give the

question special consideration. The visible form of the Church which is the subject of this present discussion must not be confused with what is strictly its knowability. It is one thing to ask whether the Church which Christ founded is a public society, and quite another to ask whether that society can be recognized as the true Church of Christ by certain distinguishing marks. Its being formally recognizable presupposes its being visible, but the two are not identical. Furthermore, the present discussion centers on the visible character of the Church insofar as it is a society. No one denies that the Church's members are visible, for they are flesh-and-blood people; but some do question whether, by the institution of Christ Himself, these members are bound together by external bonds so as to form a society that can be perceived by the senses, a society of such a nature that one can readily discern who belongs to it and who does not. Mark well the words "the institution of Christ Himself," for the question is precisely this: Did Christ personally found a visible Church, one which by its very nature would have to be an external (public) society, so that an invisible Church could not possibly be the true Church of Christ? For once one proves that the one and only Church which Christ founded is visible from its very nature, then it necessarily follows: (a) that an invisible Church such as that to which Protestants appeal is a pure fiction, and (b) that all the promises which Christ made to His Church refer to a visible Church. Note, lastly, that to insist on the Church's being visible is not to claim that all its elements are immediately apparent to the senses. Just as a man is really visible even though one cannot see his soul directly, so too the Church must be adjudged truly visible even if some element which is an essential part of its make-up cannot be seen directly—provided that this element be by its very nature joined to and externally manifested by some visible element.

Later on I will get to the nature of the authority held by those who, with whatever kind of authority it is — whether human or divine, are clearly in charge of their respective traditional Catholic societies and collectively, obviously at least somewhat in charge of the traditional Catholic community in general.

But bear in mind that there must have always been the Church, and it must always have been visible. Therefore, it is a "dogmatic imperative" (more about that expression later) that at all times there must be some visible society or community, with known members and their known leaders, and to which one can point and say, "There! That is the Catholic Church of all time and history." This doctrine therefore explicitly and definitively rules out such scenarios as "We think there must be fully duly authorized Catholic leaders but nobody seems to know who any of them are, specifically and personally." That scenario constitutes an "invisible Church" idea as worthy of censure as that of the Protestants. Even the underground Church in the catacombs still had identifiable leaders and members known to themselves and each other, and still made their presence felt even among the general society from which they hid.

This doctrine leaves only two particular possibilities standing. One would be that the Novus Ordo Vatican apparatus is that Church, which runs up against the plain facts that it has defected from the Faith, its leaders have one and all (at least since Vatican II) proven altogether fallible and wildly so, to say nothing of the four Marks which it no longer can lay any claim to (I will get to those shortly). The other would be that the traditional Catholic community, taken together as a whole, is that Church. That community can be shown to bear all four Marks – to the fullest extent to which they can be validated today, as will be embarked upon next part.

6 The Four Marks and Attributes in General: Before delving into each of the Marks, one by one, there are some general things to say about these Marks and also the Attributes (or Properties) of the Church. There are seven of these Attributes (or Properties); Msgr. G. Van Noort lists them thus (Vol. 2. Page 102):

The Church's properties are those qualities which flow from its very essence and are a necessary part of it. Authors differ somewhat in enumerating these properties; and some distinguish between properties and endowments. But the difference seems to concern method and terminology rather than the matter itself. Seven properties, then, can be listed: *visibility*, *indestructibility*, *infallibility*, *unity*, *holiness*, *catholicity*, and *apostolicity*.

Other writers also list seven such attributes, but list the first three as, for example, indefectibility, infallibility, and authority, or other similar expressions. But all seem to agree on the last four being unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.

What makes the last four stand out as Marks is that they possess aspects which the first three (by whatever names) do not, namely aspects which of their nature are of themselves visible, obvious, and easier to recognize than the Church itself. Nevertheless, the last four possess other aspects which are not Marks (or only "negative marks" as will be explained shortly) on par with all aspects of the first three attributes listed. But regarding the positive aspects that make each of these last four truly Marks, Msgr. G. Van Noort has this to say (Vol. 2 pages 165-166):

2. It was stated at the beginning of this article that the real purpose of the study of the marks is to distinguish the genuine Church of Christ from all other societies using the name Christian. But even in our purely abstract discussion of the marks we have seen that each of these marks actually involves something miraculous—something beyond the power of creatures to produce. Unless there were some such external manifestations of the Holy Spirit who breathes life into Christ's Church, there would really be no reason why founders of merely human sects could not imitate those marks in their own societies. * A merely human mark can always be counterfeited. Precisely because those marks of the Church are miraculous qualities, or moral miracles, they are not only suitable for identifying the church which possesses them as the genuine Church founded by Christ, but, even apart from the necessary presuppositions discussed above (see no. 124), they directly prove that a church possessing those marks—and the religion preached by that church—is a work of God. That is why a little deeper consideration of those same marks is sufficient to demonstrate the divine origin of the Catholic religion over all the religions in the world including the non-Christian religions.

[Footnote reads:] * The case is a bit different with the mark of apostolicity. For the mark of apostolicity, even if we prescind from the miraculous stability which is now factually implied by it (i.e., after the passing of so many centuries), fully proves the truth of the Church it belongs to because it rests upon an historic fact which once demonstrated can never be changed: the fact that the apostles planted *this* Church and no other.

The four Marks, as Marks, truly possess that miraculous aspect to them which truly cannot be copied by creatures, as they each not only identify the true Church, but also provide evidence of its truthfulness

and authenticity. One other thing to note here is that the Marks (or "notes") cannot be separated from each other, as Msgr. Charles Journet explains in *The Church of the Incarnate Word*, pages 530-531:

The essential properties of course, cannot be separated from the essence; they are distinguished from it conceptually, but identified with it in reality. Where apostolicity exists, there also are unity, catholicity, sanctity: and conversely. This also applies to the notes, which are simply the properties 'in so far as these are externally apparent and known'. One note is enough to indicate the true Church, but where this one note is, there are all the others. It is possible to consider them separately however, since though identical in reality, they differ conceptually. They are manifold aspects of one and the same reality too rich to be seized in a single concept.

Ergo, it is meaningless to claim that a given society might have one or two of the Marks but not the others. If a society truly has one, it has all four, and if it truly lacks one, it lacks all four.

Still, the attributes also have value as "negative marks." Under the Marks of Holiness and Apostolicity, Msgr. G. Van Noort discusses their value as negative marks (Vol. 2 pages 162-163, 164-165):

2. Holiness. Not everything that has been said about holiness, insofar as it is a property of the Church, can be applied in exactly the same way when we consider holiness as a *mark*. For example, if our discussion be limited to the means to holiness—and exclusively to the bare possession of such means—it must be admitted that some of the means to holiness can be found in a false church. Nothing prevents some sect, which has split off from the true Church, from holding on to the doctrine, sacraments, laws, and most of the devotional activities of that Church. Such a sect—not rightfully, of course, but physically nonetheless—might continue to possess some of the means to holiness. Contrariwise, any church holding even one doctrine or one institution which is clearly contradictory to holiness stands convicted as a counterfeit. A church, for example, which would espouse euthanasia would betray an erroneous moral sense.

. . .

Notice, too, that apostolicity of doctrine, taken all by itself would be only a negative mark of the Church; for there is nothing intrinsically contradictory in the notion of having some sect retain the doctrine of the apostles in its entirety. This point alone is guaranteed by that negative criterion: if it be proven that a Christian denomination has departed from even one point of doctrine taught by the apostles, by that very fact it is convicted of being a counterfeit.

A "negative Mark," if the condition is met, does not, of itself, prove that the society bearing it is therefore absolutely the Church. However, should a given society fail to meet the particular condition, then that is proof positive that the society in question absolutely cannot be the Church. It has already been demonstrated how it is that the Novus Ordo apparatus (which is the "Vatican apparatus" minus the few small remaining corners therein where true Catholicism is tolerated – indult/Motu & possibly some Alternate Rite) has patently failed on the indefectibility and infallibility fronts, though it does retain an organizational visibility roughly comparable to that of the traditional Catholic community.

Part 7, The Mark and Attribute of Unity: Msgr. G. van Noort introduces the Attribute and Mark of Unity, thus (Vol. 2 pages 126-127):

Catholic teaching has it that the Church, by the institution of its Founder, and hence necessarily and essentially, enjoys a threefold unity which is external and visible, namely, unity of *doctrine* and *profession*, unity of *communion*, and unity of *government*. The Vatican Council says: "Our eternal Pastor willed to build a holy Church in which ... all the faithful would be bound together by the bond of the one faith and of charity. And in order that the universal fold might be kept in oneness of faith and communion by priests who would themselves be joined in close union, He gave St. Peter charge over the other apostles and thereby established in his person the unfailing principle and visible foundation of both unities." And Leo XIII: "Since the Church's divine Founder had determined that it should be one in belief, in rule, and in communion, He selected Peter and his successors to be the principle and, as it were, the focal point of unity."

PROPOSITION: Christ willed that His Church enjoy unity of faith and of profession (creedal unity) which consists in this, that all the members of the Church hold and make profession of the same doctrine as it is presented for belief by the Church's teaching office.

Note the phrase "make profession of"; for a purely internal assent of the mind to truth does not satisfy the requirements of a visible society such as the Church is. This assent must be given clear outward expression as well: *Because with the heart a man believes and attains holiness, and with the lips profession of faith is made and salvation secured* (Rom. 10:10).

That the Novus Ordo religion and its organizational infrastructure have departed from the unity of doctrine (through their heretical teachings) and profession (through its non-Catholic liturgies and invalid sacraments) and communion (through their wicked rejection or disassociation with most of the true Catholics, and retain only a vestige of governmental unity within themselves has to be obvious. There is also the conspicuous internal disunity within itself. Different local pagan customs occasion actual doctrinal distortions, such as Santeria in one area, or "Saint Death" in another, or the sacrifice of chickens or use of corn meal for "hosts," and so forth in still other areas. And then there is the wide acceptance therein of some who advocate rights for homosexuality, abortion, priestesses, euthanasia, and so forth, concurrent with a not-a-bit-wider acceptance of others who take a "more Catholic" stance about all those same issues. And all of this is so even as they nevertheless still possess an active organizational infrastructure that is capable of imposing a uniformity of Faith and Morals, were it only so inclined. Though it possesses a kind of "unity of Government" within itself, through the rejection of the Catholic doctrine, profession, and communion, this government is already disunited from the Government of the real Catholic Church.

Such a "unity" of a single governmental structure presiding over quite an array of different systems of belief as found in the Vatican apparatus is absolutely no different than the "unity" of the Anglicans, of which Fr. Eugene Berry writes (*The Church of Christ*, pages 99-100):

UNITY. Lack of unity of faith in the Anglican communion is proved by the mere fact that it contains

three distinct parties, teaching doctrines directly opposed one to another. The *High Church* party is strikingly Catholic in its teaching; it accepts almost every doctrine of the Catholic Church except the infallibility of the Pope. The *Low Church* is thoroughly Protestant in its teachings and practices and rejects nearly all Catholic doctrine as "Romish superstition." The *Broad Church* is rationalistic and makes no definite statement of doctrine. Yet all these parties are recognized as members of the Anglican Church, teaching and professing her approved doctrines! This constitutes her "glorious comprehensiveness," by which every shade of doctrinal difference is embraced within her fold. Justly, therefore, did Macaulay say that "the religion of the Church of England ... is in fact a jumble of religious systems without number."

Contrast that with the unity of the traditional Catholic community. Their unity of faith, profession, communion, and government with the Catholic Church of all ages is utterly beyond reproach and cannot be doubted. Whatever divisions as have been sown among them in this time of such a lengthy papal vacancy are overridden by the fact that all traditional Catholics derive their source from the Church, and it is they from whom the Church of all future ages must derive.

Though I will comment more on those differences in the next part, the fact of such unity of faith, profession, communion (with government admittedly harder to see, but this will be gotten into shortly) among persons of such diverse opinions, camps, schools of thought, and even particular societies within the traditional Catholic community, is something outright miraculous, truly the power of the Mark of the Church itself at work and brilliantly recognizable among traditional Catholics. In commenting specifically on Unity as a Mark, Msgr. G. Van Noort states the following (Vol. 2 page 162):

1. Unity. It should be clear that unity of creed, membership and government is something visible, and consequently easier to recognize than the true Church itself. Furthermore, if one examines this unity, not in abstract fashion, but concretely—that is, as a unity which is *perpetually present* in a society *spread practically over the entire world*; as a unity which arises *spontaneously and connaturally*, and not as the artificial product of terroristic activities or military might—one finds something miraculous, something which can only be adequately explained on the basis of God's help. If this be true, something further follows: such unity could not be found outside of the true Church of God. Christ Himself pointed out that His own divine mission, as continued by His Church, can and should be recognized by that Church's miraculous unity:

"However, I do not pray for them alone [the apostles]; I also pray for those who through their preaching will believe in me. All are to be one; just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, so they, too, are to be one in us. The world must come to believe that I am your ambassador."—John 17:20-21.

What makes the unity of faith, profession, and communion among the traditional Catholics most particularly striking is the spontaneous sustenance of that unity even in the absence of any secular power or military might or terroristic activities or any other such "arm of the flesh" means to enforce it, and these days, even the absence of any clear or concerted effort on the part of any clerics.

While the Vatican apparatus patently lacks the Mark of Unity, the traditional Catholic community just as patently and obviously possesses it.

Part 8, The Mark and Attribute of Unity, Continued: Despite the clear unity of faith, profession, and communion, certain questions do arise concerning the high degree of controversy that exists among the traditional Catholic community, and also regarding its far less conspicuous unity of government. About each of these things, Msgr. G. Van Noort has something to say, as if in anticipation of such circumstances as ours today. First, regarding divergent theological opinions, he says (Vol. 2. Pages 127-128):

Scholion 1. What unity of faith does and does not mean.

The unity of faith which Christ decreed without qualification consists in this, that everyone accepts the doctrines *presented for belief by the Church's teaching office*. In fact our Lord requires nothing other than the acceptance by all of the preaching of the apostolic college, a body which is to continue forever; or, what amounts to the same thing, of the pronouncements of the Church's teaching office, which He Himself set up as the rule of faith. And so, (a) the essential unity of faith definitely requires that everyone hold each and every doctrine clearly and distinctly presented for belief by the Church's teaching office; and that everyone hold these truths explicitly or at least implicitly, i.e., by acknowledging the authority of the Church which teaches them. But, (b) it does not require the absence from the Church of all controversy about religious matters. For as long as there does not exist a clear and explicit statement of the Church about some point or other, even though it may perchance be contained objectively in the sources of revelation, it can be freely discussed without any detriment to the unity of the faith, provided that all the disputants are ready to bow to a decision of the Church's teaching office, should one be forthcoming. Obviously the unity of faith does not extend beyond the limits of the rule of faith.

No matter how much some disputants may succeed at making things seem otherwise, the various divergent opinions to be noted among various members and groups within the traditional Catholic community really do all fall under the those things for which "there does not exist a clear and explicit statement of the Church." Even though it can be shown that some positions would stand (or others fall) in principles deeply and obscurely rooted objectively in the sources of revelation, "it can be freely discussed without any detriment to the unity of the faith, provided that all the disputants are ready to bow to a decision of the Church's teaching office, should one be forthcoming."

As to the bigger schism between the most basic schools of thought (Indult/Motu, SSPX/resistance, and sedevacantist) present within, even so severe a problem has been experienced before and is quite obviously applicable to our situation today. For this, Van Noort writes (Vol. 2 page 131):

Scholion. The Western Schism.

It might seem that unity of rule suffered a setback in the Church at the time of the Western Schism, when for forty years (1378-1417) two or three men claimed to be sovereign pontiff. But with the preservation of unity of faith and communion, hierarchical unity was *only materially*, not formally, interrupted. Although Catholics were split three ways in their allegiance because of the doubt as to which of the contenders had been legitimately elected, still all were agreed in believing

that allegiance was owed the one legitimate successor of Peter, and they stood willing to give that allegiance. Consequently, those who through no fault of their own gave their allegiance to an illegitimate pope would no more be schismatics than a person would be a heretic who, desirous of following the preaching of the Church, would admit a false doctrine because he was under the impression that it was taught by the Church.

The setback to governmental unity suffered by the traditional Catholic community is clearly only a material, not a formal, interruption of the hierarchical unity. "Although Catholics [are] split three ways in their allegiance because of the doubt as to which of the [contending positions is the true one], still all [are] agreed in believing that allegiance [is] owed the one legitimate successor of Peter, and they [all stand] willing to give that allegiance." So even those who have taken the wrong positions (Indult/Motu, SSPX/resistance) in our day are no more to be considered schismatics than those who mistakenly followed either of the alternate papal claimants back then.

Van Noort also mentions the attribute of unity as applied to worship on pages 129-130 in which he discusses the variant alternate Rites, and again as follows on page 131:

Several popular catechisms and quite a few theologians speak of a *unity of worship*, or liturgical unity, in addition to unity of faith and rule (and communion), in line with which all share in the same sacraments. This unity does of course obtain and is absolutely necessary to the extent that the worship was determined by Christ Himself. However, liturgical unity is already included in the other unities: in unity of faith, since faith includes also the revealed doctrine on the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments; in unity of communion, since this involves the sharing in the same spiritual benefits. This is perhaps the reason that neither the Vatican Council nor Leo XIII in his encyclical on the unity of the Church make any specific mention of liturgical unity.

Despite some rather considerable variation between the Latin Rite and among the various Eastern and other Alternate Rites, all clearly show the same Faith. But there are limits to how different a liturgy can be without professing a different faith, and one of those limits is mentioned here, namely when it states that "This unity does of course obtain and is absolutely necessary to the extent that the worship was determined by Christ Himself." As the consecration formula for the Eucharist was fixed by Christ Himself explicitly (or "in specie," as distinct from other sacraments for which there is more flexibility in their exact formulation as they were given only "in generis"), there is no way to claim unity for a "mass" which attempts a consecration using the defective and positively different "for you and for all" instead of the "in specie" phrase, "for you and for many." The traditional Catholic community retains this unity.

Finally, back to what was stated on page 127, "Note the phrase "make profession of"; for a purely internal assent of the mind to truth does not satisfy the requirements of a visible society such as the Church is. This assent must be given clear outward expression as well: *Because with the heart a man believes and attains holiness, and with the lips profession of faith is made and salvation secured* (Rom. 10:10)." Except where some Vatican apparatus bishop has retained a Catholic form of worship (Bp. Rifan, some Alternate Rite bishops?), he does not profess the true faith with clear outward expression.

Part 9, The Attribute and Mark of Holiness: Msgr. G. van Noort introduces the Attribute and Mark of Holiness, thus (Vol. 2 pages 135, 136-137, 138):

Christ's Church is holy on several counts: e. g., because of its Founder and Head, who is the only-begotten Son of God; because of its purpose, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of mankind; about these there is no difficulty. Catholic teaching states in addition that the Church, by the institution of Christ and therefore necessarily and irrevocably, is adorned with a threefold external and visible holiness: that of its *means* of sanctification, that of its *members*, and that of its *charisms*.

PROPOSITION: Christ willed that His Church be holy as to its means (or principles).

That is, that the Church possess means suitable to produce moral holiness in people, even perfect and outstanding or heroic holiness.

. . .

PROPOSITION: Christ willed that His Church be holy as to its members (or its effects).

That is, that in every age very many of the Church's members be brought to a state of ordinary holiness, and at least some be shining examples of outstanding or heroic holiness. This harvest of holiness may be quite abundant at one time, less satisfying at another.

There are two points to be proved: 1. that a harvest of even outstanding holiness can never be wanting in the Church; and 2. that the harvest of holiness required to justify one's pointing to the holiness of the Church's members does not, for all practical purposes, have to exceed the limits just determined.

Assertion 1. A harvest of even outstanding holiness can never be wanting in the Church.

. . .

Assertion 2. The harvest of holiness, to the extent that it is a minimum requisite to justify one's pointing to the Church's members as holy, does not extend beyond the limits intimated in the above PROPOSITION.

. . .

Corollary

Granted the holiness of the means at its disposal, the Church, even though perhaps it clasps to its bosom more sinners than saints, can be with justification called *unqualifiedly holy*. For the saintly members of the Church, since they have been formed through its influence, belong to it *precisely* because they are holy, but this can not at all be said of sinners. The latter are what they are for the simple reason that they do not follow the standard of life set up by the Church and neglect the means that it provides for them. It would be ridiculous to stigmatize a society because of those

members who shun the influence of that society's principles. Even should they be in the majority, they would by no means be representative members.

PROPOSITION: Christ willed that His Church be holy as to its charisms, that is, that the Church in every age be enriched with certain miraculous gifts through which God manifests its holiness.

Charisms have an essential relationship to holiness, both because they are signs that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church, and because ordinarily they are enjoyed by those who are outstanding for perfect holiness.

The Mark of Holiness implies that the Church has the means for it, its effects upon its members, and the charisms (miracles). The means belongs purely to the category of "attribute" since even a false sect could easily acquire all the means for holiness.

The effect of the Church's holiness upon its members is a tougher call, as parts of that can be possessed by other churches and by non-Catholics. For God does grant to non-Catholics who earnestly seek to do what is right sufficient graces to attain what (in another place, to be quoted soon) is called an "ordinary holiness." We all know of "good people" who are nice and kind and trustworthy and helpful, but who belong to the Novus Ordo, or to Protestant churches, or even don't go to any church at all. And as clarified in the quote above, the holiness of the Church's members does not exclude the existence of members who are sinners instead of saints. The Mark of the Church exists in a greater preponderance of individual members who are at least that holy (usually quite difficult to discern), and more dramatically, in those saints whose holiness reaches heroic heights, such that they can or ought to be canonized. Such heroic holiness is something uniquely attainable today only by traditional Catholics.

Similarly, the charisms can also be a tough call because again, as God causes the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, He has also been known to answer the prayers of non-Catholics. And of course we know that the Devil's representatives may also work "lying wonders." But bona fide miracles, something that clearly goes above and beyond simple answers to prayers, and that are of a sort worthy of examination while looking into the life of some possible saint being considered for canonization, are quite rare, and have been so for most of the Church's history. And it is only these latter bona fide miracles which count as this aspect of the Mark of Holiness.

With regards to some of the means of holiness, both the Novus Ordo and the traditional Catholic community would seem to have parity in that both equally possess various religious congregations, or "orders," and those who belong to them, as a practical means of holiness. Of course, truly valid sacraments are also an essential means to holiness and unlike the traditional Catholic community which has the full benefit of truly valid sacraments, those of the Novus Ordo must often "make do" with fewer (if any) valid sacraments. The practical guidance they receive against sin is also much fuzzier and unclear, thus leaving them much more confused and perplexed, and all the more likely to fall into sin.

This lack of certain means of holiness, though merely possessing the character of the "attribute" of holiness, nevertheless proves as a negative Mark that the Novus Ordo apparatus cannot possess the Mark of Holiness, to say nothing of its irreverent liturgies and flawed moral direction.

Part 10, The Attribute and Mark of Holiness, Continued: Msgr. G. Van Noort, in drilling further into what about Holiness specifically constitutes the Mark, continues, thus (Vol. 2 pages 162-164):

2. Holiness. Not everything that has been said about holiness, insofar as it is a property of the Church, can be applied in exactly the same way when we consider holiness as a *mark*. For example, if our discussion be limited to the means to holiness—and exclusively to the bare possession of such means—it must be admitted that some of the means to holiness can be found in a false church. Nothing prevents some sect, which has split off from the true Church, from holding on to the doctrine, sacraments, laws, and most of the devotional activities of that Church. Such a sect—not rightfully, of course, but physically nonetheless—might continue to possess some of the means to holiness. Contrariwise, any church holding even one doctrine or one institution which is clearly contradictory to holiness stands convicted as a counterfeit. A church, for example, which would espouse euthanasia would betray an erroneous moral sense.

Holiness of members which does not reach heroic proportions can also be found in some fashion in a false church. That happens, however, purely accidentally; God, who wills all men to be saved, does not deprive men, who are innocently enmeshed in error, of His normal graces. Furthermore, most of the sacraments can be validly administered even outside the true Church. If the recipients be in good faith, these sacraments can be fruitfully received and produce some harvest of holiness even outside the house of God. Doubtless even this ordinary type of holiness occurs far more frequently within the true Church than outside of it, but since that greater frequency is not discernible except by difficult investigation, and is not something obvious, its incidence lies open to much quibbling. If, then, holiness is to serve as a distinguishing mark of the true Church, we must limit our investigation, if not exclusively at least principally, to heroic holiness of the members and to the holiness of charisms.

Extraordinary or heroic holiness, by the very fact that it is far beyond the normal measure, is readily perceived. Furthermore, heroic holiness can be acknowledged to be a mark of the true Church even before one actually locates the true Church. Finally, such extraordinary holiness will never be found outside the true Church; such holiness requires an extraordinary abundance of graces that is not granted to those in error. Even though Christ does not deprive anyone of necessary graces, He does nourish and cherish His own flesh, His Church, with an altogether special love. Otherwise God Himself would lead mankind into error, were He to raise up, outside the road to salvation, heroes of sanctity. The same thing holds true with even greater force of *charisms* which attest either to the holiness of the Church itself or to the holiness of its finest members.

Christ Himself, at least in some fashion, referred to the mark of holiness when He said: "Just so let your light shine before your fellow men, that they may see your good example and praise your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

As pointed out previously, the Novus Ordo apparatus indeed lacks something of the means to holiness, and instead is in many ways a promoter of unholiness. Their willingness to grant their "sacraments" to persons plainly living in sin (e. g. those unlawfully divorced and then "remarried" or to practicing

homosexuals) plainly marks them as a counterfeit. One does not find such a thing (or any comparably false moral principle) anywhere within the traditional Catholic community, a fundamental difference which has even shown up far more clearly than usually among the individual members as evidenced through their holiness. Msgr. G. Van Noort writes in a different time period, one in which it could have been said that "this ordinary type of holiness occurs far more frequently within the true Church than outside of it, but since that greater frequency is not discernible except by difficult investigation, and is not something obvious, its incidence lies open to much quibbling." But today, the difference is much more clear than usual.

Already, even those of the secular world have sensed that there is some difference between being what it commonly mistakes for a "Catholic" (actually Novus Ordo believer) and being a "traditionalist" or "pre-Vatican II" Catholic. The secular world holds Traditional Catholics to a much higher moral standard as something they have come to expect of traditional Catholics, and which is not expected of the Novus Ordo members (and members of other religions). When Novus Ordo or Protestant persons fall into sins (think of celebrities in the entertainment field who cheat on their spouses), that's just not news; so much of that goes on that the tabloids and scandal sheets can't be bothered to track it at all. It's just not news. But when a traditional Catholic of comparable professional career once fell into such a sin – that was news, to be shouted from the rooftops again and again (think of Mel Gibson and his tryst with that woman). Fellow actors and movie producers/directors, even "church-going" ones, nearly all do the same thing and nobody ever questions it – that's just how Hollywood is and "everyone" there accepts that.

I am sure that many of us traditional Catholics know or at least know of someone among us who is truly a saint, or at least truly ought to be so recognized. Many of us may even know of some miracles we or someone we know (or at least know of) among our traditional Catholic community may have experienced. But of course herein enters the limits of how much we can detect with this Mark. The Vatican apparatus has stripped down their standards for saints and miracles in their "canonization" process, indeed to a fatal degree. They have done this because none of their members are capable of meeting the traditional standards for sainthood; no one there possesses a sufficiently heroic degree of holiness to be worthy of being canonized as were the saints of former eras who passed all the tests.

But we of the traditional Catholic community are in just as bad of a circumstance. We have become so weak and disorganized as to be altogether incapable of reorganizing such a Curial office as that which the Church formerly possessed for the study of the causes of saints and miracles. We are therefore thrust back to the circumstance of the Church as it was in the long ages before such a Curial office was established in the first place. So unfortunately, while the cursory evidences of what few truly holy (to a heroic degree) saints or great miracles as might be found do seem to favor the traditional Catholic community, this is at the present time sufficiently subjective as to be useless one way or the other to serve as a proof of having this Mark. It is only the greater preponderance of holiness among traditional Catholics which has become more evident than usual, in as much as it can now provide evidence that we traditional Catholics, alone, are truly the possessors of this Mark today.

Part 11, The Attribute and Mark of Catholicity: Msgr. G. van Noort introduces the Attribute and Mark of Catholicity, thus (Vol. 2 pages 143-144):

- 2. As applied to the Church the term catholic may take on various shades of meaning since a number of facets in its makeup fit the notion of totality or universality. For example, it may be called catholic in reference to:
 - a) doctrine
 - b) personnel
 - c) time
 - d) place

The Church is catholic in *doctrine* because it teaches Christ's religion in its completeness or entirety; in *personnel* because it welcomes people of every sort of temperament and condition in life and erects no racial, national or social barriers; with reference to *time* because it covers the whole era from the time of Christ until the end of the world; with reference to *place* because it is spread throughout the entire world.

Even though the first three meanings do turn up occasionally in the writings of the fathers, they occur far less frequently than the fourth, which is the correct usage and the best known. In the present discussion the term will be used exclusively in that sense.

We can know that the present day Vatican apparatus is not Catholic owing to its failure to retain several essential aspects of Catholicism as an attribute. In particular, it fails to be Catholic on three of the four listed points, namely in doctrine, time, and place.

It lacks Catholicity of doctrine in that it does not teach "Christ's religion in its completeness or entirety" owing to its numerous errors and heresies. It lacks Catholicity of time in that it does not cover "the whole era from the time of Christ until the end of the world" owing to the obvious fact that its Novus Ordo religion never existed at all until the 1960's, and can very reasonably be expected disappear before the world's end, should that end tarry long enough.

Catholic Tradition of course has existed from the very beginning. What is called a "Traditional Catholic" today is simply what was called a "Catholic" in all pre-Vatican II eras (or in England a "Roman Catholic" as something distinct from their Anglican brand of "Catholic"), and so traditional Catholics alone rightly lay claim to that entire Patrimony and legacy which is that one true Church from the days of the Apostles in the Bible clear to today. While the presence of these first two aspects of the attribute of Catholicity among Traditional Catholics cannot serve as a positive Mark as proof that we are the Church, the absence of the two of them among the Novus Ordo believers of the present day fallen Vatican apparatus does serve as proof positive that they do not possess this Mark. (The other criterion of "Catholicity of personnel" is retained equally by both the traditional Catholic community and also by the

Vatican apparatus, in that neither one bars anyone from membership on account of race, nationality, ethnicity, economic level, etc.)

Catholicity of place requires some further clarification; Van Noort continues directly on from the above quote (pages 144):

- **3.** By the term catholicity, then, is meant the diffusion of the one and undivided Church throughout the entire world. Notice the phrase, one and undivided Church. Catholicity necessarily implies that the Church in its world-wide diffusion retains the triple unity (doctrinal, social, governmental) explained earlier (see nos. 101-109). Finally, it is customary to distinguish between what is called catholicity *by right* and catholicity *in fact*.
- a. Catholicity by right (i.e., destined or intended to be such) means that the Church has the aptitude, right, and duty to spread throughout the world.

The Church has the *aptitude* to spread over the whole world because there is nothing in its structural principles which bind it to one nation or a few nations rather than to any other. The Church has both the *right* and the *duty* to spread throughout the world because its Founder endowed it with the power and the obligation of spreading to all regions.

These facts are clearly proven by Christ's words: "Go, therefore, and initiate all nations in discipleship."

The new-born Church possessed only catholicity by right; but that is, of course, the root and foundation for catholicity in fact.

b. Catholicity in fact. Catholicity in this sense means the actual spread of the Church throughout the world. If that diffusion actually extends to all people, it is called *absolute* catholicity; if it reaches only a great number of people, it is called *moral* catholicity.

As to the last listed aspect, Catholicity of place, though the Novus Ordo has (thus far, so far as we know) retained a presence in all countries, one must not overlook the fact that they have formally relinquished "Catholicity of place by right" with their Balamand agreement with the Eastern schismatics, their recommendation to their "faithful" in China to have recourse to the schismatic clergy of the Chinese Patriotic Church, and many other lesser agreements and policies of a similar nature.

In short, if (for example) every single Chinese member of the Vatican apparatus were to transfer to the schismatic Chinese Patriotic Church, thus leaving the Vatican apparatus with absolutely NO representatives throughout that entire nation, that would be absolutely fine with them. If every Uniate cleric of any Rite whatsoever were to transfer over, body and soul, to the nearest equivalent schismatic church, thus leaving Eastern Europe and other places such as the Middle East or India with absolutely NO representatives of theirs throughout those regions, that would be absolutely fine with them. Whatever residual "Catholicity of place in fact" which is retained by the Novus Ordo apparatus (which they "appropriated" from us traditional Catholics who comprise the real Catholic Church) is not intrinsic to its structure or intentions, and could easily be lost, and doubtless eventually will be.

Part 12, The Attribute and Mark of Catholicity, Continued: Trying to make Catholicity of place in fact, purely by itself, out to be a supernatural Mark may be a flawed approach, however, as there are some sects which have attained the same thing. Think of (for example) the Watchtower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) which has their "Kingdom Halls" in literally every country on the planet, and has done so for nearly a hundred years. This flawed approach is easily enough repaired by bringing in the factor of time as an aspect of this Mark, in that it not only has to be everywhere in terms of cultures and nations, races and customs, but also extending throughout the Christian era as well. Note, for example, how in summation, when trying to explain the Mark of Catholicism in a short phrase, Msgr. G. Van Noort ends up bringing in the feature of time as well as place (Vol. 2 page 164):

OBSERVE. Some theologians incorrectly, at least in our opinion, claim that the true Church of Christ, because of this mark of catholicity, should always possess a larger number of members than any sect. But catholicity does not consist merely in numbers. It also requires diffusion throughout the world. That is why no sect, however numerous its adherents, can ever be morally universal; in other words, there could never exist in addition to the true Church of Christ some other religious society which, while retaining genuine unity, would be spread among a great number of diverse peoples for a long time.

See how the additional criterion of "time" is brought in at the very end: "spread among a great number of diverse peoples *for a long time*." The only thing he should have made clear is how long is long enough to be that "long time." 50 years is a long time to you and me, but the Watchtower has possessed this quality for longer than that. Are we therefore to construe that therefore that patently false religion has the Mark of Catholicity? Obviously not!

But taking that "long time" as the whole history of Christianity, this criterion excludes both the Watchtower Society (founded in the 1870's by Charles T. Russell) and also the Novus Ordo (founded in the 1960's at Vatican II).

It now behooves us to take a closer look at what Catholicity of place does, and does not, mean. Van Noort expounds upon Catholicity of place on pages 144-148 (here 144, 146, 146-147, 147, and 148):

II. Catholicity is an Essential Quality of Christ's Church

After its first beginnings, then, Christ's Church should always enjoy a morally universal and progressive diffusion until finally one day it reaches all nations. This is the genuine notion of the catholicity God promised His Church. Each part of this notion bears explaining. We begin with the last, the eventual, complete diffusion of the Church.

PROPOSITION 1: The Church must finally one day reach literally all nations.

. . .

PROPOSITION 2: The Church is endowed with moral catholicity: Christ's Church, after its beginnings, should always be conspicuous for its morally universal diffusion.

In other words, the Church should always include in its membership a vast number of men from

many different nations.

. . .

To satisfy the requirements of moral catholicity in fact—a quality belonging to Christ's Church perpetually and necessarily—we stated there was required: "a great number of men from many different nations." For catholicity (which is directly opposed, not to fewness of numbers, but to nationalism or any other sort of provincialism) strictly implies diffusion throughout various regions of the world, and consequently diffusion among different peoples. Such diffusion, obviously, cannot be had without a really large number of adherents; but large numbers alone do not satisfy the requirements of catholicity. For example, if all the adherents, no matter how vast their number, were to belong to only one nation or one racial stock, they would still never constitute a church which was truly *Catholic*. Four hundred million Chinese converts would not make a Catholic Church.

. . .

PROPOSITION 3: The morally universal diffusion, characteristic of the Church in all ages, should be a progressive expansion.

. . .

Please note, however, that the *continuity* of this progressive expansion should not be pressed too hard. The texts cited do not rule out the possibility of the Church's being notably decreased in this or that century due to schism or heresy (whose occurrence was foretold in the Sacred Scripture), without its being able to recoup immediately. Still, theologians usually reject the hypothesis that the Church might ever be so besieged with heresy that it would—even for a brief period—be restricted to just one region. Neither should one interpret the scriptural prophecies about the great defection at the end of the world in such a sense.

That traditional Catholicism existed (at least to some limited degree) in literally all nations for quite some centuries prior to Vatican II cannot be contested. The Church was Traditional; the Church was distributed throughout the world to every nation. So it certainly stands to reason that in every land there would remain faithful souls who would come to be thought of as traditionalists because they refuse to go along with the innovations.

Of course, being so suddenly reduced in numbers, the Church is understandably spread quite thin in some regions. But remember that Catholicity "is directly opposed, not to fewness of numbers, but to nationalism or any other sort of provincialism" and also that "The texts cited do not rule out the possibility of the Church's being notably decreased in this or that century due to schism or heresy (whose occurrence was foretold in the Sacred Scripture), without its being able to recoup immediately." And finally, just as "Four hundred million Chinese converts would not make a Catholic Church," neither would one billion Novus Ordo converts in a single era make a Catholic Church.

Part 13, The Attribute and Mark of Catholicity, Completed: As seen, Catholicity of place in fact does not require absolutely large numbers of persons, but only a sufficient number as to make possible their distribution throughout nations, regions, races, ethnicities, and so forth, all around the world. And despite our relatively small numbers today, we still have that worldwide distribution.

One dramatic evidence of this which surprised me personally was when a sedevacantist priest in Germany was being hassled by his government. The obvious iniquity of this move on the part of the German government brought on an outpouring of support for this priest from all around the world, with at least 21 countries represented, several of which I (and probably everyone else here) would have absolutely no information regarding traditional Catholic persons or groups there. At various times in the past I have also corresponded with persons of yet other countries of which the same can be said; aside from themselves or their immediate families at the most, they knew of no one other than themselves from among their countrymen who are traditional Catholics. But they themselves exist.

Some smaller countries with nevertheless some known and surviving Catholic communities and individuals may be utterly without their own priest, only being visited by Catholic priests from other countries on rare occasions, if at all. In other places, an individual Catholic may assist at only a very few Masses in a lifetime, each time through some lengthy and arduous pilgrimage, perhaps even made on foot. Yet in all of this the Church (traditional Catholic community) fully retains its international and Catholic nature encompassing persons of all nations, races, cultures, languages, economic levels, and so forth.

When (as quoted from page 148) Msgr. G. Van Noort stated that "Still, theologians usually reject the hypothesis that the Church might ever be so besieged with heresy that it would—even for a brief period—be restricted to just one region. Neither should one interpret the scriptural prophecies about the great defection at the end of the world in such a sense," he brings in yet something else worthy of discussion. Just as it is reasonable to expect that at least some traditional Catholics must exist even in nations we here in the West have heard nothing from, I do, for the record, concede the possibility, however faint, that there might be still living some faithful bishop of some Alternate Rite who was appointed and assigned some diocese by some faithful Patriarch, who in turn had been appointed by some true Pope way back when, especially in some of those parts of the world we have heard nothing from. But if this one bishop alone would be the sole remaining basis to be able to say that the Church has any true and full successors of the Apostles today, canonically established, would that not amount to the Church being "restricted to just one region," namely this bishop's diocese? As is made clear in the same quote, not even the close approach of the end of the world is expected to reduce the Church to such a provincially limited span.

On page 164, Van Noort again emphasizes the miraculous nature of this Mark:

3. Catholicity. Catholicity by right is not a mark of the Church, but rather a necessary preliminary to the mark itself. The mark of catholicity, then, means exclusively that catholicity in fact which should always be found in the true Church: its morally universal diffusion. That this sort of catholicity when viewed concretely—that is, as comprising genuine unity and the unbroken preservation of that unity

throughout many centuries without recourse to force or military might—amounts to a moral miracle, no one of good sense will doubt. Such God-given unity, therefore, cannot be a property of a false religion. That the other requirements of a mark are verifiable in the criterion of *catholicity in fact* should be obvious.

Again, note the moral miracle, namely that "comprising genuine unity and the unbroken preservation of that unity throughout many centuries without recourse to force or military might" which "amounts to a moral miracle." And all the more miraculous is that moral miracle today in which whole regions are almost entirely bereft of even the ecclesiastical infrastructure needed to sustain it, yet traditional Catholics there (however few) nevertheless remain.

It is also worth noting that though the traditional Catholic community is presently smaller than not only the Novus Ordo, but many other individual historic sects as well, the fact remains that over the course of Christian history there have been far more traditional Catholics than members of the Novus Ordo and all other sects combined. At least historically, we traditional Catholics are still truly the most numerous.

The Attribute and Mark of Apostolicity: Msgr. G. Van Noort lists three basic aspects of the attribute of Apostolicity, two of which comprise the Mark of Apostolicity (Vol. 2, pages 151 and 154):

- II. Christ's Church is Apostolic in Doctrine, Government, and Membership
- 1. Apostolicity of doctrine means the Church always retains and teaches the very same doctrine which it received from the apostles. Doctrine, as the term is used at this point, includes also the sacraments.

. . .

2. Apostolicity of government—or mission, or authority—means the Church is always ruled by pastors who form one same juridical person with the apostles. In other words it is always ruled by pastors who are the apostles' legitimate successors.

. . .

3. Apostolicity of membership means that the Church in any given age is and remains numerically the same society as that planted by the apostles.

That apostolicity of doctrine (and the apostolic sacraments in their truly authentic and valid forms) is fully retained by the traditional Catholic community scarcely requires comment as it cannot be meaningfully challenged, as this is practically a tautology. Still, it is also a readily verifiable fact that the known traditionalists really do adhere to all the apostolic doctrines (and sacraments), as the Church has honed to such a high degree of perfection by the eve of Vatican II. No matter what else happens, that much must always be retained, and will be.

Correspondingly, apostolicity of doctrine (and of sacraments) has patently not been preserved by the Novus Ordo apparatus, therefore rendering it intrinsically incapable of being the Apostolic Church.

Part 14, The Attribute and Mark of Apostolicity, Continued: With Apostolicity consisting of apostolicity of doctrine, government, and membership, Msgr. G. Van Noort explains why only apostolicity of government and membership would count as part of the Mark (vol. 2 pages 164-165):

4. Apostolicity. Apostolicity *of doctrine* should not be listed as a mark of the Church because it is not something obvious. Furthermore, it is not something easier to recognize than the true Church herself. For it is extraordinarily difficult, in fact impossible, to have certitude about the entire body of doctrine taught by the apostles without the testimony of Christ's Church. It presumes, then, that that Church is already identified. That is why the rule of faith has always been: find out who are the successors of the apostles, and which *society* is a continuation of the Church planted by the apostles, then you will be able to receive the pure and complete doctrine taught by the apostles. Notice, too, that apostolicity of doctrine, taken all by itself would be only a negative mark of the Church; for there is nothing intrinsically contradictory in the notion of having some sect retain the doctrine of the apostles in its entirety. This point alone is guaranteed by that negative criterion: if it be proven that a Christian denomination has departed from even one point of doctrine taught by the apostles, by that very fact it is convicted of being a counterfeit.

The mark of apostolicity, then, is found in *apostolicity* of both *membership* and *government*. These two factors are, of course, only inadequately distinguished from one another [Footnote clarifies: the rulers of the Church are also part of its membership]. Even though this double sort of apostolicity is not obvious to all men, but only to those who are fairly well versed in history, it clearly fulfills all the requirements for a genuine mark.

OBSERVE. If one considers apostolicity in purely abstract fashion, it is simply an historical fact; if one views it concretely, that is, as including the *unconquerable stability* of that same Church which has existed as a world-wide organization throughout nineteen hundred years, it is at the same time a moral miracle as we have demonstrated in the treatise, *The True Religion* (see no. 124).

So of course, the failure of the Novus Ordo apparatus to retain apostolicity of doctrine indeed convicts it of being a counterfeit. The possession of the fullness of apostolicity of doctrine on the part of the traditional Catholic community certainly qualifies it for being the Church, but for the reasons mentioned do not constitute any part of the Mark of apostolicity. But given the fact that nothing save the traditional Catholic community upholds that fullness of the apostolic doctrine, one would be forced to conclude that either the traditional Catholic community would have to be the Apostolic Church or else that the Apostolic Church does not exist. So although not rising to that level of being any part of the Mark of Apostolicity, it does constitute a positively favorable evidence of it. It still fails to be any part of the Mark because it presumes the antecedent discovery of the Apostolic Church whose doctrines the traditional Catholic community alone represents today.

Skipping over to the third, Apostolicity of membership, Van Noort emphasizes how this aspect of the attribute and Mark requires a direct and living continuity, a state of being *numerically* the same society, between the Church that was and the Church that is (Vol. 2 page 155):

Please note the word, *numerically* the same society. A mere *specific* likeness would never satisfy the requirement of apostolicity. Just for the sake of argument—even though it can not actually happen—let us conjure up some church which would bear a merely specific likeness to Christ's Church; a church which would be like it in all respects except numerical identity. Imagine, now, that the Church planted by the apostles has perished utterly. Imagine—whether you make it the year 600, 1500, or 3000—that all its members have deserted. Imagine, furthermore, that out of this totally crumpled society a fresh and vigorous society springs up and then, after a time, is remodeled perfectly to meet the blueprints of the ancient but now perished apostolic structure.

Such a process would never yield a church that was genuinely apostolic, that is, numerically one and the same society which actually existed under the apostles' personal rule. There would be a brand new society, studiously copied from a model long since extinct. The new church might be a decent imitation. It might be a caricature. One thing it definitely would not be—apostolic.

Obviously, there can be no claim here of the Church having disappeared, and then the traditional Catholic community starting up from scratch at some later point in time, as that would amount to a most profound failure at this all-important juncture. Equally would this test of apostolicity of membership fail if it were a matter of merely some random persons throwing themselves together into some kind of society, then modelling that society on the Church (even though still present, but with the absence of any contact thereto), and then somehow claiming that they were the Church.

The actual history of the traditional Catholic community belies either such historical scenario, since its origins are simply Catholics (clerical and lay) who were in good standing with the Church, and by their refusal to go along with the innovations being foisted upon them, thereby retained their good standing with the Church, and do so to this day. There are many traditional Catholics, who were alive as baptized and faithful Catholics in good standing with the Church back in the days before the whole schism between the traditional Catholic community and the Novus Ordo apparatus arose, and one cannot deny that they have kept their faith whole and entire, and (in most cases) without letup.

Of course, there have also been numerous converts to the traditional Catholic community, and these visibly joined a visible society as such, properly adding themselves to the Church as converts have always done. The same goes for children born of Catholic parents and raised as Catholics.

The continuity of the rank and file membership of the pre-Vatican II era Church and the traditional Catholic community is therefore complete and absolute. And to quote the footnote on page 165 of Van Noort, "the rulers of the Church are also part of its membership," and so we also find (at least a physical) continuity of the priests and bishops. For many priests (and a very few bishops) supported traditional Catholics in their struggle to keep the fullness of the faith in the face of all the radical innovations being foisted upon them, all in good standing with the Church clear from the beginning onward. As faithful priests died off, faithful bishops ordained more faithful priests to replace them, and later on bishops as well, so as with the rank and file, the (at least physical) continuity of the Church's leaders also continues directly, smoothly and cleanly from the pre-Vatican II era Church to the traditional Catholic community of today. So, traditional Catholics do possess this aspect of the Mark of Apostolicity.

Part 15, The Attribute and Mark of Apostolicity, Continued: Unfortunately, to the confusion of all, the Novus Ordo apparatus also draws its basic resources (both cleric and lay) from the pre-Vatican II era Church. This distinction is therefore properly categorized as a schism between the two societies. So which side has the right to claim Apostolicity of membership? Msgr. Charles Journet states in *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, pages 533 and 535:

B. Two Signs of Rupture: a. Dissidence b. Innovation

A rupture can be positively demonstrated in two ways: by dissidence or by innovation.

a. First, by dissidence, separation, schism. But at the moment when two Churches separate, each claims to be the true Church of Christ, and each accuses the other of dissidence. Is there any mark enabling us to recognize which of the two is the Church of Christ and which is the dissident?

The ancients replied: the Church of Christ is that where universality is found.

. . .

b. The existence of a rupture may be proved also by innovation, whereby divine things are made to pass for human or human for divine, according as it adds to or takes away from the revealed deposit. What has been divinely given to the world once and for all, ought to be kept without addition or subtraction. The supreme revelation, given by Christ and the Apostles, is not to be transformed. The definitive institutions coming from Christ are not to be replaced. Where we find antiquity there is the Church of Christ.

Of the two means to discern which side of a schism is the real Church, the first criterion as explained by him is useless today, as the traditional Catholic community and the Novus Ordo apparatus are equally to be found throughout the inhabited earth (typically, a schism would be localized in one region or another, and not spread throughout the whole world as is the Church). Traditional Catholics are all over the world because the Church was all over the world, and still is. The Novus Ordo apparatus is also all over the world merely by having appropriated to itself so very many of the Church's (now former) resources.

The second criterion however, is the "dead giveaway" today. The whole point and purpose of the Novus Ordo apparatus, with its whole new Novus Ordo religion, has been innovation in everything, preservation of nothing. And indeed, antiquity and all ages since clear until Vatican II knew nothing of any Novus Ordo religion.

It is therefore safe to say that the traditional Catholic community, alone, possesses (and possesses fully) that apostolicity of membership aspect of the Mark of Apostolicity itself.

Apostolicity of government is the trickier one, as we are not quite yet ready to show that it IS so, but merely part of why that it MUST BE so. This is by virtue of the concept, previously mentioned in Part 5, namely the "dogmatic imperative." What I call the dogmatic imperative is that the doctrines and dogmas of the Church tell us yea verily that a given thing is so, and we are constrained to believe it even if there were not a scrap of evidence (apart from the dogma itself) that it is true.

For example, those who take recourse to the notion of there being some old and faithful bishop somewhere, appointed by a true Pope (or at the very least, appointed by a true Patriarch to some Alternate Rite where this practice has been retained, who was in turn himself appointed by a true Pope) have done so purely on account of their interpretation of the dogmatic imperative that the Church must have an Apostolic succession somewhere, a true and truly canonical and legal hierarchy with all rights to command the consciences of men.

But this same dogmatic imperative also admits of another interpretation, namely that bishops who may even be uncertain themselves as to what authority or place they have in the Church, or how they got it, might indeed have obtained this truly and formally apostolic place in the Church despite their not having been appointed by a living true Pope or Patriarch.

At this point, one would in all honestly have to consider both interpretations equally possible, as each have hurdles to overcome. But as time goes on however, the first interpretation, already somewhat unlikely though not quite capable of being ruled out, becomes increasingly untenable as any such bishop remaining can only live for so long and already there is no more means of any more such bishops coming into being. Once the oldest living person is not old enough to be this bishop, the first interpretation absolutely ceases to be a possibility; if a true Pope has not been restored by that point the Church is then absolutely forced to accept the second interpretation. Later in this study I will show how the difficulties for the second interpretation might be overcome, but for now it remains to continue showing the profoundly important reasons to believe that these difficulties can and must be overcome.

As a last point here, though our familiar traditional bishops do not openly make any clear claims of authority, it is interesting to note the truly vast assortment of juridical duties they have performed: They have founded religious congregations and houses, founded and operated seminaries, tonsured seminarians into the clerical state, incardinated priests into their own Congregations/Societies, consecrated altars, blessed all manner of sacred oils, administered the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders clear to the providing of episcopal successors of themselves for the Church, directed their priests as to which editions of the Liturgical books are to be used, denounced heresies, led and presided over organized societies of priests, religious, and lay faithful, granted dispensations, enrolled parishioners in the Scapular and allowed their priests to do the same, absolved sins, even certain serious sins which are "reserved to the bishop" and granted faculties to their priests to do the same, excommunicated and lifted sentences of excommunication, restored formerly apostate or schismatic (but now repentant) clerics to the Church as clerics (including bishops as bishops), witnessed abjurations of error, consecrated various grounds as sacred for Catholic cemeteries and the like, sent priests, nuns, and monks as missionaries to remote regions, written—or authorized their priests, and sometimes others as well, to write—new catechisms and have given their approval for these catechisms to be published, recognized marriages (and even granted some few annulments), served (and authorized their priests to serve) as regular confessors to members of their flocks, performed (and authorized and empowered their priests to perform) many successful exorcisms, and assumed all the usual pastoral responsibilities for the souls. It is unreasonable to claim that all of these things can be done under the terms of supplied jurisdiction. And if it had been merely a matter of valid orders, our seminaries could have simply told their seminarians to go and get ordained by some Old Catholic or whatever.

Part 16, The survival of the Church: One last part of the puzzle to gather in before we proceed is what Msgr. G. Van Noort explained on page 165 as "the *unconquerable stability* of that same Church which has existed as a world-wide organization throughout nineteen hundred years," a "moral miracle" of which he had written in Volume One, pages 211, 213:

PROPOSITION 2. The preservation of the Christian-Catholic religion throughout all ages, considering all the circumstances, must be acclaimed a moral miracle.

- I. The fact of the unbroken preservation of the Catholic Church and of her religion is self-evident; the matter of special concern here is the nature of that stability which has been a characteristic of the Church throughout twenty centuries. It is one thing for an institution hidden away in a corner of the world to lead a long, but sterile existence. It is another matter for a religion, spread all over the face of the globe, constantly engaged in controversy with clever adversaries, part and parcel of the ever changing social scene, to go on living an always active life and to continue to grow and become stronger day by day. Since it is a well-known fact that the Catholic Church is characterized by the latter and not the former type of stability, that stability is assumed as the basis for the following discussion.
- II. The unbroken stability of the Catholic religion cannot be explained on natural grounds. This conclusion flows from a consideration of the magnitude of the perils which have constantly threatened it, and of the inadequacy of natural helps.

. . .

Conclusion. Just as the first expansion of the Catholic religion, so is its perennial conservation an effect which can be in no way explained as due to visible and merely natural causes. Consequently, unless one is ready to admit an effect without a proportionate cause, the conclusion follows that the inviolate stability of the Church is due for the most part to the special help of God, who constantly and efficaciously moves men throughout the world to embrace the faith.

Now imagine yourself as a Catholic apologist, charged with proving the claims to supernatural help for the Church. You can point to all the challenges which endangered the Church in the various ages, the Jewish, then Roman persecutions, the laxity of Roman acceptance, the rise and near total takeover of Arianism, the scandalous compromises made with secular powers, the Photian schism (and subsequent final break with the East), the rise of Islam and many heretical sects over the ages, scandalously bad, worldly, and wicked popes, the incipient humanism of the renaissance era, the rise of Protestantism, the Galileo controversy, the rise of rationalism, humanism, secularism, atheism, world wars, and "the pill."

But then comes Vatican II, which (if we take the Vatican apparatus to be the Church) finally succeeded at what these other vicissitudes of history could not, the complete deflection of its purposes away from those sustained up until that point. But one can point at the traditional Catholic community, though the Church be reduced to a small remnant, weak, scattered, its whole organizational infrastructure reduced to a mere shadow of its former self, yet nevertheless faithful, nevertheless full of that miraculous life and power, nevertheless still at the forefront of the ideological war with the world's pseudo-learning.

We are not hidden away in a corner of the world leading a sterile existence but still "constantly engaged in controversy with clever adversaries," and "part and parcel of the ever changing social scene." The same cannot be said of some undiscoverable "bishop in the woods," as he would have been heard from by now. Indeed, the very survival of the Church through the unique challenges of this one period is itself as much of a moral miracle as the Church's survival throughout all preceding periods put together.

Putting it all together: Traditional Catholics have, by and large, generally sensed, or assumed, either as a conscious belief, or at least as an inarticulate suspicion, that the traditional Catholic community, taken together as I defined at the outset, or at the very least, a significant proportion thereof, really is what constitutes the institutional Roman Catholic Church in our own era. Studying the Marks and attributes of the Church amply demonstrates that this at least intuitive *sensus fidelium* of the traditional Catholic Faithful is truly well founded, and that, in contrast, the only other society sufficiently visible to evaluate empirically, the Vatican apparatus, fails significantly on nearly all points. "N" means "does not meet," "Y" means "does meet," and "M" means "maybe meets (seems to), but that can't be proved now."

V	Т	("V" equals Vatican apparatus; "T" equals traditional Catholic community)
N	Υ	Indefectibility of the Church – That it is not corrupted in purpose
Υ	Υ	Indefectibility of the Church – That it is not eliminated from all existence
N	M	Infallibility of the Church – Active infallibility; its Pope does not err
N	Υ	Infallibility of the Church – Passive infallibility; it does not follow error or false teachers
Υ	Υ	Visibility of the Church – That it remains identifiable as a society in the world
N	Υ	Unity of Doctrine and Profession
N	Υ	Unity of Communion (despite diverse opinions on matters not ruled on by the Church)
N	Υ	Unity of Government (despite a material interruption of hierarchical unity)
N	Υ	Holiness of Means (possession of correct teaching, valid sacraments, good devotions)
N	Υ	Holiness of Members (more widespread ordinary holiness than elsewhere)
N	M	Holiness of Members (extraordinary/heroic)
N	M	Holiness of Charisms (miracles)
N	Υ	Catholicity of Doctrine – that it teaches the whole counsel of God
N	Υ	Catholicity of Time – that it has existed at all times from that of the Apostles onward
Υ	Υ	Catholicity of Personnel – that it accepts persons of all cultural/national/etc. sorts
N	Υ	Catholicity of Place (by Right) – that it claims an exclusive right and duty to lead all
Υ	Υ	Catholicity of Place (in Fact) – that it is actually found today in all countries
N	Υ	Apostolicity of Doctrine (attribute of Apostolicity; the other two comprise the Mark)
	?	Apostolicity of Government – that its leaders are lawfully and canonically founded
N		
N N	Υ	Apostolicity of Membership – that its members derive from the Church without schism

Without a Pope, there is no means to demonstrate that a Pope of the traditional Catholic community would be infallible; without a curial office to investigate saints and miracles as the Church formerly did, there is no means to confirm our truly saintly and miraculous persons and events. But note the question mark on "Apostolicity of Government." Is it really tenable to claim that a given society which fully possesses all of these other Marks and attributes would lack this one-half of the Mark of Apostolicity?

Putting it all together, continued: Observing that the traditional Catholic community would bear all the Marks and attributes of the Church (to the fullest extent they can be measured, in view of there being a few which cannot be reliably measured in today's circumstance), it certainly would have to be quite odd that Apostolicity of Government, alone, would be clearly lacking. It also does not make sense that a given society should, alone, possess all of these qualities, some of them supernatural, and yet do this while supposedly lacking the supernatural authority with which God always holds His Church together.

Recall first of all the point made back in the sixth part regarding how the four Marks (or "notes" as Msgr. Journet called them, as that was who was quoted on this point) always must go together. Msgr. G. Van Noort mentions the same point as well, however (Vol. 2. Pages 161-162):

Catholics unanimously lay down *four* marks of the true Church. They take those marks from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed which states: "I believe in the *one*, *holy*, *catholic*, and *apostolic* Church."

These four qualities, unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, must be examined to see if they meet all the requirements of genuine marks. That those four qualities are *necessary* and *inseparable* "properties" of the true Church of Christ has already been established in the preceding chapter. All that remains to do, then, is to see if they meet the remaining requisites for genuine marks: *a*. Are they visible? *b*. Are they easier to recognize than the thing sought?

In particular, these four qualities (marks) are necessary and inseparable "properties" of the true Church of Christ. It is therefore doctrinally inconceivable that the traditional Catholic community, while obviously and alone bearing the first three Marks, and attributes as well (all to the fullest extent they can be measured today), would somehow lack that one essential component of the Mark of Apostolicity.

Authority of the Church: It is by divine design that authority runs through the whole warp and woof of the Church, and in fact is the glue by which all other Marks and attributes are obtained and sustained. Jesus Christ delegated authority for the operation of His Church to Peter and the Apostles, who in turn re-delegated this same authority to successors, and to those empowered to elect popes, and so forth, a living and personal chain of re-delegation from His own day until ours, and upon which He promised the protections evidenced as these Marks and attributes. It is doctrinally impossible for the Church to exist as such without authority. Msgr. G. Van Noort explains (Vol. 2, pages 32-33):

II. The Church of Christ is a Hierarchical Society

Catholic teaching holds that Christ Himself established a sacred authority in His Church, and that this authority, invested first in the apostolic college, was uninterruptedly perpetuated, and in fact perdures today in the college of bishops.

PROPOSITION 1: Christ established a sacred authority in His Church when He directly bestowed on the college of the apostles the power to teach, to function as priests, and to rule.

The first part of this proposition affirms the general truth that the Church, by the institution of the Lord Himself, is an unequal society, i.e., one in which some govern and others are governed.

The second part states precisely who were put in authority over others and what powers put them in a class apart. A proof of this latter statement will suffice.

The power *to teach* is the right and the duty to set forth Christian truth with an authority to which all are held to give internal and external obedience.

The power to function as priests or ministers is the power to offer sacrifice and to sanctify people through the instrumentality of outward rites.

The power to rule or govern is the power to regulate the moral conduct of one's subjects. Since this power is exercised chiefly through legislation and then through judicial sentences and penalties, it comprises *legislative*, *judicial*, and *coercive* powers. The power to pass judgment and to punish is a necessary complement of the power to make laws, for all by themselves, laws usually have little effect. They must be bolstered by courts and by penalties.

The threefold power to teach, to function as priests, and to rule corresponds to the threefold office with which Christ as man was invested, for He was Prophet, Priest, and King. And so, by bestowing on the apostles the aforesaid threefold power, He made them sharers in the same powers which He (in His human nature) received from the Father, although not in the same fullness.

Once again, without yet knowing with what canonical basis any traditional clerics could lay claim to any manner of conventional jurisdiction, this teaching must be taken (at least for now, at this point in the case that I have to make) as being a dogmatic imperative, exactly as it is a dogmatic imperative that some true bishop somewhere (even were it truly impossible to find and identify this bishop) absolutely must exist. Indeed, this dogmatic imperative seems quite similar to that one introduced previously.

What this present dogmatic imperative brings to the table (which the other did not) is the fact that any and every such bishop with a right to bearing the doctrinal and moral authority and legal and canonical jurisdiction of the Church positively MUST be a member of the traditional Catholic community, and not merely some person out yonder just any-old-where. Certainly if a bishop did not publicly uphold and practice quite specifically the traditional Catholic Faith, he could not be one juridical person with the Apostles. So of course this bishop, whoever he is (or these bishops, whoever they are) must be identifiably traditional Catholic, specifically (and positively NOT Novus Ordo) in their beliefs.

I should point out (perhaps some have assumed to the contrary) that not every sacramentally valid bishop who hangs out his shingle as a traditional Catholic, no matter what or who or how he got his power of orders, would automatically possess authority in the Church. I readily and enthusiastically grant that there are some, possessing the full power of orders, who cannot legitimately act for the good of the Church, save through supplied jurisdiction. I reject the extreme of positing that everyone with full power of orders possesses true authority. However, I also reject the opposite extreme that this status of being a truly authoritative bishop could be limited to persons unknown and unidentifiable, that is to say, to persons whose existence cannot be empirically verified, and for all we know may have already died off, or necessarily will do so soon. I realize that for some, that extreme has been sufficient, and recall that I do include within my definition such Alternate Rites as would remain "within the pale."

Part 18, The Apostolicity of Traditional Bishops: I presume we all here agree that there exists a doctrine that individual bishops are appointed only with the approval of the Pope. Msgr. G. Van Noort states this doctrine straight out (Vol. 2. Page 324):

Assertion 5: Bishops receive jurisdiction over their flocks directly from the Roman pontiff.

This is *certain*.

In the previous assertion it was pointed out that the establishment of individual bishops always involves some intervention by the pope. The bishops, we saw, cannot actually exercise their jurisdiction over their flocks without the consent, explicit or implicit, of the pope.

He proceeds directly into some rather considerable discussion regarding two different theories as to how the bishops get their status, whether through the Pope (Papal theory) or directly from God upon their appointment to an office (Episcopal theory), much as the Pope receives his authority upon his election and acceptance of his office. Van Noort and most others (including myself) regard the Papal theory as confirmed (doctrinally certain), but Ludwig Ott still seems to favor the Episcopal theory.

Before proceeding however, anyone doing the diligence to read through Van Noort's discussion will note a seemingly juicy opposition quote from Zapalena (*De ecclesia Christi*) that "Two consequences follow immediately from that fact: first, that episcopal jurisdiction is not conferred by consecration; secondly, that it is conferred through the mediation of papal confirmation [i.e., adoption]" (pages 325-326). But in context he is not saying that it is impossible for jurisdiction to be conferred by or alongside consecration, but rather with reference to the common practice of performing the two actions at different times. In no wise does he (or anyone else) imply that a Pope would not have the power and right to combine the two effects into a single action, or even to legislate to the effect that the accomplishment of the one would of itself imply the delegation of the other.

Note the rather general phrase quoted above: "always involves some intervention by the pope" and also the statement that the Pope's consent may be "explicit or implicit," explicit being with his personal consent (given in person or through writing), and implicit being through any number of tacit means which do not require the Pope's active and personal participation (or even that there be a living Pope at the time). Fr. Eugene Berry describes the same distinction (in *The Church of Christ*, page 233):

The authority of the Roman Pontiff to constitute bishops for all parts of the Church may be exercised directly by personal appointments, or indirectly by delegating others, either by law or by approved custom, to elect persons to the episcopal office. The former method is in general use today, at least in the Western Church; the latter was common in the earlier ages and is practiced to some extent even today.

Van Noort explains the process yet further (page 323):

Assertion 4: Bishops, to be able to exercise jurisdiction over their flocks, must be adopted by the authority of the pope.

The way in which individual bishops are established must now be discussed. Even though the episcopal office is something established by God, it is quite obvious that individual rulers of individual dioceses are directly established not by God, but by men. At this juncture we are not inquiring from whom the bishops proximately receive their jurisdiction ..., but what is required for them *actually to function* as pastors of their diocese and *to exercise* their jurisdiction there. To be able to do this, we state, they must be adopted by the authority of the supreme pontiff. *Adoption (assumptio)* is a short form standing for "adoption or assumption into the corporate body of the pastors of the Church." It designates the factor by which the formal admittance of a selected or elected candidate is brought to its final conclusion. We use the phrase, "by the authority of the pope," to indicate that a direct, personal intervention by the pope is not necessarily required. So long as the adoption be done by someone to whom the pope has entrusted the task (regardless of the precise way in which the pope commissions him to do so), or in accord with regulations already established or approved by the pope. In saying that papal adoption is *necessary*, we do not mean it is merely necessary because of ecclesiastical law currently in force; we mean it is necessary by the divine law itself. Even though this necessity has never been explicitly defined, it follows absolutely from Catholic principles.

Note that "the authority of the pope" can be carried out either by "someone to whom the pope has entrusted the task," or else "in accord with regulations already established," or even "[regulations] approved by the pope. Note also that it is the "Adoption" (assumptio) which makes a bishop Apostolic, not an office. Msgr. G. Van Noort discusses the history of how bishops are chosen (Vol. 2 page 324):

The *objection* is raised: in ancient times the popes did not intervene in any way at all in the selection of bishops. That they did not always intervene directly and by explicit consent, is *granted*; that they did not intervene at all, not even mediately and by legal consent, we *deny*. In the absence of historical testimony, it is admittedly impossible to prove this statement directly.

Still, keeping in mind Catholic principles, it is fair enough to reconstruct the process somewhat as follows. The apostles and their principle aides, in accord with Peter's consent and will, both selected the first bishops, and decreed that thereafter when sees become vacant the vacancy should be taken care of in some satisfactory way, and in a way which at the very least would not be without the intervention of the neighboring bishops. As often, therefore, in accord with this process, established with Peter's approval, a new bishop was constituted in the early Church, Peter's authority ratified that selection implicitly. Later on, when ecclesiastical affairs were arranged more precisely by positive law, the patriarchs in the Eastern churches and the metropolitans in the Western churches used to establish the bishops; but they did so only in virtue of the authority of the Apostolic See by which they themselves had been established, even though in a variety of ways. Finally, in later centuries the matter of establishing bishops was set up in different fashion; indeed in such a way that in the Latin church especially, the direct intervention of the Roman pontiff was required. For details in this matter, consult the canonists.

It has to be clear that even the means by which a bishop is chosen may be decided "in a variety of ways" so long as it is "only in virtue of the authority of the Apostolic See by which they themselves had been established." Next, we will explore some of those means, as indicated or known from history.

Part 19, The Apostolicity of Traditional Bishops, Continued: The choice of a bishop by a Patriarch (or of a Metropolitan in the West) is the one most obvious manner in which the implicit will of the Pope for a particular man to be chosen as bishop and "adopted (or assumed) into the corporate body of the pastors of the Church" can be expressed, even in the complete absence of a Pope, and thankfully one I need not defend here. But how long can Patriarchs recognized by a true Pope remain faithful under a false one, and how long before all are replaced by new Patriarchs never recognized by any true Pope? But history bears out that there have been quite a number of methods by which the Church (with the Pope's authority) has chosen bishops, many of which did not require the active participation of a Pope. And this is so despite the doctrine (being a doctrine therefore always true) that the Pope selects bishops.

In the earliest days of the Church (at least the first five centuries or so), a variety of local customs were simply tacitly accepted. Various approved bishops of the Church would recognize the results of various procedures by which men were chosen to be bishops, and be therefore able to both consecrate and approve (legitimize) the men so consecrated as bishops of the Church. The "various procedures" other than Papal or Patriarchal appointments included such things as elections of the people of the diocese, elections of the clergy, recommendations of religious Abbots or made by the preceding bishop (selecting the coadjutor), nominations by secular princes with whom the bishop would routinely negotiate matters affecting both Church and State, or selection by the neighboring bishops. A snapshot of how things were in these early times is documented by Fr. Eugene Berry (in *The Church of Christ*, page 204):

II. ST. JEROME. In 376 St. Jerome himself consulted Pope Damasus concerning a matter pertaining to the church in Antioch, where a schism was in progress, with three claimants for the episcopal throne. He says [in his *Epistle ad Damasum*]: "The church here is divided into three parties, each trying to draw me to its side. ... But I cry out: I hold with the one who is in union with the chair of Peter. Melitius, Vitalis, and Paulinus all claim to be in union with you. If only one of them claimed this, I could believe him, but as it is, two at least, and perhaps all of them, are lying. Therefore, I beseech Your Blessedness ... to inform me by letter with whom I am to communicate here in Syria."

Three various groups within the Church in Antioch had each chosen someone to be the bishop of Antioch, and though the Pope may have already tacitly accepted one of them, St. Jerome still needed to write directly to the Pope so as to find out which one it was. (The Pope sided with Paulinus.) Such conditions would eventually be rectified by getting the Pope directly or through a chosen representative to make and approve the choices. Though the practice of leaving the selection process to various local customs gradually gave way to more rigidly controlled procedures, bishops could nevertheless still be selected during times of Sede Vacante or in circumstances of involuntary physical separation, again without access to any Pope or Patriarch (or Metropolitan) authorized to appoint bishops.

In our own day, some of these alternate means will have to be considered acceptable. Today none of the dismally small and quickly declining list of bishops, appointed personally by true Popes, have in any way discernably made any "profession of the faith" aligned with Tradition. To speculate that one such may be privately harboring truly Catholic beliefs is useless. A wolf might dress as a sheep, but a sheep does not dress as a wolf. It is perfectly possible that a bishop hanging out his shingle as a traditionalist could be some kind of deceiver, but quite impossible that some bishop, anonymously lost among the

shuffle of Novus Ordo "bishops" (himself performing and/or permitting Novus Ordo "masses"), could be really and materially a Catholic, even if at heart he really were. And the few bishops appointed by true Eastern Rite Patriarchs, formerly recognized by a true Pope, and as would still appoint the bishops for their own Rite must also die out before too long, despite the "extension" granted by that one scenario. Once the last of these dies off (and with the crisis still ongoing), some other means will be positively required in order to be able to maintain the continuance of the Church as a hierarchical society. I can see several possibilities, one being some restoration of ancient customs, another being the possibility of papal legislation that would set out some means for bishops to continue the legitimate successions in the absence of a Pope, and the last being the brute force fact that a law which becomes physically impossible to comply with thereby ceases to hold any moral or legal force; in short, because it is not reasonable to insist upon requiring the personal approval of a Pope (or papally approved Patriarch) during such a lengthy papal vacancy as to have caused all such to have died off, it would absolutely have to be legal for mere approved bishops to convey their own approved status to their succession.

One last point also bears discussion, as brought out by Msgr. G. Van Noort (vol. 2 pages 152-253):

Scholion 1. How can one prove that this or that bishop is a legitimate successor of the apostles?

... It may be asked then: "How can you be sure that this or that bishop should be counted as a *legitimate* successor of the apostles?" ... —Now two methods suggest themselves for proving that this or that bishop is a legitimate successor of the apostles.

- a. The *first method* is to demonstrate by historical documents that the man in question is connected with one of the original apostles by a never-interrupted line of predecessors in the same office. One must also prove that in this total line no one of his predecessors either acquired his position illicitly, or even though he may have acquired it legitimately, ever lost it. ... Christianity is nearly 2,000 years old. Indeed, in many cases it would be quite impossible to proceed along these lines because of a lack of documentary evidence.
- b. The second method is quite brief. First one locates the legitimate successor of the man whom Christ Himself established as the head and leader of the entire apostolic college. Once that has been done we can find out whether the particular bishop under scrutiny is united to Peter's successor and is acknowledged by him as a genuine successor in the apostolic office. It is easy enough to investigate these two points; it is also a perfectly satisfactory method of procedure.

In circumstances of Sede Vacante, and especially a prolonged period in which some number of bishops are appointed and consecrated in the absence of a Pope, the two methods can be combined. Start with the second method, going back to when there last was a Pope, and to the list of bishops he approved. Then, using the first method, but starting from the list of bishops approved by the last Pope instead of going all the way back to the original Apostles (which would be unrealistic were it possible at all), one merely works forward, following the lines approved by those apostolic bishops, excluding any as have defected from the Faith. Since the Novus Ordo bishops have defected into a new religion, that leaves only our familiar and known traditional bishops who stem from apostolic lines, along with whatever few Eastern Rite bishops (identities uncertain) as would not have yet gone "beyond the pale" into defection.

20 The disassociation of the Vatican apparatus from the Church: For the reasons discussed by Msgr. Van Noort on page 155 (discussed in part 14), it is impossible that the Vatican apparatus could ever have gone directly from being the Church to which every Catholic must belong, to NOT being the Church in such a manner that all Catholics are forbidden membership, as that would entail a continuity break which would promptly kill apostolicity. Rather, a gradual, or multi-phasic, process would be required, involving an interim stage in which a given society (now neither Church nor "anti-Church") can include non-Catholics as its members, and correspondingly have it that not all Catholics need be members.

In view of recent history (Vatican II and thereafter), one cannot help but conclude that such a thing must indeed have happened to the Vatican apparatus, such that it cannot be considered the entire Church, nor itself entirely (or by now even "mostly") Catholic. Indeed, that current remaining "overlap" between traditional Catholics and the Vatican apparatus as noted back in Part 1 is but a remaining vestige of earlier times during this "interim" phase when much more of the balance of the Church remained within the Vatican apparatus. That some few token traditional Catholics would be tolerated within such a society now so clearly opposed to Catholic principles is not to be seen as any acknowledgement of those principles on its part but rather an attack plan of "divide and rule" against Catholics, and in the East, a strategy of allowing or even encouraging Uniate Catholics to return to their schismatic counterparts. This is certainly not to accuse all individual Indult/Motu and Eastern Rite clergy (and their respective congregations) of any complicity in this subterfuge, but merely to explain why they continue to be tolerated therein. From their own standpoint such traditional Catholics see themselves as establishing a beachhead of the true Faith within a society that has patently become alienated from Catholic principles.

Still, there remains the issue of the transition into our current "interim" phase, of the Vatican apparatus in going from being simply the Catholic Church to being what it has become now. Bringing up the relevant visibility issues, Francisco Suárez stated the following (*De Legibus*, lib. Cap. VII, n. 7, p. 360):

"The loss of faith for heresy which is merely internal does not cause the loss of the power of jurisdiction (...). This is proved in the first place by the fact that the government (ecclesiastical) would become very uncertain if the power depended on interior thoughts and sins. Another proof: given that the Church is visible, it is necessary that her governing power be in its way visible, dependent therefore on external actions, and not on mere mental cogitations. ... Finally, it is consistent with reason that, just as ecclesiastical jurisdiction is only conferred by means of some human act—whether it be only designative, that is elective of the person, as in the case of the Supreme Pontiff, or it be conferring of power, as in other cases—neither should it be taken away except by means of some external action, for in both situations due proportion must be guarded, considering the condition and nature of man."

Just as a man does not lose an ecclesial office owing to some secret heresy known only to himself and to God, neither can a visible society go from being the visible Church of God to NOT being the visible Church of God through some invisible process. Some sort of official and public declaration or action is required for that to have occurred. Given this doctrinal necessity for visible external actions, it is a dogmatic imperative that the disassociation between the Vatican apparatus and the Church absolutely must have been accompanied with some sort of known and legal and visible declaration. And such

indeed we find, as the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated just hours before the positively heretical *Unitatis Redintegratio* (as shown back in Part 3), states the following:

8. ... This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Savior, after His Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and him and the other apostles to extend and direct with authority, which He erected for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth". This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, **subsists in** the catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.

The tendency on the part of many to dismiss this "subsists in" statement as just another bit of modernist heresy blinds them from realizing that a significant ontological change has just been legislated here. With the formal and public promulgation of this statement, the disassociation between the Vatican apparatus (what it called a "catholic Church") versus the (real Catholic) "Church of Christ" which is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic," and "the pillar and mainstay of the truth" is thereby made official and legal.

Indeed, one finds there a startlingly detailed description of what exactly has occurred thereafter: The real Church, no longer subsisting "as" the Vatican apparatus (as it had up to that point), nor even merely "throughout" it (which would have required its full retention, as a whole society, of the Catholic Faith), is now to be found only partly inside, but now also "outside the confines," while the Vatican apparatus, no longer as being the Church but merely partly containing part of it, becomes capable of being infiltrated, and ultimately overtaken, by alien and non-Catholic "principles" as we have all seen happen.

Some might object, "Lumen Gentium comes rather late, fully six years after the death of Pius XII." But the Church would not cease to be the Church for following a false pope if his falsity is not clearly and unambiguously manifested; furthermore, there exists no consensus as to which statement Roncalli and then of Montini would have FIRST unambiguously manifested the non-papacy of each. Therefore there is no known visible juncture, prior to Lumen Gentium, at which the disassociation could take place.

But, if one allows that Lumen Gentium itself was indeed legally promulgated, look what else it contains:

- 21. ... For the discharging of such great duties, the apostles were enriched by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, and they passed on this spiritual gift to their helpers by the imposition of hands, and it has been transmitted down to us in Episcopal consecration. ... But Episcopal consecration, together with the office of sanctifying, also confers the office of teaching and of governing ... Therefore it pertains to the bishops to admit newly elected members into the Episcopal body by means of the sacrament of Orders.
- 22. ... Hence, one is constituted a member of the Episcopal body in virtue of sacramental consecration and hierarchical communion with the head and members of the body.

Providing only that *Lumen Gentium* was legally promulgated, this passage explicitly binds together the "Adoption" (*assumptio*) into the legitimate body of pastors with the mere fact of episcopal consecration.