

About “Full Communion”

At first glance, article 12 of the apostolic letter *Misericordia et Miseria* looks like a “paternal gesture” from the pope, just as described by the SSPX communiqué of September 1st, 2015, since it seems to make things easier for traditional Catholics, while at the same time, Pope Francis’ attitude is just as “paternal”, although in opposite direction, towards pagans and heretics alike, including Lutherans recently, not recommending to them the Catholic sacraments which he is granting to traditional Catholics. Is not this two-faced strategy of Janus an instance of “straining out a gnat, and swallowing a camel”, which Our Lord accused the Pharisees of? (Matt 23:24)

Concerning this matter, the Master in Council consulted Rev. Fr Jean, OFM Cap., chaplain and censor of the Order, as he did concerning the *Refutation of Sedevacantism*, published in our general circular No. 04.0185 of last September 29th and some other questions. This time, it is the question of the validity of the sacraments given by traditional priests, and their “full communion” with the Church that are being challenged, while at the same time we should note that this notion of being “less” or “more in communion” was only invented since Vatican II with the “ecumenical” aim of integrating schismatics.

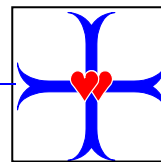
Rev. Fr Jean proposes the following text, which we are making our own and we will convey it to all our members on behalf of the Order. For us, it is simply a question of following the doctrinal and prudential guideline of Abp Lefebvre, in conformity to our Constitutions, which our undying fidelity has always demonstrated in our actions and in the positions we have maintained since the beginning. Though the situation might be chaotic today, and especially because of this, we must maintain the “path along the ridge” with a military and Catholic discipline, of which was spoken of by St Gregory of Nyssa in the 4th century, without falling into one extreme or the other.

Here is the text of Rev. Fr Jean:

On November 21st, Pope Francis published the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Miseria*, in which, in article 12, he states that the jurisdiction granted to the SSPX priests to validly and licitly hear confessions during the Jubilee of Mercy – which is, in fact, of the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II – is being extended, “until further provisions are made”.

In itself this is no matter for comments on our part, since, as for us, it is clear that nothing ever changed in confessionals, and that our priests, before, during, and after the Vatican II Jubilee, have always had, still have, and will always have the power to confess validly and licitly owing to the supplied jurisdiction given by the Church in certain cases, and particularly in this time when the Church is going through an unprecedented internal crisis.

Nevertheless, we consider it a duty for us to publicly express our disapproval, more particularly about two serious allegations from Pope Francis in this document, which we cannot accept. Catholic moral teaching tells us that a seemingly good action may be tainted by a perverted intention.



1.- The Pope explains the reason why he is extending this provision: he says “lest anyone ever be deprived of the sacramental sign of reconciliation through the Church’s pardon.” In other words, lest we traditional Catholic priests do not go on giving invalid absolutions after the Jubilee has ended... In this, Pope Francis is being much more of a rigorist than the prelates who had discussed this question of supplied jurisdiction with Abp. Lefebvre, and had finally admitted his reasons, or at least had stopped contesting them (October 29th, 1978).

We therefore have to oppose this injurious statement from the Pope, who implicitly but officially purports that sacramental confessions heard by traditional priests for the past forty years or so have been null and void. We say “injurious” –and seriously injurious– since it denies the Law of the Church, the sacerdotal integrity of our priests, and the strict right Catholics have to receive the sacraments from fully Catholic priests.

2.- The second perverted intention Francis is expressing in this document is that he might trust “in the good will of their priests [these Catholics’ SSPX priests] to strive with God’s help for the recovery of full communion in the Catholic Church.”

This is to say that this new measure is only a new “step” or “stage” toward the full canonical recognition of the SSPX. We say “stage” as a reference to the conclusion of the Vatican official declaration following the talks between the Ecclesia Dei Commission and the three superiors from Menzingen on September 23rd, 2014: “During the meeting, various problems of a doctrinal and canonical nature were examined, and it was decided to proceed gradually and over a reasonable period of time in order to overcome difficulties and with a view to the envisioned full reconciliation”.

As for us, we are being consistent with this principle, which has always guided us since the consecrations by Abp. Lefebvre : “No canonical agreement without first agreeing on doctrine,” a principle based on St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians (1:8),¹ which Abp. Lefebvre frequently alluded to, not only in his sermons and conferences, but also in his historical declarations, such as the November 21st, 1974 Charter or his letter to the four future bishops dated August 25th, 1987: if an Apostle –or one of his successors– preaches a doctrine at variance with that we have taught you, let him be anathema!

So, when the Pope, who has just introduced Luther’s statue and heresy in the Vatican, is inviting us to “recover full communion in the Catholic Church” with him, we cannot but say with Abp. Lefebvre: “The Church which affirms such errors is both schismatic and heretic. Consequently, this Conciliar Church is not Catholic. Inasmuch as the Pope, the bishops, priests or the faithful concur with this new Church, they separate themselves from the Catholic Church. Today’s Church is the true Church so far as it continues and is one with the Church of yesterday and always. The norm of the Faith is the Catholic Tradition.” (July 29th, 1976) So, when the neo-modernist hierarchy will repent from its grievous errors and scandals about the Faith, moral teaching, and liturgy, and will take up again the torch of Catholic Tradition, then it will have “recovered full communion in the Catholic Church,” and again, as Abp. Lefebvre said in Flavigny, “this will not mean that they join us, but that they join the Catholic Church, in which we have always been”.²

¹ “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema”.

² Lecture given at the Flavigny seminary in December 1988, *Fideliter* No. 68, March-April 1989.