

21. Answers to the Most Common Objections Against Sedevacantism

Pope Vigilius, *Second Council of Constantinople*, 553:

“... we bear in mind what was promised about the holy Church and Him who said *the gates of Hell will not prevail against it* (**by these we understand the death-dealing tongues of heretics**)...”¹

There are many objections launched against the sedevacantist position – that is, the position expounded in this book according to which the Chair of St. Peter is vacant because the post-Vatican II “popes” are not true popes, but non-Catholic antipopes. We will now address all of the major objections that are launched against this position.

Objection 1): The Gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church, as Christ said (Matthew 16). He said He would be with His Church all days until the end of the world (Matthew 28). What you are saying is contrary to the promises of Christ.

Answer: No, indefectibility (the promise of Christ to always be with His Church, and that the gates of Hell will not prevail against it) means that the Church will, until the end of time, remain essentially what she is. The indefectibility of the Church requires that *at least a remnant* of the Church will exist until the end of the world, and that a true pope will never authoritatively teach error to the entire Church. It does not exclude antipopes posing as popes (as we’ve had numerous times in the past, even in Rome) or a counterfeit sect that reduces the adherents of the true Catholic Church to a remnant in the last days. This is precisely *what is predicted* to occur in the last days and what happened during the Arian crisis.

St. Athanasius: **“Even if Catholics faithful to tradition are reduced to a handful, they are the ones who are the true Church of Jesus Christ.”**²

Further, it should be noted that the Church has defined that heretics are the gates of Hell which Our Lord mentioned in Matthew 16!

Pope Vigilius, *Second Council of Constantinople*, 553:

“... we bear in mind what was promised about the holy Church and Him who said *the gates of Hell will not prevail against it* (**by these we understand the death-dealing tongues of heretics**)...”³

Pope St. Leo IX, Sept. 2, 1053: “The holy Church built upon a rock, that is Christ, and upon *Peter*... because by **the gates of Hell, that is, by the disputations of heretics** which lead the vain to destruction, it would never be overcome.”⁴

St. Thomas Aquinas (+1262): “Wisdom may fill the hearts of the faithful, **and put to silence the dread folly of heretics, fittingly referred to as the gates of Hell.**”⁵ (*Intro. To Catena Aurea.*)

Notice that heretics are the gates of Hell. Heretics are not members of the Church. That's why a heretic could never be a pope. The gates of Hell (heretics) could never have authority over the Church of Christ. It's not those who expose the heretical Vatican II antipopes who are asserting that the gates of Hell have prevailed against the Church; it's those who obstinately defend them as popes, even though they can clearly be proven to be manifest heretics.

Pope Innocent III, *Eius exemplo*, Dec. 18, 1208:

"By the heart we believe and by the mouth we confess **the one Church, not of heretics**, but the Holy Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Church outside of which we believe that no one is saved."⁶

St. Francis De Sales (17th century), Doctor of the Church, *The Catholic Controversy*, pp. 305-306: "**Now when he [the Pope] is explicitly a heretic, he falls ipso facto from his dignity and out of the Church...**"

There is not one teaching of the Catholic Church that can be quoted which is contrary to the fact that there is presently a counterfeit sect which has reduced the true Catholic Church to a remnant in the days of the Great Apostasy, which is presided over by antipopes who have falsely posed as popes. Those who assert that the Vatican II sect is the Catholic Church assert that the Catholic Church officially endorses false religions and false doctrines. This is impossible and would mean that the gates of Hell have prevailed against the Catholic Church.

Objection 2): What's your authority for making these judgments?
Your use of dogmatic statements is private interpretation.

Answer: The authority a Catholic has to determine that heretics are not members of the Church is Catholic *dogma*, which teaches us that those who depart from the Faith are considered alien to the Church.

Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (# 9), June 29, 1896:

"The practice of the Church has always been the same, as is shown by the unanimous teaching of the Fathers, who were wont to hold as outside Catholic communion, AND ALIEN TO THE CHURCH, WHOEVER WOULD RECEDE IN THE LEAST DEGREE FROM ANY POINT OF DOCTRINE PROPOSED BY HER AUTHORITATIVE MAGISTERIUM."⁷

Moreover, to assert that adhering to this Catholic dogma is to engage in private interpretation, as this objection does, is to assert precisely what Pope St. Pius X condemned in his Syllabus of Errors against the Modernists.

Pope St. Pius X, *Lamentabile*, The Errors of the Modernists, July 3, 1907, #22:

"**The dogmas which the Church professes as revealed are not truths fallen from heaven, but they are a kind of interpretation** of religious facts, which the human mind by a laborious effort prepared for itself." - **Condemned**⁸

Pope Pius X, *Lamentabile*, The Errors of the Modernists, July 3, 1907, #54:

"**The dogmas**, the sacraments, the hierarchy, **as far as pertains both to the notion and to the reality, are nothing but interpretations** and the evolution of Christian intelligence, which have increased and perfected the little germ latent in the Gospel." - **Condemned**⁹

Notice, the idea that dogmas are interpretations is condemned. But that's exactly what this objection is asserting, whether those who make it will admit it or not. They are saying that to apply the truth of a dogma is "private interpretation." Further refuting this objection is the fact that, in its *Decree on the Sacrament of Order*, the Council of Trent solemnly declared that the dogmatic canons are for the use of all the faithful.

Pope Pius IV, *Council of Trent*, Sess. 13, Chap. 4: "These are the matters which in general it seemed well to the sacred Council to teach to the faithful of Christ regarding the sacrament of order. **It has, however, resolved to condemn the contrary in definite and appropriate canons in the following manner, so that all, making use of the rule of faith, with the assistance of Christ, may be able to recognize more easily the Catholic truth in the midst of the darkness of so many errors.**"¹⁰

The word "canon" (in Greek: *kanon*) means a reed; a straight rod or bar; a measuring stick; something serving to determine, rule, or measure. The Council of Trent is infallibly declaring that its canons are measuring rods for "all" so that they, making use of these rules of Faith, may be able to recognize and defend the truth in the midst of darkness! This very important statement blows away the claim of those who say that using dogmas to prove points is "private interpretation." Catholic dogma is the authority of all who come to these correct conclusions.

Pope Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos* (# 7), Aug. 15, 1832: "... nothing of the things appointed ought to be diminished; nothing changed; nothing added; **but they must be preserved both as regards expression and meaning.**"¹¹

Objection 3): You cannot know if someone is a heretic or denounce him as such without a trial and declaratory sentence.

Answer: Not so. The declaratory sentence which follows an automatic excommunication is merely a legal recognition of something which already exists. If this were not true, the automatic excommunication would be meaningless.

Canon 2314, 1917 Code of Canon Law: "All apostates from the Christian faith and each and every heretic or schismatic: 1) Incur *ipso facto* [by that very fact] excommunication..."¹²

The excommunicated person is already severed from the Church. Most heretics are known to be heretics without a trial or declaratory sentence, and must be denounced as such.

Pope Pius VI, *Auctorem fidei*, Aug. 28, 1794:
 "47. Likewise, **the proposition which teaches that it is necessary, according to the natural and divine laws, for either excommunication or for suspension, that a personal examination should precede**, and that, therefore, sentences called 'ipso facto' have no other force than that of a serious threat without any actual effect" - **false, rash, pernicious, injurious to the power of the Church, erroneous.**¹³

As we see here, the Catholic Church teaches that formal processes and judgments are **not** necessary for *ipso facto* (by that very fact) excommunications to take effect. They are very

often, as in the case of the heretic Martin Luther, formal recognitions of the *ipso facto* excommunication that has already occurred. This should be obvious to a Catholic; but to illustrate this point, here is what Martin Luther said before he was formally condemned as a heretic by the pope.

Martin Luther, speaking before the Bull of Pope Leo X giving him the final sixty days to retract before a declaration of excommunication was published: “As for me, the die is cast: I despise alike the favor and fury of **Rome; I do not wish to be reconciled with her, or ever to hold any communion with her. Let her condemn and burn my books; I, in turn, unless I can find no fire, will condemn and publicly burn the whole pontifical law, that swamp of heresies.**”¹⁴

Are we to believe that the man who uttered this quotation (well before he was formally condemned as a heretic by a declaratory sentence) was a Catholic or could have been considered one? If such an idea isn't patently absurd, then nothing is. Obviously, Martin Luther was a manifest heretic prior to the formal declaration, and any Catholic aware of his beliefs could have and *should have* denounced him as a manifest heretic once that Catholic encountered his outrageously heretical views.

That's why, prior to the trial of Luther, Cardinal Cajetan “contacted Elector Frederick, Luther's sovereign and protector, urging him not to ‘disgrace the good name of his ancestors’ by supporting a heretic.”¹⁵

The same principle applies to a heretic such as John Kerry, the notorious supporter of abortion. Almost all conservative-minded professing Catholics would immediately agree that John Kerry is a heretic and not a Catholic, since he obstinately rejects Catholic teaching against abortion. **But they are making this “judgment” on their own, since no declaratory sentence has ever been issued against him.** They are thus proving the point that a declaration is not necessary to condemn a heretic. Most heretics in Church history, and almost all heretics in the world today, have been and must be considered heretics without any declaration by virtue of their heresy being manifest.

When the heresy is manifest and clearly obstinate, as in the case of Luther or Benedict XVI (who says we shouldn't convert non-Catholics and takes active part in Synagogue worship), Catholics not only can denounce him as a non-Catholic without a trial, but must do so. That is precisely why St. Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church, in addressing this precise question, states unequivocally that the manifest heretic is deposed and must be avoided as a non-Catholic with no authority **before any “excommunication** or judicial sentence.” In this context, St. Robert uses the word “excommunication” to refer to the *ferendae sententiae* penalty (the formal declaration by the pope or judge).

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30, speaking of a claimant to the Papal Office: “For, in the first place, **it is proven with arguments from authority and from reason that the manifest heretic is ‘ipso facto’ deposed.** The argument from authority is based on St. Paul (Titus 3:10), who orders that the heretic be avoided after two warnings, that is, after showing himself to be manifestly obstinate - **which means before any excommunication or judicial sentence.** And this is what St. Jerome writes, adding that the other sinners are excluded from the Church by sentence of excommunication, but the heretics exile themselves and separate themselves by their own act from the body of Christ.”

Let us repeat that: WHICH MEANS BEFORE ANY EXCOMMUNICATION OR JUDICIAL SENTENCE! So, we can see that non-sedevacantists, in arguing that Catholics cannot denounce manifest heretics such as Benedict XVI since there hasn't been a formal trial, have gotten it all wrong. Their conclusion makes a complete mockery out of the unity of Faith in the Church. In case we have forgotten, there is a unity of Faith in the Catholic Church (as in **one**, holy, Catholic and apostolic.)

Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (# 22):

"As therefore **in the true Christian community** there is only one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one Baptism, so **there can be only one faith**. And therefore if a man refuse to hear the Church let him be considered – so the Lord commands – as a heathen and a publican. It follows that **those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body**, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit."¹⁶

According to the non-sedevacantists' conclusion, Catholics would have to affirm communion with a man who publicly avowed that he wanted no communion with the Catholic Church, and held that the whole Pontifical law is a swamp of heresies; or a man who is obstinately pro-abortion, just because no formal declaration was made against him. To state that Catholics should hold communion with such a manifest heretic because no process against him had been completed, is contrary to Catholic teaching, Catholic Tradition and Catholic sense.

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30:

"... for men are not bound, or able to read hearts; BUT WHEN THEY SEE THAT SOMEONE IS A HERETIC BY HIS EXTERNAL WORKS, THEY JUDGE HIM TO BE A HERETIC PURE AND SIMPLE, AND CONDEMN HIM AS A HERETIC."

Objection 4): What about material heresy? Can't the Vatican II Popes only be material heretics?

Answer: A "material" heretic is a Catholic erring in good faith about a dogmatic issue. The Vatican II antipopes are without doubt real heretics. They cannot be material heretics (Catholics erring in good faith) for many reasons, most important among those reasons being: 1) they don't hold the essential mysteries of Faith; 2) they reject obvious dogmas of which they are fully aware.

"Material heretic" is a term used by theologians to describe a Catholic erring in good faith regarding some Church teaching, who has not denied it deliberately. The only way that one can be a "material heretic" is by being unaware that the position that he holds is contrary to the teaching of the Church. Such a person would change his position immediately upon being informed of the Church's teaching on the matter. Thus, a so-called "material heretic" is not a heretic, but rather a confused Catholic who denies nothing of that which he knows the Church to have taught. The fact that a so-called "material heretic" is not a heretic is proven by the fact that a so-called "material heretic" does not cease to be part of the Church; and we have already shown by many quotations that all heretics cease to be members of the Church.

Pope Eugene IV, *Council of Florence*, "Cantate Domino," 1441:

"The Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that **all those who are outside the Catholic Church**, not only pagans **but also** Jews or **heretics** and schismatics..."¹⁷

Furthermore, a so-called “material heretic” (an erring Catholic) does not bring down on his head eternal punishment for denying the faith; and all heretics bring down on their heads eternal punishment for denying the faith.

Pope St. Celestine I, *Council of Ephesus*, 431:

“... ALL HERETICS corrupt the true expressions of the Holy Spirit with their own evil minds and they draw down on their own heads an inextinguishable flame.”¹⁸

A material heretic, therefore, is not a heretic, but a Catholic who is innocently mistaken about some Church teaching. Hence, **those who claim that Benedict XVI is unaware of all of the dogmas that he denies, and is therefore only a “material heretic” (in other words, a mistaken Catholic) are not only arguing that which is absurd, but that which is IMPOSSIBLE.** It is impossible that Benedict XVI is only a so-called “material heretic” for three reasons:

Number 1): It is a fact that Benedict XVI knows of the many dogmas of the Church which he denies. He knows more about Catholic teaching than almost anyone in the world. He discourses on the Church’s dogmatic pronouncements – the very same ones he contradicts and rejects, such as Vatican I – all the time.

Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), p. 239: “Anyone who inquires about the Church’s teaching with regard to holy orders finds at his disposal a relatively rich supply of source materials; **three councils have spoken extensively on the subject: Florence, Trent, and Vatican II.** Mention should also be made of the important apostolic constitution of Pius XII (*Sacramentum ordinis*) of the year 1947.”¹⁹

Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), pp. 197-198: “**On the part of the West, the maximum demand would be that the East recognize the primacy of the bishop of Rome in the full scope of the definition of 1870 [Vatican I]** and in so doing submit in practice, to a primacy such as has been accepted by the Uniate churches... **none of the maximum solutions offers any real hope of unity.**”²⁰

In these quotations we see just a glimpse of Benedict XVI’s familiarity with Catholic teaching, including the very councils he denies. The same applies to John Paul II and his “predecessors.” For example, in the 1999 agreement with the Lutheran Church on Justification, approved by John Paul II, John Paul II agreed that the Council of Trent no longer applies.

Vatican-Lutheran Agreement on the Doctrine of Justification, approved by Benedict XVI: “# 13. **IN LIGHT OF THIS CONSENSUS, THE CORRESPONDING DOCTRINAL CONDEMNATIONS OF THE 16TH CENTURY** [i.e., the canons of the Council of Trent] **DO NOT APPLY TO TODAY’S PARTNER.**”²¹

It goes without saying that he cannot be unaware of the Council of Trent if he agrees that it no longer applies. Further, **Benedict XVI holds several doctorates in theology and has written many books dealing with the intricacies of Catholic dogma. One of us has read 24 of his books, and can say that Benedict XVI is more familiar with what the Catholic Church teaches than almost anyone in the world.** To assert that Benedict XVI or John Paul II or Paul VI or John XXIII remained unaware of the simplest Church teachings which they denied on Our Lord, against Protestantism, on salvation, against false religions, on religious liberty, etc. is false and

ridiculous in the highest degree. To assert, for instance, that Benedict XVI is unaware of the dogma that Protestants are bound under pain of heresy to accept the Papacy – remember that he teaches just the opposite – is pure insanity. It's equivalent to asserting that one can be the head chef at a five star restaurant and not know what lettuce is. But that's exactly what those who advance the "material heretic" argument would have us believe.

Number 2): It's impossible for Benedict XVI to be only a "material heretic" or a mistaken Catholic because – supposing for a moment that he were unaware of the many dogmas which he denies (which, as we have stated, is definitely not true) – being a man who claims to be a bishop and the pope, he is bound to have learned them. Therefore, there is no excuse for him on the grounds that he is unaware of the fundamental Church dogmas which he denies.

A canon law manual: **"If the delinquent making this claim be a cleric, his plea for mitigation must be dismissed,** either as untrue, or else as indicating ignorance which is affected, or at least crass and supine... His ecclesiastical training in the seminary, with its moral and dogmatic theology, its ecclesiastical history, not to mention its canon law, all insure that the Church's attitude towards heresy was imparted to him."²²

Number 3): It is impossible that Benedict XVI is merely a "material heretic" because there are certain things that every adult must hold by a necessity of means in order to be a Catholic, and Benedict XVI doesn't hold those things. Every adult Catholic must believe in the Trinity, the Incarnation, that Jesus Christ and His Church are true, and that other religions outside of Jesus Christ are false. These essential mysteries must be known by *a necessity of means*.

Pope Benedict XIV, *Cum Religiosi* (# 1), June 26, 1754:

"We could not rejoice, however, when it was subsequently reported to Us that in the course of religious instruction preparatory to Confession and Holy Communion, it was very often found that these people were ignorant of the mysteries of the faith, **even those matters which must be known by necessity of means;** consequently they were ineligible to partake of the Sacraments."²³

In other words, every Catholic above the age of reason must have a positive knowledge of certain mysteries of faith to be saved. There are no excuses, even for ignorance. Thus, if one holds a belief which destroys faith in those mysteries, even if he has been taught incorrectly, he is not a Catholic.

Pope Benedict XIV, *Cum Religiosi* (# 4):

"... confessors should perform this part of their duty whenever anyone stands at their tribunal who does not know **what he must by necessity of means know to be saved...**"²⁴

Pope St. Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis* (# 2), April 15, 1905:

"And so Our Predecessor, Benedict XIV, had just cause to write: 'We declare that a great number of those who are condemned to eternal punishment suffer that everlasting calamity **because of ignorance of those mysteries of faith which must be known and believed in order to be numbered among the elect.**'"²⁵

For instance, if one really believes in three different gods and not *one God in three divine persons*, then he is not a Catholic – period. This is true even if he was never taught the true doctrine on the Trinity. He is not a Catholic, since his belief contradicts an *essential mystery* he must possess to hold the true Faith.

Likewise, if one believes that other religions, such as Islam, Judaism, etc. are also good, then one doesn't believe that Christ (and, by extension, His Church) is the only truth. If one doesn't believe that Christ (and, by extension, His Church) is the only truth, then one doesn't have the Catholic Faith – period. This is true even if he was never taught the true doctrine on this matter, which is why Pope Pius XI says that all who hold the opinion that all religions “are more or less good and praiseworthy” have abandoned the true religion – period.

Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* (# 2):

“... Certainly such attempts can nowise be approved by Catholics, founded as they are on **that false opinion which considers all religions to be more or less good and praiseworthy**, since they all in different ways manifest and signify that sense which is inborn in us all, and by which we are led to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule. **Not only are those who hold this opinion in error and deceived, but also in distorting the idea of true religion they reject it**, and little by little, turn aside to naturalism and atheism, as it is called; **from which it clearly follows that one who supports those who hold these theories and attempt to realize them, is altogether abandoning the divinely revealed religion.**”²⁶

Well, we have shown that Benedict XVI and his “predecessors” believe that Judaism, Islam, etc. are good. Benedict XVI was even initiated into Islam in a mosque on Nov. 30, 2006. He and his “predecessors” praise these religions. Benedict XVI specifically called Islam “noble” and said that it represents “greatness.” It's not possible for him to believe this and be a Catholic “material heretic,” since he doesn't believe in an *essential mystery* he must possess to hold the true Faith: that Christ is the only truth. Therefore, Benedict XVI is not a Catholic – period.

This is also proven from another angle. Since it's an essential mystery of Catholic Faith that Christ (and, by extension, his Church) is the only truth, it follows that those who believe this mystery also hold that *Christ's Church must be believed*. This is the teaching of Pope Leo XIII.

Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (# 13), June 29, 1896:

“You are not to be looked upon as holding the true Catholic faith if you do not teach that the faith of Rome is to be held.”²⁷

If one holds that the Catholic religion doesn't have to be accepted by non-Catholics, then one is not a Catholic. As we've shown, the Vatican II antipopes teach that the Catholic religion doesn't have to be accepted by non-Catholics; they specifically teach that the Eastern Schismatics don't need to convert to the Catholic Faith.

Paul VI, Joint Declaration with the Schismatic “Pope” Shenouda III, May 10, 1973: “Paul VI, Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, and **Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark**... In the name of this charity, **we reject all forms of proselytism... Let it cease, where it may exist...**”²⁸

John Paul II, *Homily*, Jan. 25, 1993: **“‘The way to achieve Christian unity, in fact,’ says the document of the Pontifical Commission for Russia, ‘is not proselytism but fraternal dialogue...’**”²⁹

Benedict XVI, *Address to Protestants at World Youth Day*, August 19, 2005: "And we now ask: What does it mean to restore the unity of all Christians?... **this unity does not mean what could be called ecumenism of the return: that is, to deny and to reject one's own faith history. Absolutely not!**"³⁰

Furthermore...

The law of the Church presumes pertinacity in heresy unless the contrary is proven.

In addition to the above facts which demonstrate that the Vatican II antipopes are definitely formal heretics, the presumption of the law is against them:

Canon 2200.2, 1917 Code of Canon Law: "**When an external violation of the law has been committed, malice is presumed** in the external forum until the contrary is proven."

A commentary on this canon by Rev. Eric F. Mackenzie, A.M., S.T.L., J.C.L., states:

"The very commission of any act which signifies heresy, e.g., the statement of some doctrine contrary or contradictory to a revealed and defined dogma, gives sufficient ground for juridical presumption of heretical depravity... [E]xcusing circumstances have to be proved in the external forum, and the burden of proof is on the person whose action has given rise to the imputation of heresy. In the absence of such proof, all such excuses are presumed not to exist."³¹

Not only have the Vatican II antipopes made literally hundreds of statements contrary to revealed and defined dogma, but they have also explicitly declared themselves to be in communion with – in the same Church as – schismatics and heretics. They have, furthermore, confirmed these statements with acts which further manifest their adherence to heresy, such as *communicatio in sacris* (communication in sacred things) with various false religions. It is not, therefore, the law or the spirit of the Church to exonerate someone publicly spewing heresy, but rather to presume him guilty.

Pope Innocent IV, *First Council of Lyons*, 1245:

"The civil law declares that those are to be regarded as heretics, and ought to be subject to the sentences issued against them, who even on slight evidence are found to have strayed from the judgment and path of the Catholic religion."³²

St. Robert Bellarmine explains why this must be.

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30:

"... for men are not bound, or able to read hearts; but when they see that someone is a heretic by his external works, they judge him to be a heretic pure and simple, and condemn him as a heretic."

A simple illustration will also demonstrate why this must be.

Suppose you had some sheep and you appointed a shepherd to watch over them. Suppose one day the shepherd became a wolf and began eating the sheep and tearing them to pieces. Would you, looking after the welfare of these sheep, **maintain the wolf**

as head of the sheep? Would you demand that the other sheep not yet eaten subject themselves to the wolf, and thus place themselves in proximate danger of being eaten? Of course you wouldn't, and neither would God.

God could never allow one who is promulgating manifest heresy in the external forum to maintain authority in the Church or be able to demand the submission of Catholics, regardless of what his intentions are. Remember, heresy kills souls. Suppose the wolf in our story is just hungry, or having a bad day. Does this change the fact that the sheep are being eliminated? No.

Furthermore, what wolf who was trying to deceive people would openly declare himself to be a non-Catholic or an enemy of the Church?

Matthew 7:15-

"Beware of false prophets, *who come to you in clothing of sheep*, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

There is no more effective way to assist a false prophet than to insist that he, despite his public profession of heresy, maintains authority in the Church. **Pope St. Celestine authoritatively confirms the principle that we cannot regard a public heretic as a person with authority when dealing with the case of the heretic Nestorius.** Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, began to preach the heresy that Mary was not the Mother of God. The faithful reacted by breaking communion with him, having realized that since Nestorius was preaching public and notorious heresy he could not have authority in the Catholic Church. The following quote from Pope St. Celestine is found in *De Romano Pontifice*, the work of St. Robert Bellarmine.

Pope St. Celestine:

"The authority of Our Apostolic See has determined that the bishop, cleric, or simple Christian who had been deposed or excommunicated by Nestorius or his followers, **after the latter began to preach heresy shall not be considered deposed or excommunicated. For he who had defected from the faith with such preachings, cannot depose or remove anyone whatsoever.**"³³

Pope Pius IX confirms this principle by teaching that one is considered a heretic or a schismatic even if one has not yet been declared as such by the Holy See.

Pope Pius IX, *Quartus Supra* (# 12), Jan. 6, 1873:

"Since the faction of Armenia is like this, they are schismatics even if they had not yet been condemned as such by Apostolic authority."³⁴

This is why the saints, theologians, doctors, canonists and popes who speak to the issue of a "heretical pope" avoid the terms "material" and "formal" heresy, for these are terms that imply a judgment of the internal forum. Rather, they use the words public, manifest, notorious, etc. - terms corresponding to the external forum.

F.X. Wernz, P. Vidal (1943):

"Through notorious and openly revealed heresy, the Roman Pontiff, should he fall into heresy, by that very fact is deemed to be deprived of the power of jurisdiction even before any declaratory judgment of the Church..."³⁵

Canon 192, 1917 *Code of Canon Law*:

"A person may be unwillingly deprived of, or removed from, an office, either by operation of law or an act of the lawful superior."

Canon 188.4, 1917 Code of Canon Law:

“There are certain causes which effect the tacit (silent) resignation of an office, **which resignation is accepted in advance by operation of the law, and hence is effective without any declaration.** These causes are... (4) if he has publicly fallen away from the faith.”

What is a public defection from the faith?

Canon 2197.1, 1917 Code of Canon Law:

“A Crime is *public*: (1) if it is already commonly known or the circumstances are such as to lead to the conclusion that it can and will easily become so...”

Thus, we have shown in great detail why it’s utterly false to assert that the Vatican II antipopes are merely “material heretics.” They cannot be material heretics because 1) they know very well of the dogmas which they deny; 2) they are bound to know the Catholic Faith as “bishops,” especially the dogmas which they deny; and 3) they lack and contradict the essential mysteries of Faith which one must hold to be a Catholic.

Objection 5): The Church cannot exist without a pope, or at least it cannot exist for 40 years without a pope, as sedevacantists say...

Answer: The Church has existed for years without a pope, and does so every time a pope dies. The Church has experienced a papal interregnum (i.e. period without a pope) over 200 different times in Church history. The longest papal interregnum (before the Vatican II apostasy) was between Pope St. Marcellinus (296-304) and Pope St. Marcellus (308-309). It lasted for more than three and a half years.³⁶ Further, theologians teach that the Church can exist for even decades without a pope.

FR. EDMUND JAMES O'REILLY CRUSHES THE NON-SEDEVACANTISTS' MAIN ARGUMENT ON THE LENGTH OF A PAPAL INTERREGNUM (PERIOD WITHOUT A POPE) BY TEACHING THAT THE CHURCH CAN EXIST FOR DECADES WITHOUT A POPE

Fr. Edmund James O'Reilly was an eminent theologian who lived at the time of Vatican I. Writing *after* Vatican I and its definitions on the perpetuity of the Papal Office, he taught that God could leave the Church without a pope for over 39 years – e.g., during the entire span of the Great Western Schism (1378-1417). Here is a quote from Father O'Reilly's discussion of the Great Western Schism:

“We may here stop to inquire what is to be said of the position, at that time, of the three claimants, and their rights with regard to the Papacy. In the first place, there was all through, from the death of Gregory XI in 1378, a pope – with the exception, of course, of the intervals between deaths and elections to fill up the vacancies thereby created. There was, I say, at every given time a pope, really invested with the dignity of the Vicar of Christ and Head of the Church, whatever opinions might exist among many as to his genuineness; **not that an interregnum covering the whole period would have been**

impossible or inconsistent with the promises of Christ, for this is by no means manifest, but that, as a matter of fact, there was not such an interregnum."³⁷

Fr. O'Reilly says that an interregnum (a period without a pope) covering the entire period of the Great Western Schism is by no means incompatible with the promises of Christ about His Church. The period Fr. O'Reilly is speaking about began in 1378 with the death of Pope Gregory XI and ended essentially in 1417 when Pope Martin V was elected. **That would be a 39-year interregnum (period without a pope).** And Fr. O'Reilly was one of the most eminent theologians of the 19th Century.

It's obvious that Fr. O'Reilly is on the side of those who, in rejecting the Vatican II antipopes, hold the possibility of a long-term vacancy of the Holy See. In fact, on page 287 of his book, Fr. O'Reilly gives this prophetic warning:

"The great schism of the West suggests to me a reflection which I take the liberty of expressing here. **If this schism had not occurred, the hypothesis of such a thing happening would appear to many chimerical [absurd]. They would say it could not be; God would not permit the Church to come into so unhappy a situation.** Heresies might spring up and spread and last painfully long, through the fault and to the perdition of their authors and abettors, to the great distress too of the faithful, increased by actual persecution in many places where the heretics were dominant. **But that the true Church should remain between thirty and forty years without a thoroughly ascertained Head, and representative of Christ on earth, this would not be. Yet it has been; and we have no guarantee that it will not be again,** though we may fervently hope otherwise. What I would infer is, that **we must not be too ready to pronounce on what God may permit. We know with absolute certainty that He will fulfill His promises...** We may also trust that He will do a great deal more than what He has bound Himself by His promises. We may look forward with cheering probability to exemption for the future from some of the trouble and misfortunes that have befallen in the past. **But we, or our successors in the future generations of Christians, shall perhaps see stranger evils than have yet been experienced,** even before the immediate approach of that great winding up of all things on earth that will precede the day of judgment. I am not setting up for a prophet, nor pretending to see unhappy wonders, of which I have no knowledge whatever. **All I mean to convey is that contingencies regarding the Church, not excluded by the Divine promises, cannot be regarded as practically impossible, just because they would be terrible and distressing in a very high degree.**"³⁸

This is an excellent point. Fr. O'Reilly explains that if the Great Western Schism had never occurred, Catholics would say that such a situation (three competing claimants to the Papacy with no thoroughly ascertained head for decades) is impossible – just like those today who say the sedevacantist "thesis" is impossible, even though the facts prove that it is true.

The Great Western Schism did happen, Fr. O'Reilly says, and we have no guarantee that worse things, that are not excluded by divine promises, won't happen. There is nothing contrary to indefectibility in saying that we haven't had a pope since the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958. **There is everything contrary to the indefectibility of the Catholic Church in asserting that true popes could promulgate Vatican II, officially endorse false and pagan religions, promulgate the Protestant New Mass, and hold that non-Catholics don't need to convert for salvation.** Leaving the Church without a pope for an extended period of the Great Apostasy is the punishment inflicted by God on our generation for the wickedness of the world.

Prophecy of St. Nicholas of Fluh (1417-1487): "The Church will be punished because the majority of her members, high and low, will become so perverted. **The Church will sink**

deeper and deeper until she will at last seem to be extinguished, and the succession of Peter and the other Apostles to have expired. But, after this, she will be victoriously exalted in the sight of all doubters." ³⁹

Objection 6): Vatican I's definitions on the perpetuity of the Papal Office contradict the claims of the sedevacantists.

Answer: Vatican I's dogmas don't contradict a vacancy of the Papal See; in fact, it's only those who reject the Vatican II antipopes who can consistently accept these papal dogmas, since Benedict XVI utterly rejects them.

**ANSWERS TO SPECIFIC PASSAGES FROM VATICAN I CITED BY
NONSEDEVACANTISTS - AND THE ABSURDITY OF A "POPE" WHO DOESN'T BELIEVE
IN VATICAN I**

People attempting to refute sedevacantism often cite three passages from Vatican I. We will specifically address all three of those passages. Before we do that, we must emphasize the fact we just discussed: there have been long periods of time when the Church has had no pope. We've already mentioned the three and a half year interregnum between Pope St. Marcellinus and Pope St. Marcellus.

Although Pope St. Gregory VII died on May 25, 1085, it was not until almost two years later - May 9, 1087 - that his successor, Pope Victor III, was elected. On June 25, 1243, Pope Innocent IV became the 179th successor to St. Peter; his immediate predecessor, Pope Celestine IV, however, had died over a year and a half before - November 10, 1241. Later in the same century, Catholics would be forced to wait nearly three years as the Church, upon the death of Pope Clement IV on November 29, 1268, delayed naming a new Pope until St. Gregory X was picked on September 1, 1271. Other examples of a year or more space between popes can be cited, the point here being that while the quick transfer of papal power has been common, exceptions are to be found. **Today's crisis, then, certainly is not the first time in which the Church has suffered for a significant period of time without a pope.**

We've already discussed antipopes who reigned from Rome while posing as the pope, something we saw in the case of Anacletus II and the Great Western Schism. There is also a theological axiom, "plus or minus does not mutate the species, a change in degree does not affect the principle." If the Church did not defect or lose perpetual papal succession during a 3 year and 7 month vacancy, then the Church will not defect or lose perpetual papal succession during a 40 year vacancy. The principle is the same, unless one can cite a specific teaching of the Church which declares a limit to a papal interregnum.

Since there is no teaching which puts a limit on such a papal interregnum (a period without a pope), and since the definitions of Vatican I on the perpetuity of Papal Office make absolutely no mention of papal vacancies or how long they can last, if the definitions of Vatican I disprove the sedevacantist position (as some claim), then they also disprove the indefectibility of the Catholic Church - every single time the Church finds itself without a pope. But this is impossible and ridiculous, of course.

Thus, in order to be consistent, non-sedevacantists who quote Vatican I against the sedevacantist “thesis” must argue that the Church can never be without a pope, not even for a moment (a patent absurdity). But this is exactly what one of them argued in a very interesting slip-up in an article. This serves to reveal his profound bias and the errors at the heart of his position:

Chris Ferrara, “Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise,” Catholic Family News, August 2005, p. 19: “**Never in Her history has the Church, even for a moment, been without a successor to Peter**, validly elected upon the death of his validly elected predecessor.”⁴⁰

This is obviously absurd and completely false. The writer knows that this is false because, in the next sentence, he declares:

Ferrara: “Indeed, **the longest interregnum between two popes in Church history was only two years and five months**, between the death of Pope Nicholas IV (1292) and the election of Pope Celestine V (1294).”⁴¹

First, the interregnum he mentions was not the longest in Church history (as we saw above). Second, he admits that the Church existed without a pope for years. So there have been quite a few “moments” in Church history that the Church has been without a pope. Why would he say that the Church cannot be without a pope “even for a moment” when he knows that this is not true?

Now that the fact that the Church can be without a pope for a long period of time has been established, let’s look at the passages of Vatican I:

1. Vatican I declares that the Papacy is the Perpetual Principle and Visible Foundation of Unity

Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, Sess. 4, July 18, 1870: “But, that the episcopacy itself might be one and undivided, and that the entire multitude of the faithful through priests closely connected with one another might be preserved in the unity of faith and communion, **placing Peter over the other apostles He established in him the perpetual principle and visible foundation of both unities**, upon whose strength the eternal temple might be erected, and the sublimity of the Church might rise in the firmness of this faith.”⁴²

That what Christ instituted in St. Peter (THE OFFICE OF PETER) remains the perpetual principle and visible foundation of unity EVEN TODAY, AND WHEN THERE IS NO POPE, is proven every time a Catholic who is a sedevacantist converts an Eastern “Orthodox” Schismatic to the Catholic Faith.

The Catholic (who is a sedevacantist) charitably informs the Eastern Schismatic that he (the Eastern Schismatic) is not in the unity of the Church because he doesn’t accept what Christ instituted in St. Peter (the office of the Papacy), in addition to not accepting what the successors of St. Peter have bindingly taught in history (the Council of Trent, etc.). **This is a clear example of how the Office of the Papacy still serves – and will always serve – as the perpetual principle of visible unity, distinguishing the true faithful from the false (and the true Church from the false)**. This is true when there is no pope, and for the sedevacantist today. This dogmatic teaching of Vatican I doesn’t exclude periods without a pope and it is not contrary to the sedevacantist thesis in any way.

In fact, while this definition remains true for the sedevacantist, it must be stated clearly that **THIS DEFINITION OF VATICAN I ONLY REMAINS TRUE FOR THE SEDEVACANTIST.** THIS DEFINITION OF VATICAN I ON THE PAPACY BEING THE PERPETUAL PRINCIPLE AND VISIBLE FOUNDATION OF UNITY IS MOST CERTAINLY NOT TRUE FOR THOSE UNDER BENEDICT XVI. This teaching of Vatican I only remains true for the sedevacantist (not those under Benedict XVI) because Vatican II teaches just the opposite:

Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium* (# 15):

“For several reasons the Church recognizes that it is joined to those who, though baptized and so honoured with the Christian name, do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve communion under the successor of St. Peter.”⁴³

We see that Vatican II teaches that the Papacy is not the visible foundation of the unities of faith and communion. It teaches that those who reject the Papacy are in communion with the Church. Since this is the official teaching of the Vatican II sect and its antipopes, those who adhere to them contradict the above teaching of Vatican I.

Second, the teaching of Vatican I on the perpetuity of the Papal Office only remains true for the sedevacantist because **Benedict XVI explicitly teaches that accepting the Papacy is not essential for unity!**

Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 1982, pp. 197-198: **“On the part of the West, the maximum demand would be that the East recognize the primacy of the bishop of Rome in the full scope of the definition of 1870 [Vatican I] and in so doing submit in practice, to a primacy such as has been accepted by the Uniate churches... As regards Protestantism, the maximum demand of the Catholic Church would be that the Protestant ecclesiological ministers be regarded as totally invalid and that Protestants be converted to Catholicism;... none of the maximum solutions offers any real hope of unity.”**⁴⁴

We’ve already shown – but it was necessary to quote it again here – that Benedict XVI specifically mentions, and then bluntly rejects, the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church that the Protestants and Eastern Schismatics must be converted to the Catholic Faith and accept Vatican I (“the full scope of the definition of 1870”) for unity and salvation. He specifically rejects that the dogmatic definition of Vatican I (accepting the Papacy, etc.) is binding for Church unity. Besides the fact that this is another clear example of manifest heresy from the Vatican II antipopes, **this proves that BENEDICT XVI (THE MAN THEY ACTUALLY CLAIM IS THE “POPE”) DENIES THE VERY DOGMA FROM VATICAN I THAT THIS OBJECTION BRINGS FORWARD!**

2. The Papacy will endure forever

Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, Sess. 4, Chap. 2: **“Moreover, what the Chief of pastors and the Great Pastor of sheep, the Lord Jesus, established in the blessed Apostle Peter for the perpetual salvation and perennial good of the Church, this by the same Author must endure always in the Church which was founded upon a rock and will endure firm until the end of ages.”**⁴⁵

Yes, what Christ instituted in St. Peter (i.e., THE OFFICE OF THE PAPACY) must endure always until the end of ages. What is the Office of the Papacy? The Office of the Papacy is the office of St. Peter which is occupied by every true and lawful Bishop of Rome. This means and guarantees that every time there is a true and valid occupant of the office he is endowed by Christ with infallibility (in his authoritative and binding teaching capacity), he is endowed with supreme

jurisdiction over the universal Church, and he is the visible head of the Church. **That remains true for every true and lawful occupant of the Papal Office until the end of time. This doesn't mean that the Church will always have such an occupant, as Church history and more than 200 papal vacancies prove,** nor does it mean that antipopes reigning from Rome are an impossibility (such as Antipope Anacletus II, who reigned in Rome from 1130-1138). This definition proves nothing for the non-sedevacantist, so let's move on.

3. Peter will have perpetual successors in the Primacy over the Universal Church

Pope Pius IX, *First Vatican Council*, Sess. 4, Chap. 2, [Canon]. "If anyone then says that it is not from the institution of Christ the Lord Himself, or by divine right that the blessed Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema."⁴⁶

This is the favorite canon of those who argue against the sedevacantist "thesis"; but, as we will see, it also proves nothing for their position. Words and distinctions are very important. Understanding distinctions and words can often be the very difference between Protestantism and Catholicism.

The canon from Vatican I condemns those who deny "that Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy over the universal Church." Notice the phrase "perpetual successors **IN THE PRIMACY.**" This, as we have seen, does not mean and cannot mean that we will always have a pope. That is why it doesn't say that "we will always have a pope." It's a fact that there have been periods without a pope. So what does the canon mean?

In understanding this canon, we must remember that there are schismatics who hold that St. Peter himself was given the primacy over the universal Church by Jesus Christ, but that the primacy over the universal Church stopped with St. Peter. They hold that the Bishops of Rome aren't successors to the same primacy that St. Peter had. They hold that the full-blown force of the primacy doesn't descend to the popes, even though they succeed St. Peter as Bishop of Rome. **Again: the "Orthodox" schismatics would admit that the Bishops of Rome are successors of St. Peter in a certain way because they succeed him as Bishops of Rome, but not successors with the same jurisdictional primacy** over the universal Church which St. Peter held in his life. This is the heresy that is the subject of the canon above.

This heresy – which denies that a pope is the successor of St. Peter in the same primacy perpetually (that is, *every time there is a pope until the end of time, he is a successor in the same primacy, with the same authority St. Peter possessed*) – is precisely what this canon condemns.

Pope Pius IX, *First Vatican Council*, Sess. 4, Chap. 2, [Canon]. "If anyone then says that it is not from the institution of Christ the Lord Himself, or by divine right that the blessed Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema."⁴⁷

When we understand this we clearly see the meaning of this canon. This is emphasized at the end by the words "or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter **in the same primacy**" let him be anathema. The canon is not declaring that we will have a pope at all times or that there won't be gaps, as we clearly have had. The meaning of the canon is clear from what it says. It condemns those who deny that Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy – that is,

those who deny that every time there is a true and lawful pope until the end of time he is a successor in the same primacy, with the same authority that St. Peter possessed.

This canon proves nothing for the non-sedevacantist, but it does prove something for us. Remember, Benedict XVI also rejects this dogma on the primacy of the popes!

BENEDICT XVI COMPLETELY REJECTS THIS CANON AND VATICAN I

Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), p. 198: **“Nor is it possible, on the other hand, for him to regard as the only possible form and, consequently, as binding on all Christians the form this primacy has taken in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries [ed.- This means the schismatics don’t have to accept Vatican I]. The symbolic gestures of Pope Paul VI and, in particular, his kneeling before the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch [the schismatic Patriarch Athenagoras] were an attempt to express precisely this and, by such signs, to point the way out of the historical impasse... In other words, Rome must not require more from the East with respect to the doctrine of the primacy than had been formulated and was lived in the first millennium. When the Patriarch Athenagoras [the non-Catholic, schismatic Patriarch], on July 25, 1967, on the occasion of the Pope’s visit to Phanar, designated him as the successor of St. Peter, as the most esteemed among us, as one who presides in charity, this great Church leader was expressing the ecclesial content of the doctrine of the primacy as it was known in the first millennium. Rome need not ask for more.”**⁴⁸

This means, once again, that according to Benedict XVI all Christians are **not** bound to believe in the Papacy as defined by Vatican I in 1870. This means that the “Orthodox” schismatics are free to reject the Papacy. This is a blatant denial of Vatican Council I and the necessity of accepting the primacy by the man who claims to be “the pope.” Who will cry out against this abominable madness?

Pope Pius IX, *Vatican Council I*, 1870, Sess. 4, Chap. 3, ex cathedra: **“... all the faithful of Christ must believe that the Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold primacy over the whole world, and the Pontiff of Rome himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, the chief of the apostles, and is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church... Furthermore We teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the disposition of the Lord, holds the sovereignty of ordinary power over all others... This is the doctrine of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate and keep his faith and salvation.”**⁴⁹

Moreover, notice that Benedict XVI admits that Paul VI’s symbolic gestures with the schismatic Patriarch “were an attempt to express precisely this” – that is to say, his gestures (such as kneeling before the representative of the non-Catholic, schismatic Patriarch Athenagoras) expressed that the schismatics don’t have to believe in the Papacy and Vatican I! Consider this a smashing vindication of all that we have said with regard to John Paul II’s incessant gestures toward the schismatics: giving them relics; giving them donations; praising their “Churches”; sitting on equal chairs with them; signing common declarations with them; lifting the excommunications against them.

We pointed out again and again that these actions alone (not even considering his other statements) constituted a teaching that the schismatics don’t have to accept the dogma of the Papacy. Countless false traditionalists and members of the Vatican II Church denied this and tried to explain these gestures away as either merely scandalous or something else, but not

heretical. Well, here we have Ratzinger – now Benedict XVI, the new “head” of the Vatican II Church – admitting precisely what we said.

In the section on Benedict XVI’s heresies, we covered in even more detail his other denials of Vatican I. We will not repeat all of that here; please consult that section for more.

So, please tell me, dear reader: who denies Vatican I? Who denies the dogmas on the perpetuity, authority, and prerogatives of the Papal Office? Who denies what Christ instituted in St. Peter? Is it the sedevacantists, who correctly point out that a man who denies Vatican I is outside the Church, outside of the unity – since he rejects, among other things, the perpetual principle of unity (the Papacy) – and therefore cannot occupy an office or head a Church which he doesn’t even believe in?

St. Robert Bellarmine (1610), Doctor of the Church: "**A pope who is a manifest heretic automatically (*per se*) ceases to be pope and head**, just as he ceases automatically to be a Christian and a member of the Church. Wherefore, he can be judged and punished by the Church. This is the teaching of all the ancient Fathers who teach that manifest heretics immediately lose all jurisdiction."

St. Francis De Sales, Doctor of the Church:
“It would indeed be one of the strangest monsters that could be seen – if the head of the Church were not of the Church.”⁵⁰

Or are the real deniers of the Papacy and Vatican I those who profess union with a man who clearly doesn’t even believe in Vatican I; a man who doesn’t even believe that the Papacy and Vatican I are binding on all Christians; a man who doesn’t even believe that the Papacy was held in the first millennium?

The answer is obvious to any sincere and honest person who considers these facts. It is Antipope Benedict XVI, and all who obstinately insist on union with him, who deny the Papacy; it is the sedevacantists who are faithful to the Papacy.

Objection 7): No one can judge the Holy See... thus the Vatican II popes are true popes.

Answer: First, people need to understand what the teaching “No one can judge the Holy See” means. It comes from the early Church. In the early Church, when a bishop was accused of a crime, there would sometimes be a trial presided over by other bishops or by a patriarch of greater authority. These bishops would sit in judgment on the accused bishop. The Bishop of Rome, however, since he is the supreme bishop in the Church, cannot be subjected to any trial by other bishops or by other people.

Pope St. Nicholas, epistle (8), *Proposueramus quidem*, 865:
 “... Neither by Augustus, nor by all the clergy, nor by religious, nor by the people will the judge be judged... **‘The first seat will not be judged by anyone.’**”⁵¹

This is what “No one can judge the Holy See” means. It does not refer to recognizing a manifest heretic who claims to be the pope as one who is not a true pope. And this brings us to the second point, which is the most important in this regard.

Second, the Holy See has told us that no heretic can be accepted as the valid occupant of the Holy See (the Pope)! With the fullness of his authority, Pope Paul IV defined that anyone who has been promoted to the Papacy as a heretic is not a true and valid pope, and that he can be rejected as a warlock, heathen, publican and heresiarch.

Pope Paul IV, Bull *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio*, Feb. 15, 1559: “6. In addition, [by this Our Constitution, which is to remain valid in perpetuity, We enact, determine, decree and define:] that if ever at any time it shall appear that any Bishop, even if he be acting as an Archbishop, Patriarch or Primate; or any Cardinal of the aforesaid Roman Church, or, as has already been mentioned, any legate, or even the Roman Pontiff, prior to his promotion or his elevation as Cardinal or Roman Pontiff, has deviated from the Catholic Faith or fallen into some heresy:

- (i) the promotion or elevation, even if it shall have been uncontested and by the unanimous assent of all the Cardinals, shall be null, void and worthless;
- (ii) it shall not be possible for it to acquire validity (nor for it to be said that it has thus acquired validity) through the acceptance of the office, of consecration, of subsequent authority, nor through possession of administration, nor through the putative enthronement of a Roman Pontiff, or Veneration, or obedience accorded to such by all, nor through the lapse of any period of time in the foregoing situation;
- (iii) it shall not be held as partially legitimate in any way...
- (vi) those thus promoted or elevated shall be deprived automatically, and without need for any further declaration, of all dignity, position, honour, title, authority, office and power...

7. Finally, [by this Our Constitution, which is to remain valid in perpetuity, We] also [enact, determine, define and decree]: that any and all persons who would have been subject to those thus promoted or elevated if they had not previously deviated from the Faith, become heretics, incurred schism or provoked or committed any or all of these, be they members of anysoever of the following categories:

- (i) the clergy, secular and religious; (ii) the laity; (iii) the Cardinals [etc.]... shall be permitted at any time to withdraw with impunity from obedience and devotion to those thus promoted or elevated and to avoid them as warlocks, heathens, publicans, and heresiarchs (the same subject persons, nevertheless, remaining bound by the duty of fidelity and obedience to any future Bishops, Archbishops, Patriarchs, Primates, Cardinals and Roman Pontiff canonically entering).

10. No one at all, therefore, may infringe this document of our approbation, re-introduction, sanction, statute and derogation of wills and decrees, or by rash presumption contradict it. If anyone, however, should presume to attempt this, let him know that he is destined to incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1559, 15th February, in the fourth year of our Pontificate.

+ I, Paul, Bishop of the Catholic Church...”

Thus, one is obeying and adhering to the teaching of the Holy See in rejecting as invalid the heretical post-Vatican II claimants. They are not true popes, according to the teaching of the Holy See.

Third, it was near the beginning of this Bull, prior to the declaration that the faithful can reject as totally invalid the “election” of a heretic, that Pope Paul IV repeated the teaching that no one can judge the pope.

Pope Paul IV, Bull *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio*, Feb. 15, 1559: “1. In assessing Our duty and the situation now prevailing, We have been weighed upon by the thought that a matter of this kind [i.e. error in respect of the Faith] is so grave and so dangerous that **the Roman Pontiff, who is the representative upon earth of God and our God and Lord Jesus Christ, who holds the fullness of power over peoples and kingdoms, who may judge all and be judged by none in this world**, may nonetheless be contradicted if he be found to have deviated from the Faith.”

Could there be a more stunning confirmation that the sedevacantist position doesn't contradict the teaching that “No one can judge the pope or the Holy See” than the fact that Pope Paul IV's Bull repeats this teaching about no one judging the pope **immediately prior to declaring that the faithful must recognize as invalid the election of a heretic!**

Pope Paul IV, unlike non-sedevacantists who use the “no one can judge the Holy See” argument, correctly distinguishes between a true Catholic pope whom none can judge, and a manifest heretic (e.g. Benedict XVI) who has shown himself to be a non-Catholic who is not the pope, since he is outside of the true Faith. This is striking proof that sedevacantists who hold as invalid the “election” of the manifest heretic Joseph Ratzinger are not judging a pope.

Fourth, many of the people who attempt to defend the Vatican II “popes” by saying “no one can judge the Holy See” are themselves guilty of judging the most authoritative actions of the men they think occupy the Holy See. Most of the traditionalists reject Vatican II, the “canonizations” of the Vatican II “popes,” etc. This is a schismatic position, which rejects the authoritative actions of that which they deem to be the Holy See. It proves that these “popes” are not popes at all and do not, in fact, occupy the Holy See.

Objection 8): St. Robert Bellarmine said that one cannot depose a pope, but that one can licitly resist him. Sedevacantists judge, punish and depose the pope...

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, Book II, Chap. 29: “Just as it is licit to resist the Pontiff who attacks the body, so also is it licit to resist him who attacks souls or destroys the civil order or above all, tries to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by impeding the execution of his will. **It is not licit, however, to judge him, to punish him, or to depose him.**”

Answer: Many of those who believe Benedict XVI is the pope, yet reject the official actions of his “Church,” such as Vatican II, attempt to see a justification for their false position in this passage from St. Robert Bellarmine. In fact, this passage is one of the most commonly used pieces of

evidence that people attempt to throw against the sedevacantist position. Unfortunately, **the passage has been completely misapplied and distorted.**

First, in the chapter immediately following the above quote from Bellarmine, he teaches this:

“A pope who is a manifest heretic automatically (*per se*) ceases to be pope and head, just as he ceases automatically to be a Christian and a member of the Church.
Wherefore, he can be judged and punished by the Church. *This is the teaching of all the ancient Fathers who teach that manifest heretics immediately lose all jurisdiction.*”⁵²

Now, hold on a second. In chapter 29 (the quote cited in objection 2), St. Robert says that you cannot “judge, punish or depose” the pope. In chapter 30, he says that a manifest heretic ceases to be pope (i.e., he is deposed) and he can be “judged and punished” by the Church.

My question to the objector is this: *Is St. Robert Bellarmine an idiot?*

St. Robert Bellarmine, <i>De Romano Pontifice</i> , chapter 29	One cannot “judge, punish or depose” a pope
St. Robert Bellarmine, <i>De Romano Pontifice</i> , chapter 30	A pope who is a manifest heretic is deposed, “judged and punished”

St. Robert Bellarmine is neither an idiot nor contradicting himself. He is a doctor of the Church, and knows exactly what he is trying to say. It is blatantly obvious, therefore, that **he is not speaking about a manifestly heretical pope in chapter 29**, but rather a true pope who gives bad example, who is not a manifest heretic. The context of the chapter confirms this beyond any doubt.

Chapter 29 involves St. Robert’s lengthy refutation of nine arguments favoring the position that the pope is subject to secular power (emperor, king, etc.) and to an ecumenical council (the heresy of conciliarism). During the Middle Ages, the heresy of conciliarism (subjecting a pope to an ecumenical council) became a major problem. In contradiction to this heresy, St. Robert Bellarmine says that while a Catholic can resist a bad pope, he cannot depose him, even if the pope gives bad example, disturbs the state or kills souls by his action. He is speaking of a bad pope who is not a manifest heretic; for he deals with the proper reaction to manifest heresy in the next chapter! It’s quite simple. He says that a manifest heretic is considered not to be the pope in the next chapter!

With this in mind, the objection raised from Bellarmine against sedevacantism is refuted. He is not talking about a manifest heretic in chapter 29, but a true pope who acts inappropriately; for he explains that a manifestly heretical pope *is* deposed, judged and punished in chapter 30. It is a mortal sin of omission for “Catholic” writers to quote over and over again the passage of chapter 29, without ever giving St. Robert’s statement on manifestly heretical popes in chapter 30. Among such people we include those who write for some of the more popular “traditional” publications. These writers suppress St. Robert’s teaching in chapter 30, along with all the other saints, popes and canonists who teach that manifestly heretical popes lose their office, because they want to deceive their readers into thinking that St. Robert condemns sedevacantism, when in reality he and *all the early Church Fathers* support the fact that a manifest heretic is not a pope.

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30:

“For, in the first place, **it is proven with arguments from authority and from reason that the manifest heretic is ‘ipso facto’ deposed.** The argument from authority is based on St. Paul (Titus 3:10), who orders that the heretic be avoided after two warnings, that is, after showing himself to be manifestly obstinate – **which means before any**

excommunication or judicial sentence. And this is what St. Jerome writes, adding that the other sinners are excluded from the Church by sentence of excommunication, but the heretics exile themselves and separate themselves by their own act from the body of Christ.”

And again St. Robert Bellarmine teaches:

“**This principle is most certain. The non-Christian cannot in any way be Pope**, as Cajetan himself admits (ib. c. 26). The reason for this is that he cannot be head of what he is not a member; now he who is not a Christian is not a member of the Church, **and a manifest heretic is not a Christian**, as is clearly taught by St. Cyprian (lib. 4, epist. 2), St. Athanasius (Scr. 2 cont. Arian.), St. Augustine (lib. De great. Christ. Cap. 20), St. Jerome (contra Lucifer.) and others; **therefore the manifest heretic cannot be Pope.**”⁵³

Objection 9): Pope Liberius gave in to the Arian heretics and excommunicated St. Athanasius, yet he remained the pope...

Answer: It is not true that Pope Liberius gave in to the Arians, signed any Arian formula, or even excommunicated St. Athanasius. Pope Liberius was a staunch defender of the truth during the Arian crisis, but his return from exile gave some the idea that he had compromised, when, in fact, he had not. We quote Pope Pius IX.

Pope Pius IX, *Quartus Supra* (# 16), January 6, 1873, On False Accusations:
“And previously the Arians falsely accused Liberius, also Our predecessor, to the Emperor Constantine, because *Liberius refused to condemn St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, and refused to support their heresy.*”⁵⁴

Pope Benedict XV, *Principi Apostolorum Petro* (# 3), Oct. 5, 1920:
“Indeed, lest they should prove faithless from their duty, some went fearlessly into exile, as did Liberius and Silverius and Martinus.”⁵⁵

According to Pope Pius IX and Pope Benedict XV, Pope Liberius didn’t falter in any way during the Arian crisis, and was falsely accused by the Church’s enemies for standing firm. Pope St. Anastasius I bears witness to this as well.

Pope St. Anastasius I, epistle *Dat mihi plurimum*, about 400 AD:
“For at this time when Constantius of holy memory held the world as victor, the heretical African faction was not able by any deception to introduce its baseness because, as we believe, our God provided that the holy and untarnished faith be not contaminated through any vicious blasphemy of slanderous men... For this faith those who were then esteemed as holy bishops gladly endured exile, that is Dionysius, thus a servant of God, prepared by divine instruction, or those following his example of holy recollection, LIBERIUS bishop of the Roman Church, Eusebius also of Vercelli, Hilary of the Gauls, to say nothing of many, on whose decision the choice could rest to be fastened to the cross rather than blaspheme God Christ, which the Arian heresy compelled, or call the Son of God, God Christ, a creature of the Lord.”⁵⁶

It was not Pope Liberius, but the pseudo-bishop Ischyras, who, before he usurped the See of Alexandria, ejected St. Athanasius from his See.

Pope Pius VI, *Charitas* (# 14), April 13, 1791:

"Perhaps in appreciation of these actions, the bishop of Lidda, Jean Joseph Gobel, was elected Archbishop of Paris, while the archbishop was still living. **He is following the example of Ischyras, who was proclaimed bishop of Alexandria at the Council of Tyre as payment for his sinful service in accusing St. Athanasius and ejecting him from his See.**"⁵⁷

Objection 10): Pope Pius XII declared in *Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis* that a cardinal, no matter what excommunication he's under, can be elected pope.

Pope Pius XII, *Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis*, Dec. 8, 1945: "34. None of the cardinals may in any way, or by pretext of any excommunication, suspension, or interdict whatsoever, **or of any other ecclesiastical impediment**, be excluded in the active and passive election of the Supreme Pontiff. We hereby suspend such censures solely for the purposes of the said election; at other times they are to remain in vigor (AAS 38 [1946], p. 76)."

ANSWER: As we've already shown, it's a dogma that 1) heretics are not members of the Church; and 2) that a pope is the head of the Church. It is a dogmatic fact, therefore, that a heretic cannot be the head of the Church, since he is not a member of it.

What, then, does Pope Pius XII mean in *Vacantis Apostolicae Sedis*? First off, one needs to understand that excommunication can be incurred for many things. **Historically, excommunications were distinguished by the terms *major* and *minor*.** Major excommunications were incurred for heresy and schism (sins against the faith) and certain other major sins. Those who received major excommunication for heresy were not members of the Church (as we have just proven at length). Minor excommunication, however, *did not remove one from the Church*, but forbade one to participate in the Church's sacramental life. Pope Benedict XIV made note of the distinction.

Pope Benedict XIV, *Ex Quo Primum* (# 23), March 1, 1756:

"**Moreover heretics and schismatics are subject to the censure of major excommunication by the law of *Can. de Ligu. 23, quest. 5, and Can. Nulli, 5, dist. 19.***"⁵⁸

Minor excommunication, on the other hand, was incurred for things such as violating a secret of the Holy Office, falsifying relics (c. 2326), violating a cloister (c. 2342), etc. These are all ecclesiastical or Church penalties. Such actions, though gravely sinful, *did not separate a person from the Church*. And though the terms major and minor excommunication are no longer used, it remains a fact that **a person could incur an excommunication (for something other than heresy) which would not separate him from the Church**, and he could incur an excommunication for heresy which would separate him from the Church.

Therefore, a cardinal who receives an excommunication for heresy is no longer a cardinal because heretics are outside the Catholic Church (*de fide*, Pope Eugene IV). But a cardinal who receives an excommunication for something else is still a cardinal, though in a state of grave sin.

So when Pope Pius XII says that all cardinals, whatever ecclesiastical impediment they are under, can vote and be elected in a Papal conclave, **this presupposes cardinals who have received an excommunication for something other than heresy, since a cardinal who has received an excommunication for heresy is not a cardinal at all.** The key point to understand is that heresy is not merely an ecclesiastical impediment – thus it is not what Pius XII is talking about – but an impediment by divine law.

The canonist Maroto explains: “**Heretics and schismatics are barred from the Supreme Pontificate by the divine law itself**, because, although by divine law they are not considered incapable of participating in certain types of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, nevertheless, they must certainly be regarded as excluded from occupying the throne of the Apostolic See...”⁵⁹

Notice, heretics are not excluded from the Papacy by merely ecclesiastical impediments, but impediments flowing from the divine law. Pius XII’s legislation doesn’t apply to heresy because he was speaking about ecclesiastical impediments: “...or any other ecclesiastical impediment...”. Thus, his legislation does not show that heretics can be elected and remain popes, which is why he didn’t mention heretics. Pope Pius XII was referring to Catholic cardinals who may have been under excommunication.

To further prove the point, let’s assume *for the sake of argument* that Pope Pius XII’s legislation did mean that a heretical cardinal could be elected pope. Notice what Pius XII says:

“We hereby suspend such censures solely for the purposes of the said election; **at other times they are to remain in vigor.**”

Pius XII says that the excommunication is suspended *only for the time of the election*; at other times it remains in vigor. This would mean that the excommunication for heresy would fall back into force immediately after the election and then the heretic who had been elected pope would lose his office! Thus, no matter what way you look at it, a heretic could not be validly elected and remain pope.

St. Antoninus (1459): “**In the case in which the pope would become a heretic, he would find himself, by that fact alone and without any other sentence, separated from the Church.** A head separated from a body cannot, as long as it remains separated, be head of the same body from which it was cut off. A pope who would be separated from the Church by heresy, therefore, would by that very fact itself cease to be head of the Church. **He could not be a heretic and remain pope, because, since he is outside of the Church, he cannot possess the keys of the Church.**” (*Summa Theologica*, cited in *Actes de Vatican I*. V. Frond pub.)

If a heretic (one who denies the faith) could be the head inside the Church, then the dogma that the Church is **one in faith** (as in *one, holy, Catholic and apostolic*) would be false.

Objection 11): What does it matter whether or not Benedict XVI is a pope? The issue does not concern me.

Answer: If whether or not Benedict XVI is a pope does not matter, then the non-Catholicism of the Vatican II sect does not matter, the New Mass doesn't matter, etc. One cannot separate one from the other. You cannot separate pope and Church. Furthermore, to maintain that Benedict XVI is the head of the Catholic Church is to assert that the gates of Hell have prevailed against Her.

Further, to obstinately recognize Benedict XVI as the pope is to commit a sin against the Faith; for it is to assert that one has the true Faith who, in fact, is a manifest heretic and apostate against it. Moreover, to recognize Benedict XVI and the other Vatican II antipopes as true popes is to scandalize non-Catholics; it is to be unable to consistently present the Faith to a non-Catholic. On this point, we must now see *The Devastating Dilemma* to demonstrate just how much this issue matters.

The Devastating Dilemma: Why Catholics cannot even present the Faith to a Protestant if they accept the Vatican II antipopes as true popes

Suppose that tomorrow you encounter a well-informed Protestant who is interested in becoming a Catholic. While this man claims to be interested in becoming "Catholic," he has major problems with the teaching of the Catholic Church on justification: he rejects the canons and decrees of the 16th century Council of Trent. As he explains his position you think to yourself: "How does this man expect to become Catholic when he doesn't believe in the teaching of the Council of Trent on justification?"

So you, being a charitable Catholic, inform him that if he wants to become Catholic he *must* accept and believe the Council of Trent's teaching on justification and repudiate Luther's view of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*), since the Catholic Church (not to mention scripture - James 2:24) condemns the idea of justification by faith alone.

Pope Paul III, *Council of Trent*, Session 6, Chap. 10, *ex cathedra*:

"You see, that by works a man is justified **AND NOT BY FAITH ALONE**' (James 2:24)." ⁶⁰

But the Protestant responds by saying:

"Excuse me sir, I do not have to accept and believe the Council of Trent's teaching on justification to become Catholic. Nor do I have to believe that justification by faith alone is a heresy, as you say. Your pope, Benedict XVI, and his predecessor, John Paul II, who are both Catholics agree with and have approved of a document that says that faith alone is not a heresy, and that Trent's canons on justification do not apply to the Lutheran explanation of justification." And he proceeds to make three points in succession to prove this.

#1) The Protestant first cites the *Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification*, approved by the Vatican on Oct. 31, 1999. He quotes two selections from the *Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification*, which he happens to have in his briefcase.

Joint Declaration With Lutherans: “# 5. THE PRESENT JOINT DECLARATION has this intention: namely, to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ. It does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does encompass a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and **SHOWS THAT THE REMAINING DIFFERENCES ARE NO LONGER THE OCCASION FOR DOCTRINAL CONDEMNATIONS.**”⁶¹

After citing this, the Protestant correctly explains that this rules out any condemnation of the Lutheran view of justification (*faith alone*, etc.). He then cites # 13.

Joint Declaration With Lutherans: “# 13. IN LIGHT OF THIS CONSENSUS, THE CORRESPONDING DOCTRINAL CONDEMNATIONS OF THE 16TH CENTURY DO NOT APPLY TO TODAY’S PARTNER.”⁶²

After citing this, the Protestant rightly explains that this also means that Trent’s condemnations (in the 16th century) of the Lutheran view of justification no longer apply.

#2) To further substantiate his point, the Protestant proceeds to cite two more selections from the same *Joint Declaration With the Lutherans*.

Joint Declaration With Lutherans: “# 41. Thus the doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century, in so far as they are related to the doctrine of justification, appear in a new light: THE TEACHING OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES PRESENTED IN THIS DECLARATION DOES NOT FALL UNDER THE CONDEMNATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.”⁶³

The Protestant points out the obvious fact that this means that none of the Lutheran teaching contained in the *Joint Declaration* is condemned by the Council of Trent. He then proves that justification by *faith alone* is among the teaching of the Lutheran churches in the *Joint Declaration*.

Joint Declaration With Lutherans: “# 26. ACCORDING TO THE LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING, GOD JUSTIFIES SINNERS IN FAITH ALONE (*sola fide*). In faith they place their trust wholly in their Creator and Redeemer and thus live in communion with him.”⁶⁴

He concludes, with perfect logic, that according to the Vatican’s own agreement with the Lutherans on justification, faith alone is most assuredly not condemned by the Council of Trent. Thus, he says to you:

“You see, sir, the Catholics who adhere to and believe in the *Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification* do not hold that faith alone is a heresy that is **anathematized infallibly by decree of the Council of Trent, as you claim a Catholic must believe in order to be Catholic.”**

#3) Finally, this smart Protestant knows that you will try to say that John Paul II and Benedict XVI didn't sign the *Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification*. So he points out that the Joint Declaration was signed under John Paul II's auspices and repeatedly approved by Benedict XVI.

John Paul II, Jan. 19, 2004, *At a Meeting with Lutherans From Finland*: "... I wish to express my gratitude for the ecumenical progress made between Catholics and Lutherans in the five years since the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*." ⁶⁵

Benedict XVI, *Address to Methodists*, Dec. 9, 2005: "**I have been encouraged by the initiative which would bring the member churches of the World Methodist Council into association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999**." ⁶⁶

The Protestant concludes his presentation by saying:

"Benedict XVI (and, before him, John Paul II) is a Catholic and adheres to the Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the doctrine of justification, **which declaration explicitly teaches that faith alone is not anathematized by Trent, and that the remaining differences between Lutherans and Catholics on justification are not the occasion for any doctrinal condemnations. Therefore, when I become a Catholic, I will hold the same position as Benedict XVI and as the Joint Declaration with the Lutherans sets forth. I will hold that faith alone justifies, and I will not hold that it is an anathematized heresy!** And I will not embrace the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, because John Paul II and Benedict XVI have accepted, endorsed and agreed with the Joint Declaration, which explains that Trent's canons are no longer in force."

You know that as a Catholic, you have a strict obligation to tell him that belief in faith alone and belief in the Catholic religion are incompatible. So what do you say in response?

If you hold that Benedict XVI and John Paul II are/were valid popes, you spit back the following response, which is the only thing that you can think of:

"*John Paul II and Benedict XVI are wrong. They aren't infallible in everything they say or do. The Joint Declaration is not infallible. The Council of Trent is infallible.*"

And the smart Protestant, quickly detecting the flaws in this illogical and poor response, replies:

"*Sir, I never said that the Joint Declaration is infallible. Infallibility has nothing to do with our discussion. **The bottom-line is that you admit that Benedict XVI is a Catholic with whom you are in communion, and with whom every Catholic must be in communion. You admit that he is not a heretic who is outside the communion of the Catholic Church for embracing the Joint Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification, so you must admit that I will also be a Catholic in communion with the Church (not a heretic) when I take the same position.***"

If you hold that Benedict XVI is a valid pope, you would then have nothing to say in response to this Protestant. The debate is over, and you have lost. You cannot on the one hand say that acceptance of *faith alone and the Joint Declaration With the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification* is incompatible with this Protestant's entrance into the Catholic Church (which you must as a Catholic, since this was defined infallibly at Trent), while you simultaneously give obedience to Benedict XVI as head of the Catholic Church, who has demonstrated his acceptance of the *Joint*

Declaration with the Lutherans on the Doctrine of Justification quite publicly. The Protestant has cornered you and you are forced to admit that he can indeed become Catholic and hold to what is taught in the Joint Declaration. This proves that those who accept Benedict XVI as the pope cannot even consistently present the Catholic Faith to a Protestant. **THEY MUST ADMIT THAT ONE CAN BE A "CATHOLIC" AND HOLD THAT FAITH ALONE IS NOT AN ANATHEMATIZED HERESY, AND THAT TRENT'S CANONS DO NOT APPLY TO THE LUTHERAN VIEW OF JUSTIFICATION.**

As long as one acknowledges Benedict XVI as the Catholic pope, he is defending a Church that has repudiated the Council of Trent, a "Church" that is, by definition, a non-Catholic Church – a Church of heretics.

Pope Innocent III, *Eius exemplo*, profession of faith, Dec. 18, 1208: "By the heart we believe and by the mouth we confess **THE ONE CHURCH, NOT OF HERETICS**, but the Holy Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Church outside of which we believe that no one is saved."⁶⁷

The same judgment and authority by which you determined that this non-denominational Protestant was a heretic and outside the Catholic Church – a judgment you made upon meeting him and finding out what he believed and how he repudiated the Council of Trent – is the same exact judgment that you absolutely are forced to make about Benedict XVI. It should hit you in a striking and illuminating way that you are not guilty of judging the Holy See or a pope when you correctly judge that Benedict XVI is a non-Catholic; rather, you are identifying a non-Catholic for what he is, just as you correctly identified the non-denominational Protestant you met as a non-Catholic, as well as any Calvinist, Methodist or Episcopalian.

Objection 12): How could the entire Church and all the cardinals recognize an antipope, such as in the case of John XXIII (1958-1963)?

Answer: Pope Paul IV declared that Catholics could not accept such a heretical claimant, **even if obedience were given to him by "all" – indicating by such a statement that all giving obedience to such an antipope is a possibility.**

Pope Paul IV, Bull *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio*, Feb. 15, 1559: "6. **In addition, [by this Our Constitution, which is to remain valid in perpetuity We enact, determine, decree and define:]** that if ever at any time it shall appear that... the Roman Pontiff, prior to his promotion or his elevation as Cardinal or Roman Pontiff, has deviated from the Catholic Faith or fallen into some heresy... (ii) **it shall not be possible for it to acquire validity (nor for it to be said that it has thus acquired validity) through the acceptance of the office, of consecration, of subsequent authority, nor through possession of administration, nor through the putative enthronement of a Roman Pontiff, or Veneration, or obedience accorded to such by all, nor through the lapse of any period of time in the foregoing situation;...**"

But we've already had a situation where all of the cardinals recognized an antipope! As covered earlier in the book, during the Great Western Schism **15 of the 16 cardinals who had elected Pope Urban VI withdrew from his obedience on the grounds that the unruly Roman mob had made the election uncanonical.** The one cardinal who did not repudiate Pope Urban VI was Cardinal Tebaldeschi, but he died shortly thereafter, on Sept. 7 – **leaving a situation where not**

one of the cardinals of the Catholic Church recognized the true pope, Urban VI. All of the living cardinals then regarded his election as invalid.⁶⁸

In the 12th century, Antipope Anacletus II – who reigned eight years in Rome while rivaling the true Pope, Innocent II – gained the majority of the cardinals, the Bishop of Porto, the Dean of the Sacred College, and the entire populace of Rome as his supporters.⁶⁹

Objection 13): John XXII was a heretic, who was even denounced by Cardinal Orsini as a heretic, yet he remained the pope.

Chris Ferrara, “Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise,” Catholic Family News, August 2005, p. 21: **“Compare the [Sedevacantist] Enterprise’s lack of success in finding ‘manifest’ heresy in the pronouncements of the conciliar popes with the historical example of Pope John XXII. In 1331, certain French theologians and Cardinal Orsini denounced John XXII as a heretic when, in a series of sermons, he taught that the souls of the blessed departed, after finishing their appointed time in Purgatory, do not see God until after the last judgment. Cardinal Orsini called for a general council to pronounce the Pope a heretic...** Confronted in this public manner, John XXII replied that he had not intended to bind the whole Church to his sermons, and he impaneled a commission of theologians to consider the question. The commission informed the Pope that he was in error, and he did retract the error several years later, the day before his death. **Yet despite being denounced as a heretic and threatened with a general council to declare his heresy,** John XXII never ceased to be regarded by the Church as Pope, and Church history duly records him as such.”⁷⁰

Answer: John XXII was not a heretic, and his reign is no proof that heretics can be popes.

First, we want the reader to notice something very interesting: when Ferrara (the person launching this objection) is discussing John XXII, notice that the affair is exaggerated. He doesn’t hesitate to label it as an example of actual heresy. But when he is addressing the clear heresies of the Vatican II “popes,” they are all diminished so much that he denies that any of them even constitute heresy. For instance:

Chris Ferrara, “Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise,” Catholic Family News, August 2005, p. 21: **“But the [Sedevacantist] Enterprise does not even get to first base since, as we shall see, despite its indefatigable efforts it has failed to identify any ‘manifest’ heresy among the many ambiguous pronouncements and disturbing (even scandalous) actions of John Paul II or Paul VI...”**⁷¹

Okay, so none of the clear heresies from John Paul II and Paul VI (e.g., teaching that there are saints in other religions; stating that we shouldn’t convert non-Catholics; etc.) even constitute heresy, according to Ferrara; but the case of John XXII *certainly* rose to the level of heresy. What complete nonsense! Does anyone not see the profound hypocrisy and utter dishonesty here? When Ferrara and other non-sedevacantists feel that it is an advantage to belittle the heresy, they raise the bar for heresy, so that basically nothing rises to the level of actual heresy. But when they deem it useful to exaggerate a heresy (as in the case of John XXII), because they think it will successfully oppose sedevacantism, they overstate it and make it seem much worse than it was.

The fact of the matter is that John XXII was not a heretic. John XXII's position that the souls of the blessed departed don't see the Beatific Vision until after the General Judgment was not a matter that had yet been specifically defined as a dogma. This definition occurred two years after Pope John XXII's death by Pope Benedict XII in *Benedictus Deus*,⁷² but apparently Ferrara didn't feel that it was important to mention that fact.

The fact that Cardinal Orsini denounced John XXII as a heretic doesn't prove anything, especially when we consider the context of the events. To provide a brief background: **John XXII had condemned as heretical the teaching of "the Spirituals."** This group held that Christ and the apostles had no possessions individually or in common. John XXII condemned this view as contrary to Sacred Scripture, and declared that all who persistently adhere to it are heretical.⁷³ "The Spirituals" and others like them, including King Louis of Bavaria, were condemned as heretics.

When the controversy about John XXII's statements on the Beatific Vision occurred, the Spirituals and King Louis of Bavaria profited by it and accused the pope of heresy. **These enemies of the Church were supported by Cardinal Orsini, the man Ferrara mentions in his article.**

The Catholic Encyclopedia, "John XXII," Vol. 8, 1910, p. 433: **"The Spirituals, always in close alliance with Louis of Bavaria, profited by these events to accuse the pope of heresy, being supported by Cardinal Napoleon Orsini. In union with the latter, King Louis wrote to the cardinals, urging them to call a general council and condemn the pope."**⁷⁴

With this background, we can see that Ferrara's statement that "Cardinal Orsini called for a general council to pronounce the pope a heretic..." takes on a different light: Yes, Cardinal Orsini and his good friends, the excommunicated heretics. In fact, even Ferrara's own "pope," in his book *Dogmatic Theology*, notes that the scandal was exploited by the enemies of the Church for political ends:

"Cardinal" Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), *Dogmatic Theology*, 1977, p. 137: **"The scandal [of John XXII] was exploited for political ends in the accusation of heresy brought by the pope's Franciscan opponents [the Spirituals] in the circle of William of Ockham at the court of the emperor Louis of Bavaria."**⁷⁵

Ferrara places himself right in the company of the enemies of the Church with his exaggeration of the case of John XXII. John XXII was not a heretic. **In addition to the fact that the matter had not yet been specifically defined as a dogma, John XXII also made it clear that he bound no one to his (false) opinion and was not arriving at a definitive conclusion on the matter:**

The Catholic Encyclopedia, on Pope John XXII:
"Pope John wrote to King Phillip IV on the matter (November, 1333), and emphasized the fact that, as long as the Holy See had not given a decision, the theologians enjoyed perfect freedom in this matter. In December, 1333, the theologians at Paris, after a consultation on the question, decided in favor of the doctrine that the souls of the blessed departed saw God immediately after death or after their complete purification; **at the same time they pointed out that the pope had given no decision on this question but only advanced his personal opinion**, and now petitioned the pope to confirm their decision. John appointed a commission at Avignon to study the writings of the Fathers, and to discuss further the disputed question. **In a consistory held on 3 January, 1334, the pope explicitly declared that he had never meant to teach anything contrary to**

Holy Scripture or the rule of faith and in fact had not intended to give any decision whatever. Before his death he withdrew his former opinion, and declared his belief that souls separated from their bodies enjoyed in heaven the Beatific Vision."⁷⁶

All of this serves to show that John XXII was not a heretic. He held a personal opinion that was dead wrong, one which he explicitly declared was nothing more than opinion. In fact, despite his significant error, John XXII was quite vigorous against heresy. His condemnation of the Spirituals and King Louis of Bavaria is proof that he did condemn heresy. To compare him to the Vatican II antipopes who don't even believe that heresy exists is utterly ridiculous. As established already, Benedict XVI doesn't even believe that Protestantism is heresy! What a satanic joke that anyone would *obstinately* (in the face of these facts) assert that this man is a Catholic! The fact is wherever non-sedevacantists want to turn (to the dogma of the Papacy, or the actions of Luther, etc.), they are refuted. For instance, since we're on the topic of John XXII and the General Judgment, it should be remembered that Benedict XVI denies perhaps the most central Catholic dogma regarding the General Judgment: the Resurrection of the Body, as we demonstrated in the previous section on his heresies.

Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, 2004, p. 349: "**It now becomes clear that the real heart of faith in the resurrection does not consist at all in the idea of the restoration of bodies**, to which we have reduced it in our thinking; such is the case even though this is the pictorial image used throughout the Bible."⁷⁷

Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, 2004, pp. 357-358: "To recapitulate, **Paul teaches, not the resurrection of physical bodies**, but the resurrection of persons..."⁷⁸

So, when non-sedevacantists bring up the issue of John XXII and the Last Judgment, they do nothing except remind us of another dogma which Benedict XVI denies and another proof why he is not the pope.

Objection 14): Pope Honorius was condemned for heresy by a general council after his death, yet the Church does not consider him to have ceased to be pope, even though he was accused of heresy during his reign.

Answer: As we have already seen, it's a dogmatic fact that a heretic cannot be the pope, since it's an infallibly defined dogma that a heretic is not a member of the Catholic Church.

Pope Eugene IV, *Council of Florence, ex cathedra*: "The Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that **all those who are outside the Catholic Church**, not only pagans **but also** Jews or **heretics** and schismatics ..." ⁷⁹

The case of Pope Honorius doesn't prove that a heretic can be the pope. In condemning Pope Honorius as a heretic after his death, **the III Council of Constantinople made no statement - nor has the Church ever made a statement - that he remained pope until his death.**

Third Council of Constantinople, Exposition of Faith, 680-681:
 "... the contriver of evil did not rest, finding an accomplice in the serpent and through him bringing upon human nature the poised dart of death, so now too he has found instruments suited to his own purpose - namely, Theodore... Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul and

Peter... and further Honorius, who was pope of elder Rome, Cyrus... and Macarius... - and has not been idle in raising through them obstacles of error against the full body of the Church, sowing with novel speech among the orthodox people the heresy of a single will and a single principle of action..."⁸⁰

The Church didn't address the issue of whether Honorius lost the Papal Office after falling into heresy; it simply condemned him. (Honorius was also condemned by the *Fourth Council of Constantinople* and the *Second Council of Nicea*.) Since Honorius was a validly elected pope (which is why he is listed in the list of true popes), if he became a true heretic during his reign then he did lose the Papal Office; for, as even non-sedevacantists who make this argument admit, "**heretics are not Catholics, and non-Catholics cannot be popes.**"

Pope Honorius had been dead for more than 40 years when he was condemned by the *III Council of Constantinople*. Honorius had issued no dogmatic decrees, and only "reigned" for three and ½ years after the incident of heresy occurred. Hence, the question of whether he remained the pope and ruled the universal Church for the last three and ½ years of his thirteen-year pontificate wasn't especially relevant to the faithful at the time.

Therefore, it is perfectly understandable that the Church didn't issue any proclamation that Honorius lost his office because nothing was riding on the issue at the time, and it would have involved a major theological discussion and an entire can of worms that didn't need to be opened.

Further, there still remains some confusion among people (including among Honorius's successors) as to whether Pope Honorius had been a heretic or merely guilty of failing to stamp out heresy or whether he had been completely misunderstood, as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1907 states. Certain scholars who have even studied the question in great detail remain unconvinced that Honorius was condemned as a true heretic by the *III Council of Constantinople*. Their argument rests in the fact that **Pope St. Agatho, who was alive during the council, died before it was over**. Since a council's decrees only possess the authority which are given to them in the confirmation by the pope, they argue that Pope St. Leo II, the pope who actually confirmed the council, *only confirmed the condemnation of Honorius in the sense that he failed to stamp out heresy*, and therefore allowed the faith to be polluted. This confusion is surely why we see that St. Francis De Sales says what he says (see below) about Honorius.

In order to further differentiate the case of Honorius from the Vatican II antipopes, it's important to point out that **the lapse of Pope Honorius was almost completely unknown during his reign and for years after his reign**. Honorius's two letters which favored the monothelite heresy (written in 634) were letters to Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. These letters were not only almost completely unknown at the time, but were also misunderstood by a pope who reigned just after Honorius.

For instance, **Pope John IV (640-643), who was the second pope to reign after Pope Honorius, defended Honorius from any charge of heresy**. Pope John IV was convinced that Honorius had not taught the monothelite heresy (that Christ has only one will), but that Honorius merely emphasized that Our Lord doesn't have two contrary wills.

Pope John IV, "Dominus qui dixit" to Constantius the Emperor, Regarding Pope Honorius, 641: "...So, **my aforementioned predecessor [Honorius] said** concerning the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, that there were not in Him, as in us sinners, contrary wills of mind and flesh; **and certain ones converting this to their own meaning,**

suspected that he taught one will of His divinity and humanity which is altogether contrary to the truth."⁸¹

With these facts in mind, one can see: 1) the case of Pope Honorius doesn't prove that heretics can be popes, since the Church has never declared that he remained the pope after his lapse; and 2) **the facts of the case of Pope Honorius are drastically different from the case of the Vatican II antipopes, since Honorius's two letters containing heresy were almost completely unknown at the time, and were even misunderstood by popes who succeeded him.** To compare Pope Honorius's two letters to the acts and statements of the manifest heretics Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI is like comparing a grain of sand to the seashore.

Finally, if you want further confirmation that heretics *ipso facto* cease to be popes, **and that the case of Pope Honorius provides no evidence to the contrary**, you don't have to take our word for it.

St. Francis De Sales (17th century), Doctor of the Church, *The Catholic Controversy*, pp. 305-306: **"Thus we do not say that the Pope cannot err in his private opinions, as did John XXII; or be altogether a heretic, as perhaps Honorius was. Now when he [the Pope] is explicitly a heretic, he falls *ipso facto* from his dignity and out of the Church..."**⁸²

In the same paragraph in which St. Francis De Sales (Doctor of the Church) mentions Pope Honorius, he states unequivocally that a pope who would become a heretic would cease to be pope. St. Francis De Sales wasn't sure if Pope Honorius was a heretic or merely failed to stamp out heresy; but, whatever it was, St. Francis knew the case of Honorius didn't affect the truth that heretics cannot be popes.

St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Alphonsus were also familiar with the case of Pope Honorius. His case didn't cause them to hesitate in declaring:

St. Robert Bellarmine (1610), Doctor of the Church: **"A pope who is a manifest heretic automatically (*per se*) ceases to be Pope and head, just as he ceases automatically to be a Christian and a member of the Church.** Wherefore, he can be judged and punished by the Church. This is the teaching of all the ancient Fathers who teach that manifest heretics immediately lose all jurisdiction."

St. Alphonsus Liguori (1787), Doctor of the Church: **"If ever a pope, as a private person, should fall into heresy, he would at once fall from the Pontificate."**⁸³

With these facts in mind, we can see that the argument from Honorius doesn't prove anything for the non-sedevacantist; but rather it reminds us of the Doctors of the Church who, while recalling his case, simultaneously declared that heretics cannot be popes.

Objection 15): The Church and the hierarchy will always be visible. If the Vatican II Church is not the true Catholic Church, then the Church and hierarchy are no longer visible.

Answer: 1) People misunderstand in what the visibility of the Church consists; 2) the Vatican II sect cannot be the visible Church of Christ; and 3) the Vatican II sect denies this very teaching on the visibility of the Church.

No one denies that the Catholic Church could cease to exist in all the countries of the world except one. The visibility of the Church does not require that the faithful or the hierarchy be seen in every single geographical location around the globe. This has never been the case. Simply, the visibility of the Church signifies real Catholic faithful who externally profess the one true religion, even if they are reduced to a very small number. These faithful who externally profess the one true religion will always remain the visible Church of Christ, even if their ranks are reduced to just a handful.

And that is precisely what is predicted to happen at the end of the world.

St. Athanasius: "Even if Catholics faithful to tradition are reduced to a handful, they are the ones who are the true Church of Jesus Christ."⁸⁴

Our Lord Himself indicates that the size of the Church will become frighteningly small in the last days.

Luke 18:8: **"But yet, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?"**

The Apocalypse of St. John seems to indicate the same.

Apocalypse 11:1-2:

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and it was said to me: Arise, and measure the temple of God, and *the altar*, and them that adore in it. But the court, which is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not, because it is given to the Gentiles..."

The *Haydock version of the Douay-Rheims Bible*, a popular compilation of Catholic commentary on the Scriptures by Rev. Fr. Geo. Leo Haydock, contains the following comment on Apoc. 11:1-2.

Catholic Commentary on Apoc. 11:1-2, *Haydock version of the Douay-Rheims Bible*:

"The churches consecrated to the true God, are so much diminished in number, that they are represented by St. John as one church; its ministers officiate at *one altar*; and all the true faithful are so few, with respect to the bulk of mankind, that the evangelist sees them assembled in one temple, to pay their adorations to the Most High. - Pastorini."⁸⁵

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church has never taught that there must always be a certain number of bishops or faithful for the Church to exist. As long as there is at least one priest or bishop and at least a few faithful, the Church and the hierarchy are alive and visible. Today there is much more than a handful of faithful left who maintain the unchanging Catholic Faith. Thus,

the argument of our opponents from the standpoint of visibility lacks any merit and is contrary to the prophecies of Sacred Scripture.

Further, during the Arian crisis the true Faith was eliminated from entire regions, so much so that there were hardly any Catholic bishops to be found anywhere.

Fr. William Jurgens: "At one point in the Church's history, only a few years before Gregory's [Nazianz] present preaching (+380 A.D.), perhaps the number of Catholic bishops in possession of sees, as opposed to Arian bishops in possession of sees, was no greater than something between 1% and 3% of the total. **Had doctrine been determined by popularity, today we should all be deniers of Christ and opponents of the Spirit.**"⁸⁶

Fr. William Jurgens: "In the time of the Emperor Valens (4th century), Basil was virtually the only orthodox Bishop in all the East who succeeded in retaining charge of his see... If it has no other importance for modern man, **a knowledge of the history of Arianism should demonstrate at least that the Catholic Church takes no account of popularity and numbers in shaping and maintaining doctrine:** else, we should long since have had to abandon Basil and Hilary and Athanasius and Liberius and Ossius and call ourselves after Arius."⁸⁷

The Arian heresy became so widespread in the 4th century that the Arians (who denied the Divinity of Christ) came to occupy almost all the Catholic churches and appeared to be the legitimate hierarchy basically everywhere.

St. Ambrose (+382): "**There are not enough hours in the day for me to recite even the names of all the various sects of heretics.**"⁸⁸

Things were so bad that St. Gregory Nazianz felt compelled to say what the Catholic remnant today could very well say.

St. Gregory Nazianz, "Against the Arians" (+380): "Where are they who revile us for our poverty and pride themselves in their riches? **They who define the Church by numbers and scorn the little flock?**"⁸⁹

This period of Church history, therefore, proves an important point for our time: If the Church's indefectible mission of teaching, governing and sanctifying required a governing (i.e., jurisdictional) bishop for the Church of Christ to be present and operative in a particular see or diocese, then one would have to say that the Church of Christ defected in all those territories where there was no governing Catholic bishop during the Arian heresy. However, it is a fact that in the 4th century, where the faithful retained the true Catholic faith, even in those sees where the bishop defected to Arianism, the faithful Catholic remnant constituted the true Church of Christ. In that remnant, the Catholic Church existed and endured in her mission to teach, govern and sanctify without a governing bishop, thus proving that **the Church of Christ's indefectibility and mission to teach, govern and sanctify does not require the presence of a jurisdictional bishop.**

It should also be noted that the hierarchy can be defined in two ways: the jurisdictional hierarchy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁹⁰

Pope Pius XII, *Ad Sinarum gentem* (# 13), Oct. 7, 1954: "Besides – as has also been divinely established – **the power of orders (through which the ecclesiastical hierarchy is**

composed of bishops, priests, and ministers) comes from receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders.”⁹¹

Only those who have ordinary jurisdiction (i.e., jurisdiction which is attached to an office) constitute the jurisdictional hierarchy. All valid Catholic priests, on the other hand, constitute parts of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It is possible that as long as the ecclesiastical hierarchy remains the hierarchy exists.

Non-sedevacantists who raise this objection cannot point to one real Catholic bishop with ordinary jurisdiction. To whom are they going to point? Are they going to point to "Bishop" Bruskewitz, who conducted an interfaith Seder Supper with a group of rabbis in his own cathedral during Holy Week?⁹² Are they going to point to "Cardinal" Mahony or "Cardinal" Keeler?

If it's true that there must be one bishop with ordinary jurisdiction somewhere (which is something that has not been proven), then he is somewhere. But it doesn't change the fact that Benedict XVI and his apostate bishops are not Catholic and therefore not part of the hierarchy. Against a fact there is no argument; against this fact there is no argument.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Vatican II sect rejects the visibility of the Catholic Church, thus proving again that it's not the visible Catholic Church!

Vatican II document, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (# 1):

“Yet almost all, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, that truly universal Church whose mission is to convert the whole world to the gospel, so that the world may be saved, to the glory of God.”⁹³

Remember this one? At the very beginning of its Decree on Ecumenism, Vatican II teaches that almost everyone longs for a truly universal and visible Church whose mission is to convert the world to the Gospel. Again, for those who doubt that Vatican II was here denying that the Catholic Church exists, we will quote Antipope John Paul II's own interpretation of this passage.

John Paul II, *Homily*, Dec. 5, 1996, speaking of prayer with non-Catholics: “**When we pray together, we do so with the longing ‘that there may be one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal** and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God’ (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1).”

John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (# 7), May 25, 1995: “**And yet almost everyone, though in different ways, longs that there may be one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal** and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God (Vatican II document *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1).”⁹⁴

So, if you accept the Church's teaching on its visibility, that's just one more reason to reject the Vatican II sect and its antipopes.

By the way, the idea of an invisible Church – taught by the Vatican II sect – has been condemned at least three times: Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (# 3), June 29, 1896;⁹⁵ Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* (# 10), Jan. 6, 1928;⁹⁶ Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (# 64), June 29, 1943.⁹⁷

Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (# 3), June 29, 1896:

“‘Now you are the Body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 12:27) – and precisely because it is a body is the Church **visible... From this it follows that those who arbitrarily conjure up and picture to themselves a hidden and invisible Church are in grievous and pernicious error.**”⁹⁸

Moreover, here is an interesting quote from the Lay Investiture crisis (1075-1122). During this crisis the evil King of Germany, Henry IV, instituted an antipope (who was supported by many German bishops). Henry also appointed his own bishops who were also subject to the antipope. The result was **two bishops in most dioceses and massive confusion.**

The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, 1910, “Investitures,” p. 86: “There was now much confusion on all sides... **Many dioceses had two occupants.** Both parties called their rivals perjurers and traitors...”⁹⁹

The point is: while we are currently dealing with an unprecedented apostasy, the Church has seen confusing times before, including those in which the true hierarchy was not easily ascertainable.

Objection 16): The Vatican II popes haven’t taught manifest heresy, because their statements are ambiguous and require commentary.

Chris Ferrara, *Catholic Family News*, “Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise, Part II,” Oct. 2005, p. 8: “**Now that which is manifest – i.e., plain, evident, obvious, unmistakable and undoubted – requires no explanation.** The very quality of not needing to be explained is what makes a thing manifest. Thus, before the Enterprise can even get to first base, it must show us not merely papal statements made openly, but statements whose alleged heresy requires no explanation to demonstrate. **The papal words themselves – not sedevacantist interpretations of those words – must denote heresy.** **“If a Pope were to proclaim to the whole Church in some document or public pronouncement ‘There is no Holy Trinity. There is only God the Creator, just as the Muslims believe!’ his heresy would be manifest in the full and correct sense of the word.”**¹⁰⁰

Answer: The one making this objection, Chris Ferrara, is completely wrong, as usual. First, there are many examples of manifest heresies from the post-conciliar antipopes which require no explanation or commentary, as we have seen. Second, papal authority teaches us that some heresies do require explanation, deep study and analysis to uncover and condemn, as we will also see.

Before we expand on those two points, it is necessary for the reader to examine the example of heresy that Ferrara gives. Ferrara gives the example of heresy: “There is no Holy Trinity.” According to Ferrara, this is an undeniable example of manifest heresy. He is correct that this statement is heretical, but notice that **even in this example we are not dealing with an exact word-for-word denial of a dogmatic definition.** As far as we’re aware, there is no dogmatic definition on the Holy Trinity which states “There is a Holy Trinity.” There are definitions, such as the following:

Pope Gregory X, *Council of Lyons II*, 1274, ex cathedra: “**We believe that the Holy Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is one God omnipotent...**”¹⁰¹

Of course, Catholics immediately recognize that the statement “There is no Holy Trinity” equates to a direct denial of this dogmatic definition, even though it doesn’t deny the dogmatic definition *verbatim*. So, **in giving his single example of heresy** – a single example Ferrara probably concocted because he feels confident that that the sedevacantists can produce no equivalent heresy on the Trinity from Benedict XVI – **Ferrara proves our point: statements that equate to a direct denial of dogma, even though they are not exact word-for-word denials of a dogmatic definition, are examples of manifest heresy.**

So, just as Catholics immediately recognize that the statement “There is no Holy Trinity” is a manifest heresy, even though there is no dogma declaring *exactly the opposite word-for-word*, they likewise immediately recognize that Benedict XVI’s declaration that **Protestantism is not heresy** is, of course, a direct denial of the Catholic dogmas which condemn Protestant teachings as heresies. Thank you for proving our point again, Mr. Ferrara.

We will now quote more than 10 statements from Benedict XVI (and just one from John Paul II) and give no commentary whatsoever. Everyone who is sincere and honest will see that they equate to direct rejections of Catholic dogma without any analysis being required.

“Cardinal” Joseph Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, pp. 87-88: “The difficulty in the way of giving an answer is a profound one. Ultimately it is due to the fact that **there is no appropriate category in Catholic thought for the phenomenon of Protestantism today** (one could say the same of the relationship to the separated churches of the East). **It is obvious that the old category of ‘heresy’ is no longer of any value... Protestantism has made an important contribution to the realization of Christian faith, fulfilling a positive function in the development of the Christian message... The conclusion is inescapable, then: Protestantism today is something different from heresy in the traditional sense, a phenomenon whose true theological place has not yet been determined.**”¹⁰²

No comment necessary.

Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, pp. 61, 68: “... **Meantime the Catholic Church has no right to absorb other Churches.** The Church has not yet prepared for them a place of their own, but this they are legitimately entitled to... **A basic unity – of Churches that remain Churches, yet become one Church – must replace the idea of conversion,** even though conversion retains its meaningfulness for those in conscience motivated to seek it.”¹⁰³

No comment necessary.

“Cardinal” Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, pp. 197-198: “Against this background we can now weigh the possibilities that are open to Christian ecumenism. The maximum demands on which the search for unity must certainly founder are immediately clear. **On the part of the West, the maximum demand would be that the East recognize the primacy of the bishop of Rome in the full scope of the definition of 1870** and in so doing submit in practice, to a primacy such as has been accepted by the Uniate churches. On the part of the East, the maximum demand would be that the West declare the 1870 doctrine of primacy erroneous and in so doing submit, in practice, to a primacy such as has been accepted with the removal of the Filioque from the Creed and including the Marian dogmas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. **As regards Protestantism, the maximum demand of the Catholic Church would be that the Protestant ecclesiological ministers be regarded as totally invalid and that Protestants**

be converted to Catholicism... none of the maximum solutions offers any real hope of unity."¹⁰⁴

No comment necessary.

"Cardinal" Joseph Ratzinger, *God and the World*, 2000, p. 209: "**It is of course possible to read the Old Testament so that it is not directed toward Christ; it does not point quite unequivocally to Christ.** And if Jews cannot see the promises as being fulfilled in him, this is not just ill will on their part, but genuinely because of the obscurity of the texts and the tension in the relationship between these texts and the figure of Jesus. Jesus brings a new meaning to these texts – yet it is he who first gives them their proper coherence and relevance and significance. **There are perfectly good reasons, then, for denying that the Old Testament refers to Christ and for saying, No, that is not what he said.** And there are also good reasons for referring it to him – that is what the dispute between Jews and Christians is about."¹⁰⁵

No comment necessary.

"Cardinal" Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), p. 377: "...**There is an obsession with the letter that regards the liturgy of the Church as invalid and thus puts itself outside the Church. It is forgotten here that the validity of the liturgy depends primarily, not on specific words, but on the community** of the Church..."¹⁰⁶

No comment necessary.

"Cardinal" Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), p. 202: "**It means that the Catholic does not insist on the dissolution of the Protestant confessions and the demolishing of their churches but hopes, rather, that they will be strengthened in their confessions and in their ecclesial reality.**"¹⁰⁷

No comment necessary.

John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (# 84), May 25, 1995:
 "...[Speaking of non-Catholic "Churches"] **These saints come from all the Churches and Ecclesial Communities WHICH GAVE THEM ENTRANCE INTO THE COMMUNION OF SALVATION.**"¹⁰⁸

No comment necessary.

"Cardinal" Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 1982, p. 381: "**If it is desirable to offer a diagnosis of the text [of the Vatican II document, Gaudium et Spes] as a whole, we might say that (in conjunction with the texts on religious liberty and world religions) it is a revision of the Syllabus of Pius IX, a kind of counter syllabus...** As a result, the one-sidedness of the position adopted by the Church under Pius IX and Pius X in response to the situation created by the new phase of history inaugurated by the French Revolution **was, to a large extent, corrected** *via facti*, especially in Central Europe, but there was still no basic statement of the relationship that should exist between the Church and the world that had come into existence after 1789."¹⁰⁹

No comment necessary.

“Cardinal” Joseph Ratzinger, *Co-Workers of the Truth*, 1990, p. 217: “**The question that really concerns us, the question that really oppresses us, is why it is necessary for us in particular to practice the Christian Faith in its totality; why, when there are so many other ways that lead to heaven and salvation,** it should be required of us to bear day after day the whole burden of ecclesial dogmas and of the ecclesial ethos. And so we come again to the question: What exactly is Christian reality? What is the specific element in Christianity that not merely justifies it, but makes it compulsorily necessary for us? **When we raise the question about the foundation and meaning of our Christian existence, there slips in a certain false hankering for the apparently more comfortable life of other people who are also going to heaven.** We are too much like the laborers of the first hour in the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16). Once they discovered that they could have earned their day’s pay of one denarius in a much easier way, they could not understand why they had had to labor the whole day. **But what a strange attitude it is to find the duties of our Christian life unrewarding just because the denarius of salvation can be gained without them!** It would seem that we – like the workers of the first hour – want to be paid not only with our own salvation, but more particularly with others’ lack of salvation. That is at once very human and profoundly un-Christian.”¹¹⁰

No comment necessary.

“Cardinal” Joseph Ratzinger, *Co-Workers of the Truth*, 1990, p. 29: “To borrow Congar’s cogent phrase, **it would be both foolish and perverse to identify the efficacy of the Holy Spirit with the work of the ecclesial apparatus. This means that even in Catholic belief the unity of the Church is still in the process of formation; that it will be totally achieved only in the eschaton** [the end of the world], just as grace will not be perfected until its effects are visible – although the community of God has already begun to be visible.”¹¹¹

No comment necessary.

“Cardinal” Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 2004, p. 349: “**It now becomes clear that the real heart of faith in the resurrection does not consist at all in the idea of the restoration of bodies,** to which we have reduced it in our thinking; such is the case even though this is the pictorial image used throughout the Bible.”¹¹²

No comment necessary.

The Jewish People and the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Bible, Section II, A, Prefaced by Benedict XVI: “**Jewish messianic expectation is not in vain... to read the Bible as Judaism does necessarily involves an implicit acceptance of all its presuppositions... which exclude faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God... Christians can and ought to admit that the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one...**”¹¹³

There are many others, but these constitute more than ten examples of manifest heresies which equate to a direct denial of Catholic dogma without any commentary being necessary.

**CHRIS FERRARA VS. POPE PIUS VI ON AMBIGUITY IN HERESY = A KNOCKOUT FOR
POPE PIUS VI**

In addition to the fact that there are manifest heresies which require no commentary from the Vatican II antipopes, as we saw above, **WHAT UTTERLY DESTROYS FERRARA'S POINT is the fact that Pope Pius VI teaches exactly the opposite of Ferrara on heresy and ambiguity. Pope Pius VI declares that heretics, such as Nestorius, have always camouflaged their heresies and doctrinal errors in self-contradiction and ambiguity!**

Pope Pius VI, condemning the Synod of Pistoia, Bull "Auctorem fidei," August 28, 1794: "[The Ancient Doctors] knew the capacity of innovators in the art of deception. In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, they sought to hide the subtleties of their tortuous maneuvers by the use of seemingly innocuous words such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the most gentle manner. Once the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith which is necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by subtle errors to their eternal damnation. This manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious, regardless of the circumstances under which it is used. For very good reasons it can never be tolerated in a synod of which the principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity and excluding all danger of error.

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

"It is as if the innovators pretended that they always intended to present the alternative passages, especially to those of simple faith who eventually come to know only some part of the conclusions of such discussions which are published in the common language for everyone's use. Or again, as if the same faithful had the ability on examining such documents to judge such matters for themselves without getting confused and avoiding all risk of error. It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by our predecessor Saint Celestine who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and which he exposed in order to condemn it with the greatest possible severity. Once these texts were examined carefully, the impostor was exposed and confounded, for he expressed himself in a plethora of words, mixing true things with others that were obscure; mixing at times one with the other in such a way that he was also able to confess those things which were denied while at the same time possessing a basis for denying those very sentences which he confessed.

"In order to expose such snares, something which becomes necessary with a certain frequency in every century, no other method is required than the following: WHENEVER IT BECOMES NECESSARY TO EXPOSE STATEMENTS WHICH DISGUISE SOME SUSPECTED ERROR OR DANGER UNDER THE VEIL OF AMBIGUITY, ONE MUST DENOUNCE THE PERVERSE MEANING UNDER WHICH THE ERROR OPPOSED TO CATHOLIC TRUTH IS CAMOUFLAGED."

Pope Pius VI teaches us that if someone veils a heresy in ambiguity, as heretics have done throughout the ages, a Catholic must hold him to the heretical meaning and denounce the heretical meaning which is camouflaged in ambiguity! **This alone blows Chris Ferrara's entire series of articles and objections against sedevacantism out of the water.** (And please note an important distinction: we are not asserting that documents or statements that are merely ambiguous, but which teach no clear doctrinal contradiction of Catholic Faith, are heretical; no, we are asserting with Pope Pius VI that documents which contain heretical statements or assertions which clearly contradict Catholic dogma ("shocking affirmations," according to Pius VI) but which *also* contain self-contradiction and ambiguity along with those heretical statements, are still just as heretical despite the ambiguity and self-contradiction that accompanies the heresy. An example would be an alleged "Catholic" who consistently supports abortion, but sometimes says that he accepts Church teaching on abortion. This person is a manifest heretic, despite the self-contradiction and ambiguity that his position implies. Another example would be a man who states that we shouldn't convert Protestants (a manifest heresy), but who also states that the Catholic Church alone is the fullness of the Christian Faith which all should embrace. He is a manifest heretic, despite the fact that the latter statement seems to some to contradict the former statement. Heretics are dishonest and liars, so they often attempt to contradict or mitigate the offensiveness of their heresies through subtle tactics of self-contradiction and accompanying ambiguity; that is the point of Pope Pius VI.)

Notice how directly Chris Ferrara contradicts the teaching of Pope Pius VI.

<p>Chris Ferrara, <i>Catholic Family News</i>, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise, Part II," Oct. 2005, p. 25: "Thus, we are dealing with a document [<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> of Vatican II] that contains apparent self-contradictions, which seem to have resulted from the Council's attempt to appease both conservative and liberal factions among the Council Fathers. <u>A document that contradicts itself by appearing to uphold and negate the traditional teaching at one and the same time can hardly be said to constitute a manifest contradiction of the traditional teaching...</u> For what is at issue are ambiguities, internal inconsistencies, and novelties..."</p>	<p>Pope Pius VI: "Moreover, if all this is sinful, <u>it cannot be excused in the way that one sees it being done, under the erroneous pretext that the seemingly shocking affirmations in one place are further developed along orthodox lines in other places, and even in yet other places corrected; as if allowing for the possibility of either affirming or denying the statement, or of leaving it up to the personal inclinations of the individual - such has always been the fraudulent and daring method used by innovators to establish error. It allows for both the possibility of promoting error and of excusing it.</u></p> <p>" It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by <u>our predecessor Saint Celestine who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and which he exposed in order to condemn it with the greatest possible severity...</u>"</p>
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Obviously, Pope Pius VI is correct and Chris Ferrara is completely wrong. Notice that Pius VI also says that some of these doctrinal errors (**which are also heresies in this case, since he is referring to the heresies of the arch-heretic Nestorius**) were only uncovered through careful study and analysis!

Pius VI: "It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by our predecessor Saint Celestine who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and which he exposed in order to condemn it with the greatest possible severity. **Once these texts were examined carefully, the impostor was exposed and confounded,** for he expressed himself in a plethora of words, mixing true things with others that were obscure; mixing at times one with the other in such a way that he was also able to confess those things which were denied while at the same time possessing a basis for denying those very sentences which he confessed."

But we thought that such analysis and study wouldn't be needed for manifest contradictions of Catholic teaching? That's what Chris Ferrara said.

Chris Ferrara, *The Remnant*, Sept. 30, 2005, p. 18: "...where are the objectively heretical statements? If they exist, it should be a simple matter to quote the heretical propositions uttered... **The 'heresies' should speak for themselves without any helpful 'commentary' by sedevacantist accusers.**"¹¹⁴

Chris Ferrara couldn't be more wrong. Heretics deceive through contradictions and ambiguity because heresy itself is a lie and a contradiction.

Pope Pius XI, *Rite expiatis* (# 6), April 30, 1926: "...**heresies gradually arose and grew in the vineyard of the Lord, propagated either by open heretics or by sly deceivers** who, because they professed a certain austerity of life and gave a false appearance of virtue and piety, easily led weak and simple souls astray."¹¹⁵

Notice, **heresies** arise both through open and undeceiving heretics as well as by sly deceivers, such as Benedict XVI, who mixes in conservative statements and actions among his astounding and undeniable heresies. Illustrating this point again is the fact that the arch-heretic Arius got himself approved by Constantine by giving him an ambiguous profession of faith. St. Athanasius was not fooled, however, and refused to consider him a Catholic.

"**Arius presented himself with Euzoios, his ally in doctrine and exile. He left with the Emperor [Constantine] a wary profession of Faith which could be interpreted either in the Arian or the orthodox sense but which did not contain the word 'consubstantial.'** Constantine was content, revoked his sentence of exile, and ordered that Arius should be readmitted to his rank in the clergy. Arius' ecclesiastical superior, Athanasius, however, refused to accept him."¹¹⁶

According to Chris Ferrara, Catholics should have accepted the Christ-denier Arius as a Catholic, as Constantine did, since his profession was ambiguous. **Chris Ferrara is the perfect dupe of Satan; all the Devil needs to have the heretic do after teaching his heresy is spice in a little ambiguity, and pepper in a little contradiction, and he will be telling the world to follow the**

heretic and remain under his aegis. And that is exactly how the Devil has been so successful in keeping people in the apostate, manifestly heretical Vatican II sect. People see a few conservative statements or actions from the heretics, and they convince themselves that they couldn't be malicious heretics, even though they are denying and destroying the Faith all around them, as we've shown. In this way, the Devil wins.

To further illustrate the "patent absurdity" of Chris Ferrara's "theology" John Doe could write a document which denies that Our Lady is immaculate over and over again, and then state at the end that he upholds Church teaching on the Immaculate Conception, and the document wouldn't be manifestly heretical because it contains "self-contradiction." Could anything be more stupid? Ferrara applies this false theology, which is directly contrary to the teaching of Pope Pius VI (as we saw above), to his analysis of Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty.

Chris Ferrara, *Catholic Family News*, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise, Part II," Oct. 2005, p. 25: "**The [Sedevacantist] Enterprise's claim of manifest heresy in DH [Dignitatis Humanae, Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty] becomes even weaker when one considers that Article 1 of DH states that the Council 'leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ.'**"¹¹⁷

Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty contains clear heresy against the Church's dogma that the State has the right to repress the public expression of false religions. The fact that Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty claims to "leave untouched traditional Catholic doctrine" means absolutely nothing. The "Old Catholics" said exactly the same, as did heretics throughout history.

Pope Pius IX, *Graves ac diuturnae* (# 2), March 23, 1875: "**They [the 'Old Catholics'] repeatedly state openly that they do not in the least reject the Catholic Church and its visible head but rather that they are zealous for the purity of Catholic doctrine...** But in fact they refuse to acknowledge all the divine prerogatives of the vicar of Christ on earth and do not submit to His supreme Magisterium."¹¹⁸

According to Ferrara, then, the case that the "Old Catholics" are heretics is invalid, for they repeatedly state that they are zealous for the purity of Catholic doctrine, and they openly declare that they don't reject Catholic teaching. But no, the Catholic Church teaches that they are manifest heretics, and all who adhere to their teachings and sect are considered heretics.

Pope Pius IX, *Graves ac diuturnae* (#'s 1-4), March 23, 1875: "... the new heretics who call themselves 'Old Catholics'... these schismatics and heretics... their wicked sect... these sons of darkness... their wicked faction... this deplorable sect... This sect overthrows the foundations of the Catholic religion, shamelessly rejects the dogmatic definitions of the Ecumenical Vatican Council, and devotes itself to the ruin of souls in so many ways. **We have decreed and declared in Our letter of 21 November 1873 that those unfortunate men who belong to, adhere to, and support that sect should be considered as schismatics and separated from communion with the Church.**"¹¹⁹

Pope Pius IX, *Quartus Supra* (# 6), Jan. 6, 1873: "It has always been the custom of heretics and schismatics to call themselves Catholics and to proclaim their many excellences in order to lead people and princes into error."¹²⁰

We can see that Chris Ferrara's "theology" is directly at variance with not only the teaching of the popes, but common sense. In fact, the satanic idiocy of Ferrara's (and many others') position – that the Vatican II apostates and antipopes are not manifest heretics because they sometimes contradict themselves and employ ambiguity along with their astounding heresies – is perhaps best exemplified by looking at the case of the apostate John Kerry.

We would doubt that almost anyone reading this article believes that John Kerry is a Catholic. Even the people at Franciscan University admit that: **"You cannot be a Catholic and be pro-abortion,"** as their signs declared in protest when he spoke in Ohio. **But John Kerry states that he accepts Catholic teaching,** even though he consistently votes in favor of abortion.

During the 2004 Presidential Debate with George W. Bush, John Kerry stated: **"I cannot impose my article of faith on someone else."** Did you get that? John Kerry has stated publicly that the Church's teaching against abortion is his article of faith, but that he simply cannot apply that or impose that in the public sphere. His argument is absurd, a lie, a contradiction, of course – as all heresies are. But according to Chris Ferrara, John Kerry must be considered a Catholic, for something that:

"... contradicts itself by appearing to uphold and negate the traditional teaching at one and the same time can hardly be said to constitute a manifest contradiction of the traditional teaching..."¹²¹

We can see that this statement is pure nonsense. If it were true, then John Kerry can hardly be said to be a manifest heretic when he publicly affirms that Church teaching against abortion is his article of faith, but contradicts that by adamantly supporting abortion. John Kerry must be considered a Catholic, according to the despicable perversion of Catholic teaching, inspired by Satan, that the heretic Chris Ferrara is peddling in "traditional" publications. This conclusion would also put Ferrara at variance with another of his colleagues and good friends, Michael Matt, who declared unequivocally (on his own authority, since this has not been declared by his "pope") that John Kerry is an apostate.

Michael Matt, *The Remnant*, April 15, 2004, p. 5: **"Take Senator John F. Kerry, for example, the first Catholic nominated for the presidency by either major party since 1960.** Kerry, whose paternal grandparents were Jewish, by the way, is doing a remarkably good Kennedy impersonation these days: 'We have a separation of Church and state in this country,' Kerry recently told *Time* magazine. 'As John Kennedy said very clearly, I will be a President who happens to be Catholic, not a Catholic president.' On that, at least, we can agree with the gentleman from Massachusetts! **In fact, we would take it one step further by noting that presidential candidate Kerry isn't Catholic at all.**

"Oh, yes, the former altar boy says he's Catholic; he allegedly complains when his staff doesn't leave adequate time on his schedule for Sunday Mass; his official web site announces that 'John Kerry was raised in the Catholic faith and continues to be an active member of the Catholic church.' But he's not Catholic, and neither is his wife – another anti-Catholic who claims to be a practicing one. John Kerry's description of himself and his wife is simply untrue: '[I'm a] believing and practicing Catholic, married to another believing and practicing Catholic.' Sounds nice. Trouble is, John Kerry is an apostate."¹²²

It seems that Ferrara and Matt have some talking to do. And really, the case of John Kerry proves the point, for if you cannot say that Benedict XVI, who takes active part in Jewish worship, doesn't believe that Jesus is necessarily the Messiah and Son of God, teaches that we shouldn't

convert Protestants, was initiated into Islam, etc. can't be considered a heretic – then you have no justification whatsoever to label John Kerry one. In fact, the dogmas that Benedict XVI denies have been defined far more times than the dogma that Kerry denies.

Objection 17): Both the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law teach that a declaration is needed for one to lose his office due to heresy.

Chris Ferrara, "A Challenge to the Sedevacantist Enterprise, Part II," *The Remnant*, Sept. 30, 2005, p. 18: "**Indeed, both the 1917 and 1983 codes of canon law provide that no one may insist that an ecclesiastical office has been lost due to heresy unless this has been established by a declaration of the competent authority.**"¹²³

Answer: This is simply not true. Antipope John Paul II's heretical and invalid 1983 Code states that such a declaration is necessary in Canon 194 § 3. But the 1917 Code doesn't. The 1917 Code's parallel canon to canon 194 is canon 188. **Canon 188 of the 1917 Code does not contain this provision**, but simply declares that a cleric who "Publicly defects from the Catholic faith" (188 § 4) loses his office by that very fact "without any declaration."

Canon 188.4, *1917 Code of Canon Law*:

"There are certain causes which effect the tacit (silent) resignation of an office, **which resignation is accepted in advance by operation of the law, and hence is effective without any declaration.** These causes are... (4) if he has publicly fallen away from the faith."¹²⁴

Notice that the 1917 Code doesn't say anything about a declaration being necessary; it says just the opposite – "without any declaration"! When one compares the two canons, one sees the glaring difference.

Canon 194.1-3, *1983 Code of Canon Law*: "One is removed from an ecclesiastical office by the law itself: ... 2- who has publicly defected from the Catholic faith or from the communion of the Church... The removal from office referred to in nn. 2 and 3 can be enforced only if it is established by the declaration of a competent authority."¹²⁵

This is probably why Ferrara provides no citation to the 1917 Code in his footnote; he only provides a reference to the 1983 code. Thus, we are dealing with another blatant falsehood from Ferrara.

Objection 18): The Council of Constance condemned the idea that a heretic would cease to be the pope.

Errors of John Hus, Condemned by the Council of Constance: "#20. **If the Pope is wicked** and especially if he is foreknown (as a reprobate), then as Judas, the Apostle, he is of the devil, a thief, and a son of perdition, **and he is not the head of the holy militant Church, since he is not a member of it.**"¹²⁶ – **Condemned**

Answer: No, the Council of Constance didn't condemn the idea that a heretic would cease to be the pope at all. This is a serious misunderstanding of this proposition. As we see clearly above, the Council condemned something significantly different. It condemned the proposition that **a wicked man** would cease to be the head of the Church, since he is not a member of it. The proposition from the heretic Hus rightly asserts that one who is not a member of the Church cannot be the head of the Church, but it falls into trouble by stating that the pope ceases to be a member if he is "wicked."

Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (# 23), June 29, 1943:

"For not every sin, however grave it may be, is such as of its own nature to sever a man from the Body of the Church, as does schism or heresy or apostasy."¹²⁷

A merely wicked pope doesn't cease to be pope, but a heretic or schismatic does. This is because heresy and schism and apostasy separate one from the Church, while other sins (no matter how grave or wicked they are) do not. Thus, we can see clearly that the proposition is condemning the idea that wickedness separates one from the Church. It is not condemning the truth that a heretic ceases to be the pope. In fact, many of the other propositions from John Hus which were condemned by the Council of Constance repeat the false idea expressed above in different ways: that the wicked are not part of the Church.¹²⁸

St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, Book II, Chap. 30:

"This principle is most certain. The non-Christian cannot in any way be pope, as Cajetan himself admits (ib. c. 26). The reason for this is that he cannot be head of what he is not a member; now he who is not a Christian is not a member of the Church, and a manifest heretic is not a Christian, as is clearly taught by St. Cyprian (lib. 4, epist. 2), St. Athanasius (Scr. 2 cont. Arian.), St. Augustine (lib. De great. Christ. Cap. 20), St. Jerome (contra Lucifer.) and others; therefore the manifest heretic cannot be pope."

Objection 19): The Joint Declaration with the Lutherans is not manifest heresy because John Paul II and Benedict XVI didn't sign it.

Answer: The Joint Declaration with the Lutherans by itself proves that the Vatican II "popes" are non-Catholic antipopes. The fact that John Paul II and Benedict XVI neither wrote the document nor signed it is completely irrelevant. **They both approved of it publicly numerous times**, and agreed with it.

John Paul II, Jan. 19, 2004, *At a Meeting with Lutherans From Finland*: "... I wish to express my gratitude for the ecumenical progress made between Catholics and Lutherans in the five years **since the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**."¹²⁹

Benedict XVI, *Address to Protestants at World Youth Day*, August 19, 2005: "... **the important Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999)** ..." ¹³⁰

James Smith could draw up a document denying the Immaculate Conception, and if you were to go around giving speeches about how great Smith's document is, that would make you a manifest heretic. The fact that you didn't write Smith's document or sign it means nothing; you publicly approved of it. John Paul II and Benedict XVI publicly approved of the *Joint Declaration*

with the Lutherans on Justification, which teaches that the worst Lutheran heresies are not condemned by the Council of Trent. They are manifest heretics.

There is No Reason not to accept the Sedevacantist Position

We have addressed in much detail the major objections launched against the sedevacantist position. We can see that there is nothing in the teaching of the Catholic Church which should cause one not to accept the undeniable fact that the Vatican II sect is not the Catholic Church, and that the men who have headed this sect (the post-Vatican II “popes”) are not popes at all, but non-Catholic antipopes. On the contrary, there is undeniable proof for this position and every reason to accept it.

Endnotes for Section 21:

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- ² *Coll. Selecta SS. Eccl. Patrum*. Caillu and Guillou, Vol. 32, pp 411-412
- ³ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, p. 113.
- ⁴ Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, B. Herder Book. Co., Thirtieth Edition, 1957, no. 351.
- ⁵ *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, Regnery, Co: Chicago, IL, 1963, Vol. 1, pp. xxiv.
- ⁶ Denzinger 423.
- ⁷ *The Papal Encyclicals*, by Claudia Carlen, Raleigh: The Pierian Press, 1990, Vol. 2 (1878-1903), p. 393.
- ⁸ Denzinger 2022.
- ⁹ Denzinger 2054.
- ¹⁰ Denzinger 960.
- ¹¹ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 236.
- ¹² *The 1917 Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*, translated by Dr. Edward Von Peters, San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2001, canon 2314, p. 735.
- ¹³ Denzinger 1547.
- ¹⁴ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Luther,” Robert Appleton Company, 1910, pp. 445-446.
- ¹⁵ Warren H. Carroll, *A History of Christendom*, Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 2000, Vol. 4 (*The Cleaving of Christendom*), p. 10.
- ¹⁶ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 4 (1939-1958), p. 41.
- ¹⁷ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, p. 578.
- ¹⁸ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, p. 74.
- ¹⁹ Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, Ignatius Press, 1982, p. 239.
- ²⁰ Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, pp. 197-198.
- ²¹ *L’Osservatore Romano*, Special Insert, Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, November 24, 1999, #13.
- ²² G. McDevitt, *The Delict of Heresy*, 48, CU, Canon Law Studies 77. Washington: 1932.
- ²³ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 45.
- ²⁴ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 46.
- ²⁵ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 3 (1903-1939), p. 30.
- ²⁶ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 3 (1903-1939), pp. 313-314.
- ²⁷ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 2 (1878-1903), p. 399.
- ²⁸ *L’Osservatore Romano* (the Vatican’s Newspaper), May 24, 1973, p. 6.
- ²⁹ *L’Osservatore Romano*, Jan. 27, 1993, p. 2.
- ³⁰ *L’Osservatore Romano*, August 24, 2005, p. 8.
- ³¹ Eric F. Mackenzie, A.M., S.T.L., J.C.L. Rev., *The Delict of Heresy*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Univ. of America, 1932, p. 35. (Cf. Canon 2200.2).
- ³² *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, p. 283.
- ³³ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30.
- ³⁴ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 416.
- ³⁵ *Ius Canonicum*. Rome: Gregorian 1943. 2:453.

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- ³⁶ Denzinger 51-52; Warren H. Carroll, *A History of Christendom*, Vol. 1 (*The Founding of Christendom*), p. 494; J.N.D. Kelly, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 25.
- ³⁷ Fr. Edmund James O'Reilly, *The Relations of the Church to Society – Theological Essays*, 1882.
- ³⁸ Fr. O'Reilly, *The Relations of the Church to Society – Theological Essays*, p. 287.
- ³⁹ Yves Dupont, *Catholic Prophecy*, Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1973, p. 30.
- ⁴⁰ Chris Ferrara, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise," *Catholic Family News*, Niagra Falls, NY, August 2005, p. 19
- ⁴¹ Chris Ferrara, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise," *Catholic Family News*, August 2005, p. 19
- ⁴² Denzinger 1821.
- ⁴³ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 860.
- ⁴⁴ Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, pp. 197-198.
- ⁴⁵ Denzinger 1824.
- ⁴⁶ Denzinger 1825.
- ⁴⁷ Denzinger 1825.
- ⁴⁸ Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, p. 198.
- ⁴⁹ Denzinger 1826-1827.
- ⁵⁰ St. Francis De Sales, *The Catholic Controversy*, Tan Books, 1989, p. 45.
- ⁵¹ Denzinger 330.
- ⁵² St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30.
- ⁵³ St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 30.
- ⁵⁴ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 417.
- ⁵⁵ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 3 (1903-1939), p. 195.
- ⁵⁶ Denzinger 93.
- ⁵⁷ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 180.
- ⁵⁸ *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 1 (1740-1878), p. 84.
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- ⁶⁰ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 675.
- ⁶¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Special Insert, Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, November 24, 1999, #5.
- ⁶² *L'Osservatore Romano*, Special Insert, Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, November 24, 1999, #13.
- ⁶³ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Special Insert, Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, November 24, 1999, #41.
- ⁶⁴ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Special Insert, Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, November 24, 1999, #26.
- ⁶⁵ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Jan. 28, 2004, p. 4.
- ⁶⁶ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 21/28, p. 5.
- ⁶⁷ Denzinger 423.
- ⁶⁸ Warren H. Carroll, *A History of Christendom*, Vol. 3 (*The Glory of Christendom*), pp. 432-434.
- ⁶⁹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 447.
- ⁷⁰ Chris Ferrara, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise," *Catholic Family News*, August 2005, p. 21.
- ⁷¹ Chris Ferrara, "Opposing the Sedevacantist Enterprise," *Catholic Family News*, August 2005, p. 21
- ⁷² Denzinger 530.
- ⁷³ Denzinger 494.
- ⁷⁴ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "John XXII," Vol. 8, 1910, p. 433.
- ⁷⁵ Benedict XVI, *Dogmatic Theology*, The Catholic University of America Press, 1977, p. 137.
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- ⁷⁷ Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 349.
- ⁷⁸ Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 357-358.
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- ⁸⁰ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, pp. 125-126.
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- ⁸⁴ *Coll. Selecta SS. Eccl. Patrum*, Caillu and Guillou, Vol. 32, pp 411-412.

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- 90 Donald Attwater, *A Catholic Dictionary*, "Hierarchy," Tan Books, p. 229.
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- 94 *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1996, p. 918.
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