

11. The New Rite of Consecration of Bishops

Paul VI also changed the rite for consecrating bishops. This is very significant because groups such as the Fraternity of St. Peter and the Institute of Christ the King (indult groups who offer the traditional Latin Mass) ordain their men in the Traditional Rite of Ordination, but have the ordinations done by “bishops” who were made “bishops” in the New Rite of Episcopal Consecration.

This issue is also significant because Benedict XVI, the man who currently purports to be the Bishop of Rome, was “consecrated” in this New Rite of Episcopal Consecration on May 28, 1977.¹ If he is not a validly consecrated bishop, he cannot be the Bishop of Rome.

In *Sacramentum Ordinis*, Nov. 30, 1947, Pope Pius XII declared what is the essential form for the Consecration of Bishops:

TRADITIONAL FORM FOR CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS

Pope Pius XII, *Sacramentum Ordinis*, Nov. 30, 1947: “But regarding the matter and form in the conferring of every order, **by Our same supreme apostolic authority We decree and establish the following:** ...in the Episcopal ordination or consecration... the form consists of the words of the ‘Preface,’ of which the following are essential and so required for validity:

► “Complete in Thy priest the fullness of Thy ministry, and adorned in the raiment of all glory, sanctify him with the dew of heavenly anointing.”²

With its mention of “*the fullness of Thy ministry... raiment of all glory*” this traditional form unequivocally signifies the power of the episcopacy, which is the “fullness of the priesthood.” Paul VI’s new form in the 1968 rite is given below. The two forms only have one thing in common, the single word “et,” which means “and.”

PAUL VI’S NEW FORM FOR CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS

- “So now pour out upon this chosen one that power which is from you, the governing Spirit whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.”³

This new form does not unequivocally signify the power of the episcopacy. The phrase “governing Spirit” is used to refer to many things in scripture or tradition (e.g. Psalm 5:14), but it doesn’t unequivocally signify the powers of the episcopacy. Therefore, the new form is of gravely doubtful validity.

In addition to the devastating change to the essential form, many other things have been deleted. In fact, there is not one unambiguous statement about the intended sacramental effect of

Episcopal Consecration that can be found. In the Traditional Rite of Consecration, the consecrator instructs the bishop elect in the following terms:

▶ "A bishop judges, interprets, **consecrates, ordains**, offers, baptizes and confirms."

This has been abolished.

▶ In the Traditional Rite, the bishop-to-be is asked to confirm his belief in each and every article of the Creed.

This has been abolished.

▶ In the Traditional Rite, the bishop-to-be is asked if he will "anathematize every heresy that shall arise against the Holy Catholic Church."

This has been abolished. The deletion of this requirement to anathematize heresy is significant, for this is indeed one of the functions of a bishop.

In the Traditional Rite, after the consecratory prayer, the functions of a bishop are once again specified in these words:

▶ "Give him, O Lord, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven... Whatsoever he shall bind upon earth, let it be bound likewise in Heaven, and whatsoever he shall loose upon earth, let it likewise be loosed in Heaven. Whose sins he shall retain, let them be retained, and do Thou remit the sins of whomsoever he shall remit... Grant him, O Lord, an Episcopal chair..."

This entire prayer has been abolished in the New Rite.

Conclusion: Paul VI's New Rite of Episcopal Consecration has a radically different form from what Pius XII declared was necessary for validity. The new form does not unequivocally signify the powers of the episcopacy. The New Rite of Episcopal Consecration cannot be considered valid, since doubtful matter or form is considered invalid.

All "priests" ordained by "bishops" consecrated in this rite, even if the Traditional Rite of Ordination was used, such as with most of the Fraternity of St. Peter priests, Institute of Christ the King priests, etc. cannot be considered valid priests. Their "Masses" must be avoided.

Endnotes for Section 11:

¹ Biography of Benedict XVI, Vatican website: www.vatican.va

² Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, B. Herder Book Co., Thirtieth Edition, 1957, no. 2301.

³ *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991, Vol. 2, p. 73.