

Press Statement

The Pope is provoking disobedience

General discontent and frustration over the delay of inner-church reforms dominated both the alternative and the official *Katholikentag* (bi-annual Catholic Congress) at Mannheim. In sharp contrast, Pope Benedict XVI is obviously preparing for the definite reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the traditionalist Society of St Pius X and its bishops and priests. This is even to take place if the SSPX, which continues to reject decisive Council texts, should have to be reincorporated with the help of canonical artistic devices. The Pope should be warned in the strongest terms against doing this, not least by the bishops, because:

1. The Pope would be taking invalidly ordained bishops and priests definitely back into the Church. According to Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution *Pontificalis Romani recognito* of 18 July 1968, the ordinations of bishops and priests undertaken by Archbishop Lefebvre were not only illicit but also invalid. This is also the view taken by Karl Josef Becker SJ, an authoritative member of the "Reconciliation Commission" and now a cardinal, among others.
2. With such a scandalous decision, Pope Benedict, in his already much bewailed aloofness, would further distance himself from the People of God. The classical teaching on schism should be a warning to him. According to the teaching, a schism occurs if one separates oneself from the Church but also if one separates oneself from the body of the Church. "Thus the Pope could also become a schismatic if he did not wish to maintain the union and affinity he owes to the whole body of the Church" (Francisco Suarez, authoritative 16th/17th century Spanish theologian).
3. According to the same church teaching, a schismatic Pope loses his office. At the very least, he can no longer reckon with obedience. Pope Benedict would thus further promote the already growing movement of "disobedience" to a hierarchy which is disobeying the Gospels. He alone would be responsible for the serious rift and strife which he would thus promulgate in the Church.

Instead of seeking reconciliation with the ultra-conservative, anti-democratic and anti-Semitic Society of St Pius X, the Pope should rather attend to the interests of the majority of Catholics and seek reconciliation with the Reformation Churches and with the whole of ecumenical Christianity. In that way he would not divide minds.

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