

The Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Archbishop Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, S.J.), claiming to have direct papal approval for his actions, put the brakes on the German bishops' attempt to promote and regularize the reception of the Blessed Sacrament by non-Catholic spouses of German Catholics (see [here](#) for *Rorate Caeli*'s report, including the full text of the CDF letter addressed to Cardinal Reinhard Marx, pictured above). It is a testament to the depths of the crisis in the Church that such an action constitutes "big news" in the Church.

Before uncorking champagne to celebrate this apparent check on the next phase of the Revolution, we should put this action in context. First, the letter does not declare this attempt of the German bishops to be against the Faith and an attempt at legitimizing sacrilege. (St. Paul, on the contrary, teaches that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, **not discerning the Body of the Lord**" [1 Cor. 11:29].) The letter merely declares that the Pope "reached the conclusion that the document is not ready for publication." So, it does not close the door on this sacrilege but merely notes that the time is not right for its publication.

The reasons essentially boil down to the fact that such a change in praxis affects the universal Church and, thus, the Curia needs to study the issue. This reason could either mean that the intention is to bury intercommunion in a Curial bureaucracy or that the Pope doesn't want this to happen as a "Germany-only" exception but, rather, as a new norm for the universal Church. Only time will tell which of the two paths Pope Francis is intending.

Even if such sacrilegious intercommunion is *de jure* prohibited, *de facto* liberal bishops and priests are likely already tolerating it (if not promoting it), so we shouldn't be too excited. More importantly, the first paragraph of the CDF letter is shocking. It praises the liberal German bishops thus:

"The multiple ecumenical efforts of the German episcopal conference, in a particular way the intense collaboration with the council of the Evangelical Church of Germany, deserve recognition and appreciation. The joint commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 has shown that in recent years and decades a foundation has been found that allows bearing witness together to Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men..."

Jesus Christ is not actually "the Savior of all men" in the sense that all men are not, in fact, saved. Jesus Christ has made salvation *available* to all men, but as the Church has always taught, large sections of humanity *reject* that salvation. Secondly, the Church and Lutherans

do not bear a common witness to Our Lord. Lutherans reject His divinely revealed teaching on Justification and Salvation, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the ministerial priesthood, *etc.* This is not a common witness but a division. Denying reality in no way changes reality. I can only imagine the rebuke Pope Pius XI, author of [*Mortalium Animos*](#) (an encyclical which defines true ecumenism as the return of the dissidents to the Church), would give to the current Prefect of the CDF for congratulating the German bishops for “commemorating” the Reformation.