

As has been predicted for some time (see our December 28, 2018 report [here](#)) the Vatican announced today that Pope Francis has suppressed the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, that was established by John Paul II in 1988. Below is an English translation of the Italian text of the *Motu Proprio* dated January 17 but released today. We are grateful to *Lifesite News* Rome correspondent Diane Montagna who prepared this working translation so quickly. You can read the full story as reported on Lifesite News [here](#).

Later today and over the next few days we will be posting reactions from interested organizations and some commentary by *CFN* authors to help our readers consider the implications of this latest action by Pope Francis

Apostolic Letter
issued Motu Proprio
on the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei

For over thirty years the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei, established with the Motu proprio *Ecclesia Dei adflicta* of 2 July 1988, has carried out with sincere solicitude and praiseworthy concern the task of collaborating with Bishops and the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, in facilitating the full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, communities or individual men and women religious, linked to the Fraternity founded by Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, who wished to remain united to the Successor of Peter in the Catholic Church, preserving their own spiritual and liturgical traditions.[\[1\]](#)

In this way, it was able to exercise its authority and competence in the name of the Holy See over these societies and associations, until otherwise provided.[\[2\]](#) Subsequently, by virtue of the Motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of 7 July 2007, the Pontifical Commission extended the authority of the Holy See to those Institutes and Religious Communities which had adhered to the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite and had assumed the precedent traditions of religious life, supervising the observance and application of the provisions established.[\[3\]](#)

Two years later, my Venerable Predecessor Benedict XVI, with the Motu Proprio *Ecclesiae unitatem*, of 2 July 2009, reorganized the structure of the Pontifical Commission, in order to make it more suited to the new situation created by the remission of the excommunication of the four Bishops consecrated without pontifical mandate. And, furthermore, considering that after this act of grace, the questions dealt with by the same Pontifical Commission were

of a primarily doctrinal nature, he more organically linked it to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, while maintaining its initial aims, but modifying its structure.[\[4\]](#)

Now, since the Feria IV of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 15 November 2017 formulated the request that dialogue between the Holy See and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X be conducted directly by the aforementioned Congregation, as the questions being dealt with are of a doctrinal nature, to which I gave my approval in an audience with the Prefect on 24 November 2017, and this proposal was accepted by the Plenary Session of the same Congregation celebrated from 23-26 January 2018, I have arrived, after ample reflection, at the following decision.

Considering that today the conditions which led the Holy Pontiff John Paul II to institute the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei have changed; noting that the Institutes and Religious Communities which habitually celebrate in the extraordinary form have today found their own stability of number and of life; recognizing that the aims and questions dealt with by the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei are of a predominantly doctrinal order; and wishing that these aims be made ever more evident to the conscience of the ecclesial communities, with this Apostolic Letter 'Motu proprio data',

I decree that

1. The Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei, instituted on 2 July 1988 with the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, is suppressed.
2. The tasks of the Commission in question are entirely assigned to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, within which a special Section will be established that is committed to continue the work of vigilance, promotion and protection conducted thus far by the suppressed Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei.
3. The budget of the Pontifical Commission returns to being part of the ordinary accounting of aforementioned Congregation.

I also establish that this Motu proprio, to be observed notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even should it merit particular mention, be promulgated by publication in *L'Osservatore Romano* in its 19 January 2019 edition, coming into immediate force, and that subsequently it be inserted into the official Commentary of the Holy See, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 17 January 2019, Sixth Year of Our Pontificate.

Francis

[1] Cf. JOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Ecclesia Dei adflicta', 2 Iulii 1988, AAS, LXXX (1988), 12 (15 Nov. 1988), 1495-1498, 6a.

[2] Cf. Rescriptum ex Audientia Sanctissimi, 18 Oct. 1988, AAS, LXXXII (1990), 5 (3 Maii 1990), 533-534, 6.

[3] Cf. BENEDICTUS PP. XVI, Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Summorum Pontificum, 7 Iulii 2007, AAS, XCIX (2007), 9 (7 Sept. 2007), 777-781, 12.

[4] Cf. BENEDICTUS PP. XVI, Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Ecclesiae unitatem, 2 Iulii 2009, AAS, CI (2009), 8 (7 Aug. 2009), 710-711, 5.