

The Second Atomic Bomb Has Exploded: CDW Issues Directives Banning Traditional Confirmations and Ordinations, Decrees the End of Ecclesia Dei Communities

CFN will hold a LIVE Q&A Session on this topic tonight, December 18, at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. Join us with your questions!

The predicted document of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments (CDW) extending the totalitarian measures against the Traditional Latin Mass has been [published](#). It takes the form of a letter from Archbishop Arthur Roche, the Congregation's Prefect, and a series of responses to *dubia* (questions) it says are a consolidation of questions submitted by bishops. The responses were approved by Pope Francis on Dec, 4, 2021 — the 58th anniversary of the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

A Caveat of Language

Throughout this article, when I refer to the CDW document “banning” or “requiring” certain things, I mean that the document purports to do such things. I do not mean to imply that its attempts to forbid what cannot be forbidden or demand what cannot be demanded have legal effect or bind in conscience. This document, as well as Francis' [Traditionis Custodes](#) are, to use St. Thomas' language, “illegal laws.” They are not laws at all but rather “acts of violence” (*Summa Theologiae* [I-II, q. 96, a. 4](#)). Being acts contrary to the divine and natural law, directed not to the common good of the Church, and exceeding the authority of the Holy See, these documents are of no legal force and effect. Yet, unless bishops and priests are willing to fulfill their duty and exercise their right to refuse these illegal laws, what I describe as consequences will follow from this violent attack. I do not hope for such an outcome; on the contrary, I sincerely hope that this event will be a moment of grace for bishops and priests to rise up and resist the Dictator Pope and his minions “to the face” (Gal. 2:11) and stand for the rights of God and His Church.

Begin with the End in Mind: To Destroy the Traditional Liturgy

If diocesan bishops choose to obey the unjust commands contained in the new CDW document, it will mean the disappearance of the Traditional Mass from parish churches and the end of confirmations and ordinations in the Traditional Rite (outside of the Society of St. Pius X). The new document makes the rumored visitations of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities a mere formality as the document contains a death sentence for those institutes in the form in which they were founded. It makes clear that every priest of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities must concelebrate the New Mass. It also forbids their seminarians from being ordained in the Traditional Rite. These measures will likely empty their seminaries of anyone who entered due to a commitment to the Traditional Rite. It eviscerates their unique charism and says they have no real reason to exist anymore, having failed in their original mission to lead

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people to the New Liturgy.

The introductory letter from Archbishop Roche makes clear the goal of every response: to eventually eliminate any celebration of the pre-conciliar liturgy and enforce complete adherence with no exceptions to the Protestantized and doctrinally deficient New Mass. Roche makes clear that “[e]very prescribed norm has always the sole purpose” of enforcing this eventual uniformity. He repeats the fallacious propaganda that the New Mass — which obscures such doctrines as the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the unique role of the sacrificing priest, the Communion of Saints, sin, and the unique privileges of the Blessed Virgin Mary — was actually “a reform so that the truth of the faith as celebrated might appear ever more in all its beauty.” In Orwellian double-speak, they always mean the opposite of the Truth. Whereas the New Missal obscures Catholic truth — in Archbishop Annibale Bugnini’s words, by stripping “from our Catholic prayers and from the Catholic liturgy everything which can be the shadow of a stumbling block for our separated brethren, that is, for the Protestants” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, March 19, 1965) — Archbishop Roche and his cohort falsely claim the New Mass makes Catholic truth clearer and more beautiful. How does stripping it away make it more beautiful?

Like all totalitarian dictators, Roche makes clear in his letter that there is a two-pronged approach: (1) Ban the Old Rite as much as possible and (2) sentence its adherents to re-education camps. He calls for “a renewed and continuous liturgical formation” that he declares “is necessary both for Priests and for the lay faithful.” In one of his many calls for re-education of Traditionalists, he expresses yet another example of double-speak by claiming that the New Mass expresses the same faith but also simultaneously a different faith: “This [re-education] should take place through an appropriate formation that makes it possible to discover how the reformed liturgy is the witness to an unchanged faith, the expression of a renewed ecclesiology....” So, the New Mass both expresses an unchanged faith but also a new faith about the nature of the Church. Specifically, priests who do not concelebrate the New Mass must be sentenced to a re-education camp in order to “discern” that they need to comply before they are forbidden to celebrate Mass if the re-education camp does not break their conviction.

The text is almost absurd in its continual references to the “saintly” Paul VI and John Paul II, confirming the only reason for their purported canonizations was to canonize the Council and the New Mass. Its pandering praise for the Council and the deficient Rite that followed it are obsequious.

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The End of All Sacraments in the Old Rite

The harshest provisions, and the ones which indicate the destruction of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities (unless bishops openly defy the Vatican), is the unambiguous attempt to suppress the *Rituale Romanum* and the *Pontificale Romanum*. In response to the question, “Is it possible, according to the provisions of the *Motu Proprio Traditionis Custodes*, to celebrate the sacraments with the *Rituale Romanum* and the *Pontificale Romanum* which predate the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council?” the CDW responds with a clear “Negative.” In the explanation to this answer, they concede that a diocesan bishop can grant the use of the Ritual, but only in already-erected personal parishes (as no new ones are permitted) and not regular diocesan parishes. Thus, it is only in personal parishes that souls might be able to receive Baptism, Confession, and Extreme Unction in the Traditional Rite. The Congregation makes clear, however, that under no circumstances may the bishops use the Pontifical, the book that contains the rites of Confirmation and Ordination. This means that those priests ordained by diocesan bishops this past year (2021) were the last ones to be ordained in the ancient way.

The *Ecclesia Dei* communities were promised their own bishop over 30 years ago, yet they have never been granted one because they were told they did not need one since any bishop could ordain their seminarians. Now, Rome has abolished that assurance and outright forbidden any bishop to ordain their candidates in the Old Rite. They must either accept the compromised New Rite of ordination or withdraw their candidacy. How many candidates will stay in these seminaries knowing there is no path to ordination in the manner in which they were promised? This will likely empty their seminaries of any men who joined with the expectation that they would be ordained according to Tradition.

This prohibition also includes another unspoken assault. It eliminates the minor orders and the subdiaconate since those ceremonies are only contained in the old Pontifical. No future *Ecclesia Dei* seminarian will be able to be ordained into these minor orders or the subdiaconate. One of the other responses confirms their intention to stamp out the other orders of the priesthood because it requires that not only must the priest celebrant of the Mass have permission but also any “Deacons and the instituted ministers” who wish to participate. The phrase “instituted ministers” is the invention of Paul VI to replace the minor order of Acolyte and major order of Subdeacon.^[1] It is significant that the document does not say “Deacons and Subdeacons,” which indicates that they plan to eradicate subdeacons, even if for a time someone dresses up to play subdeacon for a Solemn Mass as an “instituted minister” — a phrase that, thanks to Pope Francis, now includes women.^[2] Clearly, this response is meant to make it more difficult to offer the Mass in all its fullness (i.e., in solemn form), since not only one permission will be necessary but three.

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Unless diocesan bishops are willing to endure probable removal from their respective episcopal sees, suspension, and perhaps even excommunication, the only seminarians who will receive Holy Orders (and the lower orders) in the Old Rite and the only children who will be confirmed with the Old Rite will be those who receive those sacraments from the three bishops of the Society of St. Pius X. Bishops contemplating this choice should decide if they wish to follow in the steps of St. Athanasius, who was twice expelled from his see and excommunicated for his fidelity. Do they have the fortitude to defy the Dictator Pope?

The Destruction of Traditional Seminaries

In addition to foreclosing the possibility of ordination in the Traditional Rite, the document makes clear that the seminaries of the *Ecclesia Dei* institutes must stop training their priests to offer the Mass of All Ages. First, it makes clear the intention of preventing any priests ordained after July 16, 2021 from ever celebrating the Old Mass. The bishops are told that *Traditionis Custodes* requires more than mere consultation with Rome to grant such permission. It requires the affirmative consent of the CDW, which it indicates it is unlikely to grant. Not only will *Ecclesia Dei* seminarians be denied Traditional ordination, they will also have no clear path to obtain permission to celebrate the Rite at the heart of their charism. The CDW response makes clear that seminaries can no longer train seminarians to offer the Mass of All Ages:

“The *Motu Proprio* clearly expresses the desire that what is contained in the liturgical books promulgated by Popes Saint Paul VI and Saint John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, be recognised as the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite: it is therefore absolutely essential that Priests ordained after the publication of the *Motu Proprio* share this desire of the Holy Father.”

All newly ordained priests must repeat the slogan: “There is no Mass other than the New Mass.” The document then says the following to seminary rectors:

“All seminary formators, seeking to walk with solicitude in the direction indicated by Pope Francis, are encouraged to accompany future Deacons and Priests to an understanding and experience of the richness of the liturgical reform called for by the Second Vatican Council. This reform has enhanced every element of the Roman Rite and has fostered — as hoped for by the Council Fathers — the full, conscious and active participation of the entire People of God in the liturgy (cf.

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Sacrosanctum Concilium no. 14), the primary source of authentic Christian spirituality.”

Thus, *Ecclesia Dei* seminaries must henceforth indoctrinate their candidates in the regime propaganda that the Rite which nourished Saints and Martyrs is no more and the “banal on-the-spot product” (to use Cardinal Ratzinger’s language) is the most beautiful thing this side of Heaven.

If the *Ecclesia Dei* communities comply — and the [rumored February visitations](#) will likely have as their purpose to demand such compliance — the only seminaries left that will teach the Old Mass will be those of the Society of St. Pius X.

A Quarantine Stricter Than COVID Lockdowns

With this new CDW document, the deep church, following the lead of its deep state masters, has announced a severe lockdown and quarantine of the Traditional Latin Mass that is more violent and globally universal.

The CDW responses first nullify the actions of many diocesan bishops who granted dispensations from *Traditionis Custodes*’ prohibition (Art. 3 § 2) on Masses being offered in parochial churches. In the days and weeks following July 16, 2021, many bishops announced a blanket permission for any priests already authorized to continue celebrating the Mass and excusing them from the prohibition of using parish churches. The CDW now decrees that only the Congregation for Divine Worship “can grant, at the request of the diocesan Bishop, that the parish church be used to celebrate according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962.” Thus, it invalidates any permissions granted by bishops in the past few months since they were granted without the permission of the CDW. Further, the response limits the CDW’s grant of permission only to cases in which “it is established that it is impossible to use another church, oratory or chapel. The assessment of this impossibility must be made with the utmost care.” Thus, if there is any 4×4 chapel anywhere in the confines of the diocese that can be used, the CDW will deny the request.

In addition, the CDW decrees that if it grants permission to use a parish church that “such a celebration should not be included in the parish Mass schedule, since it is attended only by the faithful who are members of the said group. Finally, it should not be held at the same time as the pastoral activities of the parish community.” Thus, the Traditional Mass cannot be advertised and can only occur at 4:00 p.m. (as long as there is no parish bingo game at that time). It further requires that as soon as any other location is available “this permission will be withdrawn.”

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Releasing this response on a Saturday is no coincidence. As I write this article, parish priests that have been offering a Traditional Mass in their parishes have to decide if they will disregard this unjust decree and offer Mass in their parish tomorrow. Bishops are deciding if they will persecute those priests with unjust punishments tomorrow for disregarding this quarantine of the Traditional Mass from every parish in the world (since there is no time for any bishop to seek CDW permission before Sunday morning).

The irony of this new document is overwhelming. *Traditionis Custodes*, by its very name, purported to restore to the diocesan bishop the guardianship of the Traditional liturgy. That was obviously a ruse. The Dictator Pope wants only mindless minions as bishops who enforce his wicked will. This seizing of all authority to grant a dispensation from Art. 3 §2 of *Traditionis Custodes* is clearly meant to be a message to those bishops that allowed the continuation of parochial Masses. The message is: you only have authority over your diocese to the extent that you comply with my demands; otherwise, I will take back your authority.

The response seizing the authority of the bishop to permit parochial Masses ends with a complete slap in the face to diocesan TLM communities. “There is no intention in these provisions to marginalise the faithful who are rooted in the previous form of celebration: they are only meant to remind them that this is a concession to provide for their good (in view of the common use of the one *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite) and not an opportunity to promote the previous rite.” In other words, we are putting your Mass in a tiny broom closet in the boondocks of the diocese at 4:30 in the afternoon and you cannot tell anyone it is happening, but we are not marginalizing you at all. Be grateful that we are conceding to grant you any bread crumbs while we re-educate you.

The time in solitary confinement in the broom closet chapel should also have an expiration label slapped on it. According to the CDW, it is “recommended” that any permissions granted by bishops to offer the True Mass be only “for a defined period of time — the duration of which the diocesan Bishop will consider appropriate” so that at the end of the definite period of time there can be “the possibility of ascertaining that everything is in harmony with the direction established by the *Motu Proprio*. The outcome of this assessment can provide grounds for prolonging or suspending the permission.” Can there be any doubt which outcome the Vatican demands? Obviously suspension, since the entire goal is to “in time” eliminate completely the True Mass.

Additional detailed restrictions attempt to quarantine the Mass and Traditional priests even further. First, the bishop’s permission to his priest to offer the Mass does not extend outside his diocese. Thus, a priest who goes home to visit his parents in another diocese cannot offer the Mass without the added permission of the other bishop. This provision is also aimed at putting an end to priests leading the faithful on pilgrimages (outside their diocese)

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since they will not be permitted to offer Masses there without the local Ordinary's permission. What will the Chartres Pilgrimage do? It would seem only priests of the Archdiocese of Paris or the Diocese of Chartres, depending in which territory the pilgrimage is on each day, can offer the pilgrimage Masses. This seems a clear attempt to cancel the Chartres Pilgrimage.

Two further responses limit the number of Masses a priest may offer. To understand the responses, we must explain the concept of "binating." The law of the Church requires that ordinarily a priest may only offer Mass once a day. Yet, canon law provides that a priest may offer more than one Mass for a "just cause" or "pastoral necessity" (cf. 1983 Code of Canon Law, [can. 905](#)). Two responses in the new document, when read together, make clear that a priest who is grudgingly permitted to offer the True Mass on a weekday (not a Sunday) may not offer a second Mass that day, even if there is not enough room in the broom closet chapel for everyone to attend since the faithful can simply go to a *Novus Ordo*.

Although the document does not completely prohibit binating on Sunday, it does restrict it in regard to the Traditional Mass. A priest can only offer one Traditional Mass for the same group of people. Hence, in a personal parish in which there is not enough room for everyone to fit in the location for Sunday Mass the priest can offer two Masses, but if he has two groups at two different locations then he can only offer one Mass for one of the groups. Thus, if a Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter priest services two different locations on a Sunday, the response makes clear that he cannot binate for the second group "since they [the second community] are offered the possibility of participating in the Eucharist in its current ritual form [i.e., the *Novus Ordo*]."

A New Index of Forbidden Books

Pope Paul VI abolished the centuries-old index of forbidden or dangerous books, but Pope Francis has resurrected it and put only one item on the list: "No vernacular lectionaries may be published that reproduce the cycle of readings of the previous rite." One interesting feature of *Traditionis Custodes* was a strange obsession with the "readings." It required that they be read in the vernacular but only in translations approved by the Episcopal Conferences for liturgical use (cf. Art. 3 § 3). Most translations approved by Episcopal Conferences are modern translations that are at best poorly done or at worst ideological. They are attempting to prohibit what most priests do at a Traditional Mass: simply reading the Epistle and Gospel out of a traditional hand missal that contains an accurate and orthodox translation (typically, the Douay-Rheims Version, a faithful translation of the Latin Vulgate). This is clearly prohibited. They seem to be trying to make it extremely difficult for a priest. He can't simply open a book to the readings for the Mass. He has to take out the

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version of the Bible from which the New Mass translations are drawn, look up the citations in the 1962 Missal, then find them in that Bible to read, remembering that sometimes the Epistle and Gospel are not contiguous verses. The only goal seems to be to ban traditional translations and make it even harder for the celebrating priest.

Conclusions

If July 16, 2021 will go down in history as the liturgical version of the Hiroshima atomic blast, then Dec. 18, 2021 will go down as the liturgical Nagasaki. The responses of Archbishop Roche and the CDW make clear that the Pope means what he said. His goal is the eventual eradication of the Traditional Liturgy and any priests committed to it. In the great generosity of a dictator, he is permitting for an unspecified period of time some crumbs for the ignorant fools who resist their re-education. Yet, he is expressing his complete displeasure with bishops who expressed real pastoral solicitude after Hiroshima to grant derogations and dispensations from his assault. He is making clear that in his great love for collegiality he will only allow them the freedom to be collegial with him in the brutal suppression of the Tradition of the Church.

As noted earlier, this document seems to make the [rumored visitations of the Ecclesia Dei communities in February](#) perfunctory. They are already doomed. If they cannot obtain ordinations and cannot train their seminarians in the Old Rite, why should anyone join their seminaries? This will choke off their vocations, which seems to be the obvious intended consequence.

In his dealings with the Vatican, [Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre](#) (1905-1991) pleaded for the Roman authorities to allow the “experiment of Tradition.” The Archbishop knew with certainty what any truly free experiment would prove: the explosion of vocations, the transmission of true doctrine, and the flourishing of Catholic communities. The Vatican has ruled on the experiment and agrees completely with the Archbishop that these are the inevitable consequences of any freedom for the Tradition. Thus, like all brutal totalitarians who are losing the battle, all that is left is brutal repression and re-education indoctrination in the Revolution.

If anyone had doubts in 1988 about his decision to preserve the Catholic priesthood by consecrating bishops who could transmit the traditional sacraments and priesthood, those doubts must be swept away. If the *Ecclesia Dei* communities and the diocesan bishops surrender and obey these instructions, contrary to their moral duty, the SSPX bishops will be the only lifeline to the Traditional priesthood.

In short, this document is the moment of decision for bishops and priests around the world.

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Will you abandon your divine mission and submit to a tyrant or will you follow Archbishop Lefebvre into the wilderness of persecution (removal, apparent suspension, or even apparent excommunication). What will be your choice?

[1] Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter [*Ministeria Quaedam*](#) (Aug. 15, 1972).

[2] Cf. Francis, [Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Regarding Access of Women to the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte](#) (Jan. 10, 2021).