

If we could, in a phrase, sum up Western man’s chief flaw, we might say: he never knew when to stop innovating.

Innovation and striving towards new ways of developing culture is, of course, a strength of the West. But if one is always discontent with the greatness he achieves, he risks tinkering too much, innovating himself into ruin. Is this not what was done with the Second Vatican Council and its ecumenism? Our elites grew tired of the bastion of the Church of the Pius popes, for there was the allure that the breakaway Protestants might join our ranks *Ut Unum Sint*, as if the Immaculate Bride of Christ needed these heretical sects to complete herself!

Yet, we are now confronted with the notion that perhaps we didn’t innovate enough, that the “Spirit of Vatican 2” merely innovated in the wrong areas. This is the argument put forth by Philip Primeau for Crisis Magazine in his May 31st article [“Toward a New Ecumenism.”](#)

Primeau suggests that “some orthodox Catholics might balk at this proposal—not unfairly, given the dismal results of the Old Ecumenism,” and goes on to say that the New Ecumenism ought to be different based on these principles:

“First, Christ established one holy Church upon the apostles and their successors cum Petro et sub Petro; second, Christian unity therefore entails full communion with this Church; third, it follows that every Catholic has an obligation to draw men into the Church by those means consonant with justice and charity. So stated, we see that ‘ecumenism’ is really just an endeavor to magnify the unity, sanctity, Catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church.”

Same Terms, Same Error

Primeau’s goal is already doomed from the start, as he accepts erroneous terminology. If the stated aim is to magnify the unity of the Church, how does the term “full communion” achieve this? It immediately implies that there might be some groups in “partial communion,” an ambiguous term used either to placate Protestants or scare scrupulous traditionalists. Having a Church with elements only partially unified does nothing to magnify its unity; it destroys it entirely! In reality, the Catholic Church is completely united, with no elements but only dead vestiges outside of her unity. Our elites felt bound to subvert this principle, making the vestiges into living elements to the point where the Church of Christ only *subsists* in the Catholic Church. This is the impetus behind the so-called Old Ecumenism, and here, the same terms are being employed.



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Lowering Clerical Standards: A Solution?

One of the most bizarre implementations of the “New Ecumenism” that Primeau suggests is admitting more Protestant pastors to the priesthood.

“Moreover, the New Ecumenism must think in terms of communities, not individuals. Bishops must actively engage Protestant ministers in their dioceses with the express goal of bringing entire congregations into full communion. To this end, the Holy See must supply or streamline canonical procedures for incorporating Protestant congregations as parishes and admitting Protestant ministers (including those with wives) to the sacred orders of the diaconate and the presbyterate.”

It is quite difficult to think of a statement that could be more completely oblivious to the “Crisis” in the Church. In an age of priests who constantly contradict the basic catechism, where the faithful are more likely to hear heresy from the pulpit than Catholicism, where liberals constantly promote the abolition of clerical celibacy, and in a world where we

completely lack trust in the presbyterate, should we put these concerns aside and fast-track Protestant ministers to the priesthood to run Catholic parishes? It takes years to acquire an authentic Catholic spirit as a convert and being put in charge of a parish and tasked with priestly duties just because one used to run a heretical sect is not only dangerous but completely absurd.

Do We Really Need Another New Mass?

Primeau’s final point on his agenda seems to be the most egregious to those familiar with the “Crisis” in the Church. Primeau is not content with the New Mass as a way to appeal to Protestants but rather says that “the Holy See must collaborate with bishops in the production of alternative liturgical books suited to the modes of worship customarily employed by formerly Protestant communities. Obviously, a dispensation of this sort would require a good deal of prudence and not a few guardrails. Yet one can imagine a ‘low church’ evangelical service modified only to include the Eucharistic prayer.”

I, for one, am tired of Protestant masses in my Catholic Church. While it should be obvious to those in the traditionalist movement, I would like to remind everyone that *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Simply adding the Eucharistic prayer (which one?) to an *evangelical* service does not change the fact that it is still an *evangelical* service and cannot be accepted. This does not even delve into the evident controversy of suggesting that one can make up a rite by adopting the rite of heretics! However, I don’t think Primeau needs to worry; the average Novus Ordo should be more than accommodating to those who wish to partake in Protestant worship with a Eucharistic prayer.