

Last week Monday, Rorate Caeli [reported](#) what it called “rumors ... from the most credible sources” concerning an imminent “ban” on the Traditional Latin Mass:

“An attempt is being made to implement, as soon as possible, a Vatican document with a stringent, radical, and final solution banning the Traditional Latin Mass. The same ideologues who imposed *Traditionis Custodes* and its implementation, and who are still frustrated with its apparently slow results, especially in the United States and France, want to ban it and shut it down everywhere and immediately. They want to do it while Francis is still in power. They want to make it as wide, final, and irreversible as possible.

These rumors come from the most credible sources, in different continents, and we urge you to take them as seriously as possible, and do what you can in your station, as laity, priests, bishops, cardinals, religious men and women, to prevent the ban from becoming a concrete measure.”

“When we have further information that can be made public,” the report concludes, “we will let you know.”

In the meantime, Pope Francis received three leading members of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest (ICKSP) in private audience yesterday and “insisted,” according to the Institute’s [press release](#), that they “continue to serve the Church according to [their] own, proper charism,” at the heart of which is the [traditional Roman Liturgy](#), “in the spirit of unity and communion which the harmony and balance of the Salesian spirituality allow.”

Does this mean that the rumors about a total ban on the Traditional Mass are false? Sadly, I don’t think so.

Two Reasons Why a “Final Solution” is Probable

Instead, it seems probable that certain “ideologues” in Rome — and this arguably includes Pope Francis, given his [notorious disdain for traditional Catholics](#) and his [claim](#) that “the liturgical reform is irreversible” — will indeed attempt to impose a “final solution” before the end of the current pontificate for a couple of reasons.

First, Francis said plainly in his [Letter to Bishops](#) that accompanied *Traditionis Custodes* (July 16, 2021) that all Roman Catholics “need to return in due time to the Roman Rite promulgated by Saints Paul VI and John Paul II,” that is, to the Novus Ordo, which, as Dr.

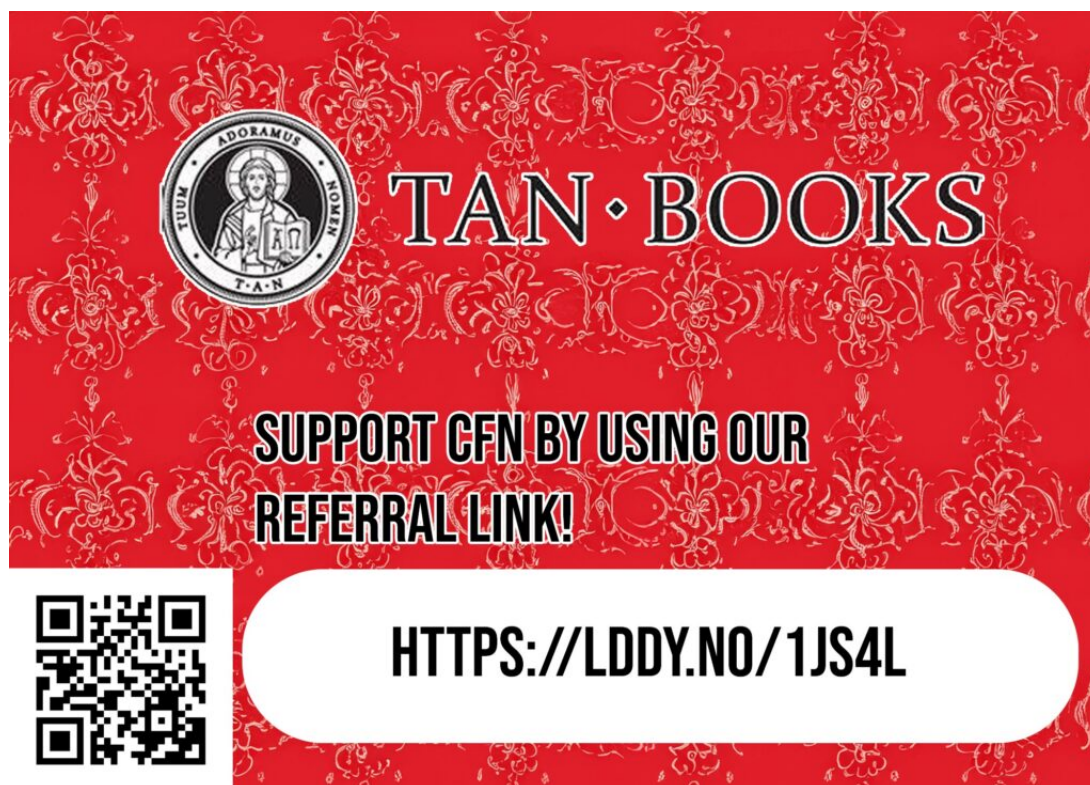
Peter Kwasniewski demonstrates, is not actually the Roman Rite for several reasons.[\[2\]](#)

Second, and more importantly, Francis and two of his close collaborators — Cardinals Arthur Roche and Blase Cupich — have essentially stated that the Traditional Latin Mass is incompatible with the new ecclesiology expressed in the documents of Vatican II, a topic I have covered at length [in the past](#).

To briefly recap, Pope Francis wrote in [Desiderio Desideravi](#) (June 29, 2022):

“It would be trivial to read the tensions, unfortunately present around the celebration, as a simple divergence between different tastes concerning a particular ritual form. The problematic is primarily ecclesiological. I do not see how it is possible to say that one recognizes the validity of the Council ... and at the same time not accept the liturgical reform born out of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], a document that expresses the reality of the Liturgy intimately joined to the vision of Church so admirably described in *Lumen Gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church]. For this reason, as I already expressed in my letter to all the bishops, I have felt it my duty to affirm that ‘The liturgical books promulgated by Saint Paul VI and Saint John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II, are the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite.’ (Motu Proprio *Traditionis custodes*, art 1)” (DD, 31)

In other words, “the tensions” which exist between Catholics who embrace “the liturgical reform” and those who resist it are based not on “different tastes” but on *divergent ecclesiologies* — that is, on fundamentally different doctrinal positions about the Church’s very nature (the object of ecclesiology). And the ecclesiology which corresponds to the new liturgical rites, according to Francis, is “the vision of Church so admirably described in *Lumen Gentium*” (DD, 31). That “vision,” epitomized by the phrase “the people of God” (used in an egalitarian sense),[\[2\]](#) includes the novel teaching that the Church is somehow “linked with” all manner of non-Catholics (LG, 15), the latter being “related in various ways to the people of God” (LG, 16): non-Catholic Christians, Jews, Muslims, “those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God,” and even “those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God” (“without blame,” despite the contrary teaching of Romans 1:18-20). Thus, the Council’s new ecclesiology is inherently ecumenical and interreligious.



Cardinals Cupich and Roche Confirm

In the interim between *Traditionis Custodes* (July 2021) and *Desiderio Desideravi* (June 2022), the aforementioned close collaborators of Pope Francis defended his decision to restrict the Traditional Latin Mass by invoking the Council's new ecclesiology and related novelties.

In November of 2021, Cardinal Cupich [wrote](#) that “failing to promote a return to a unitary celebratory form in accord with the directives of ‘Traditionis Custodes’ will further call into question the authority and value of the council [Vatican II] as an integral part of Catholic tradition.”

“For this reason,” said Cupich, “Pope Francis calls on all Catholics to recognize that Vatican II and its reforms are not only authentic actions of the Holy Spirit but also are in continuity with the tradition of the church. Sadly, there is ample evidence that many of those rejecting the reformed liturgy in earlier and even later years also expressed opposition to the council and its teachings, including those on the nature of the church, the modern world, religious freedom, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue; nor were these objections restricted to the ways those teachings were being interpreted.”

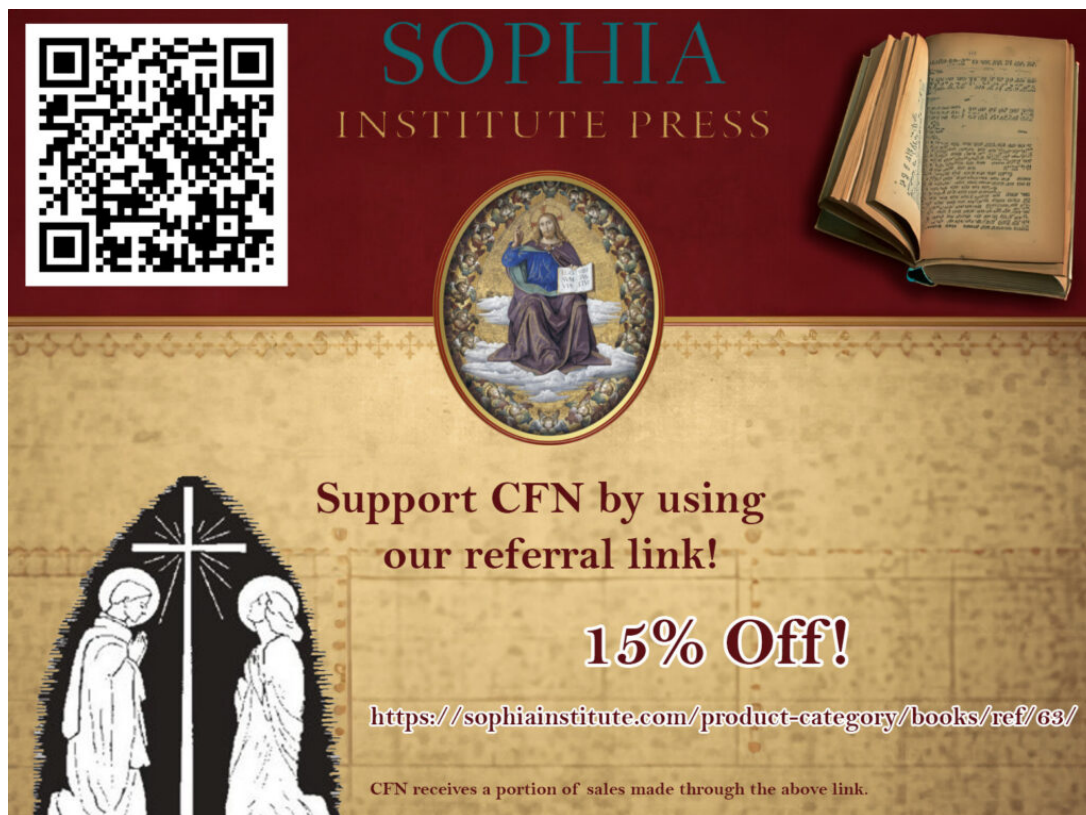
Cupich went so far as to claim that “the very nature of the church and her mission is at stake. The council fathers described the church as a ‘pilgrim people,’ a term rooted in Scripture, to develop the image of the church previously understood as a perfect society and a world power to be contended with.”[\[3\]](#)

And in January of 2022, then-Archbishop Roche made similar remarks during an interview with *Catholic News Service*. Interviewer Cindy Wooden [summarized](#) as follows:

“The differences between the pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II Masses, he said, are not simply the use of Latin, chant, silence and the direction the priest faces.

The promotion of the pre-Vatican II liturgy as somehow more holy or prayerful than the current liturgy ‘is not basically a liturgical problem, it is an ecclesial problem,’ the archbishop said. The current Mass, with a richer selection of prayers and Scripture readings, reflects and reinforces the church’s understanding of itself as the people of God.

“That which was given to us by the council, which classified, concretized the teaching of the church about itself and its understanding of the role of the baptized and the importance of the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the church, is not without significance for the future of the church,’ he said.”



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Liturgical Expression of New Ecclesiology

In what ways does the Council's new ecclesiology find expression in the New Mass? The revised intercessions for Good Friday are a prime example. Whereas the Church expressly prays for the conversion of heretics, schismatics, Jews, and pagans in the [traditional rite](#), the [new prayers](#) are significantly softened and imbued with the Conciliar novelties mentioned by Cardinal Cupich ("religious freedom, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue"). Here are a few examples:

- The traditional prayer for Church unity invites the faithful to pray "for heretics and schismatics: that our Lord God would be pleased to rescue them from all their errors; and recall them to our holy mother the Catholic and Apostolic Church." In contrast, the new version invites the faithful to pray "for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ, that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth [despite their heresies and schism?], to gather them together and keep them in His one Church."
- The traditional prayer for the Jews is offered "for the blindness of that people: that, acknowledging the light of Thy truth, which is Christ, they may be rescued from their darkness." The new version merely asks that God "may grant them to advance in love of His Name and in faithfulness to His covenant," subtly implying that the New

Covenant established by Christ in His Precious Blood is not necessary for them.

- Towards the end of Pope Pius XII's reign, a prayer "for all engaged in affairs of state" was added which asks God "to look favorably on those who wield power over us, and let Thy right hand protect us: that all the world through, both religious integrity [i.e., adherence to the true religion, which is Catholicism] and our country's security may be firmly based and abide."[\[4\]](#) The Novus Ordo equivalent asks that "throughout the whole world, the prosperity of peoples, the assurance of peace, and freedom of religion [i.e., the so-called right to practice and promote whichever religion one prefers] may through Your gift be made secure."

When Cardinal Cupich says that “the very nature of the church and her mission is at stake,” in relation to whether the liturgical revolution is embraced or rejected, he is absolutely right. The Traditional Latin Mass and the New Mass are not “two usages of the one Roman rite” ([*Summorum Pontificum*](#), art. 1); they are two distinct rites that manifest two distinct visions of the Church — two opposing ecclesiologies — which cannot co-exist within the Church forever.

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Look to St. John the Baptist

If and when a “final solution” is revealed, traditional Catholics should strive to imitate St.

John the Baptist, who fearlessly confronted King Herod the Tetrarch about his illegitimate marriage: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). Similarly, we must denounce as illegitimate any and all attempts to suppress or restrict the Traditional Latin Mass. In the [words](#) of Bishop Athanasius Schneider:

"The traditional Roman liturgy of the Mass has the closest affinity with the Eastern rites in bearing witness to the universal and uninterrupted liturgical law of the Church....

The Pope and the bishops do not have, therefore, the authority to forbid or to limit such a venerable form of the Holy Mass, which was offered by the Saints for over a thousand years, in the same way as the Pope or the Bishops would not have the authority to forbid or significantly reform the venerable form of the Apostolic or Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, precisely because of their venerable, continuous, and millennium-old use."

Through the intercession of St. John the Baptist, may we receive the graces we need to "stand fast in the faith: do manfully and be strengthened" (1 Cor. 16:13).

For more on this topic, check out the latest CFN Weekly News Roundup:

[1] See Peter A. Kwasniewski, [The Once and Future Roman Rite](#) (Gastonia: TAN Books, 2022), pp. 155-167.

[2] Although "the people of God" is a Biblical phrase (cf. 1 Pet. 2:10), it is often used in an egalitarian sense to overemphasize the laity to the detriment of the Church's hierarchical constitution and the dignity of Holy Orders. On this point, and in connection with the post-conciliar liturgical revolution, Professor Roberto de Mattei notes: "Even the progressives admitted that the *Novus Ordo Missae* expressed a new theology of the 'people of God' on its journey through history: an immanentist ecclesiological vision that presupposed the common priesthood of the faithful and was quite different ... from the vision of the encyclicals *Mediator Dei* and *Mystici Corporis Christi* by Pius XII." ([The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story](#) [Fitzwilliam: Loreto Publications, 2012], p. 546).

[3] The Church has always been and remains a perfect society, not because she is devoid of wicked members, but in the sense that she contains within herself all the resources

necessary to attain her divinely appointed end (i.e., she does not need assistance from those outside her visible bounds in order to accomplish her mission). In the words of Pope Pius XI, "Christ our Lord instituted His Church as a perfect society, external of its nature and perceptible to the senses, which should carry on in the future the work of the salvation of the human race, under the leadership of one head, with an authority teaching by word of mouth, and by the ministry of the sacraments, the founts of heavenly grace; for which reason He attested by comparison the similarity of the Church to a kingdom, to a house, to a sheepfold, and to a flock." ([*Mortalium Animos*](#), n. 6).

[4] [The Daily Missal \(1962\) and Liturgical Manual](#) (London: Baronius Press, 2007), p. 580.