Even in death, Francis seems intent on mocking the papacy.

In what is erroneously described as yet another act of humility, the Vatican announced this week that the rubrics for pontifical funerals are being "simplified."

The reforms are intended to "emphasize even more that the Roman Pontiff's funeral is that of a shepherd and disciple of Christ and not of a powerful man of this world," Archbishop Diego Ravelli, the Vatican's Master of Ceremonies, has said.

They are meant to "better express the faith of the Church in the Risen Christ."

The previous rubrics were approved by John Paul II in 1998, but those were seen as too antiquated for Francis, who revised the document in conjunction with Ravelli.

Among other things, the new rules call for Francis's body to be placed in a barren wooden box instead of three interlocking caskets of cypress, lead, and oak, which had become the norm for popes over the past century.

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The revisions also mandate that his body not be placed on a raised catafalque but on a lower table, a symbolic gesture no doubt of the continued diminishment of the papal office these past 11 years.

In December, Francis announced his desire to be buried outside of the Vatican, which houses 91 popes. Instead, he wishes to reside at the Basilica of St. Mary Major. According to Reuters, the last pope to be buried outside the Vatican was Leo XIII, who was laid to rest at St. John Lateran.

The mainstream media has predictably praised the rubrics.

"Pope Francis, who has shunned much of the pomp and privilege of leading the global Catholic Church, has decided that a simple wooden casket will suffice when the time comes

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for his funeral," Reuters reported this week.

"Pope Francis rejects tradition, opts for humble wooden casket and burial outside Vatican," a Fox News headline reads.

One can't help but be reminded of what Vatican II's document on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium,* says about all this.

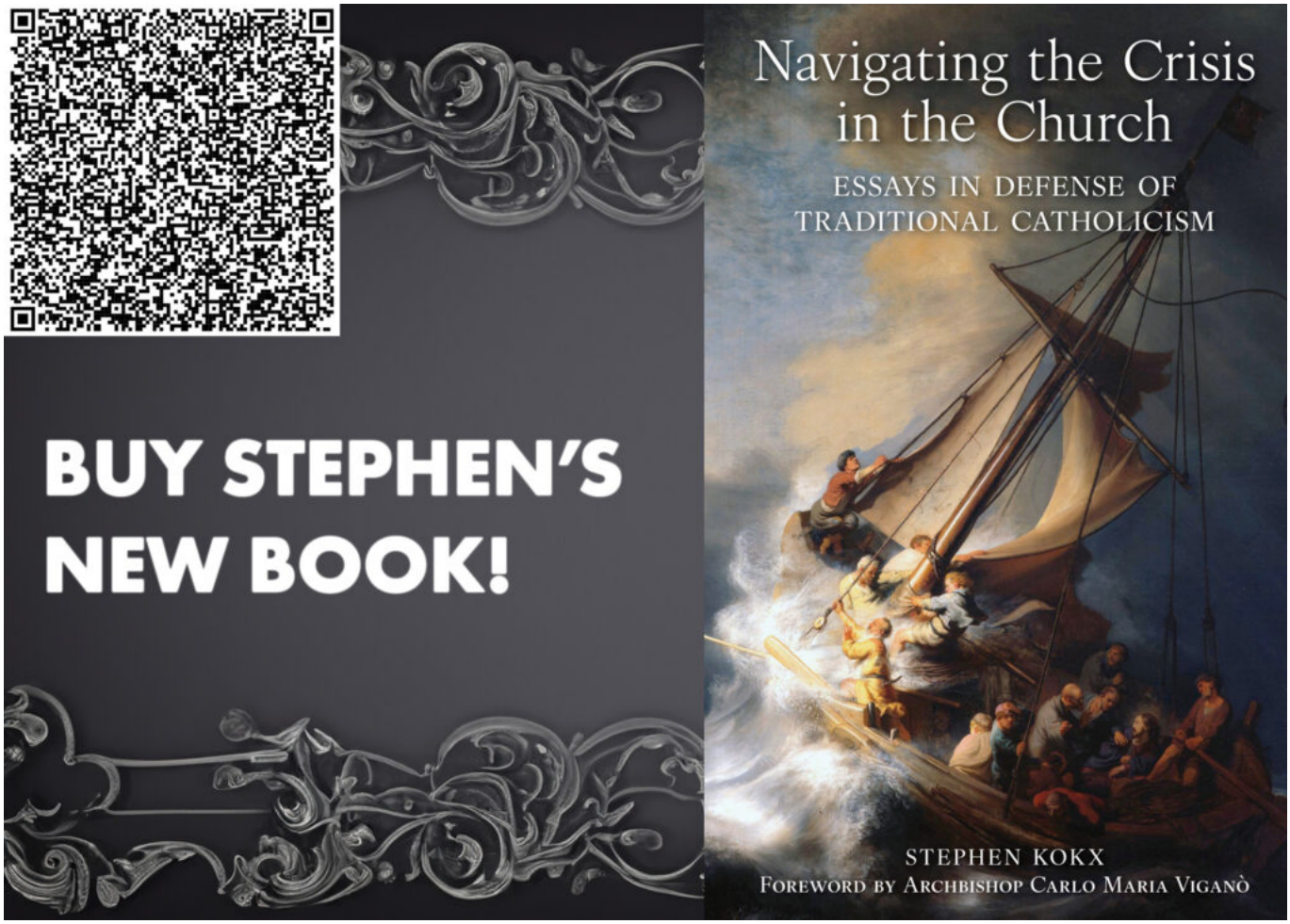
"The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions," it reads.

No doubt Francis thinks he's doing this, but of course, 'noble simplicity' is a largely undefinable term. It was, and still is, used to justify the removal of marvelous statues, priceless paintings, and other beautiful objects in churches that lift our souls up to God.

Indeed, "noble simplicity" is what liberals and modernists have invoked to eradicate all of the rich liturgical norms that developed in the Church for centuries up until the 1960s.

You would think Francis was content with the wreckage he has caused these past eleven years and that it might be a good idea to stop tempting God by destroying *everything* in sight. Alas, he seems incapable of doing anything but that.

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