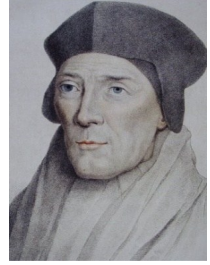




The Recusant

An unofficial SSPX newsletter, fighting a guerrilla war for the soul of Tradition!



“The truly Catholic press is altogether Catholic, that is to say, it defends **Catholic doctrine** in all its principles and applications; it opposes **all false teaching** (known as such) always and entirely, *opposita per diametrum* [diametrically opposed], as St Ignatius says in that golden book of his exercises. Arrayed with unceasing vigilance against error, it places itself on the frontier, always face-to-face with the enemy. It never bivouacs with the hostile forces, as the compromising press loves to do. Its opposition is definite and determined; it is not simply opposed to certain undeniable manoeuvres of the foe, letting others escape its vigilance, but watches, guards, and resists at every point.”

- *Liberalism is a Sin*, p.140

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- **“Doubt and Confusion: the New ‘Canonizations’” (John Vennari)**
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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR:

Dear Reader,

The SSPX has a problem with bishops. We have pointed it out before, in these pages, but it came on fairly suddenly. Word reaches us that Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta is not well and effectively out-of-action and with Tissier gone that leaves only Bishop Fellay. This time last year, the original four bishops consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988 were still alive. Now two of them are dead and one is unwell and unable to function. Two years ago, the SSPX had three bishops plus one conciliar bishop (Vitus Huonder, whom they had already begun to use to consecrate holy oils and do confirmations in their chapels). Now there is only Bishop Fellay on whom they can rely, it seems. Will he be consecrating new bishops for the SSPX? Don’t hold your breath. That would take courage, courage which neither he nor anyone else in today’s SSPX has. The

more time passes, the more we ought to be able to appreciate just what Archbishop Lefebvre did for us: there is none alive today who even comes close to him in stature.

As it happens, the SSPX recently released another Fr. Paul Robinson and Andrew video on their youtube channel. This time they are not pushing billions of years, nor why we all need to avoid conspiracy theories and get the latest vaccine. No, this time they are defending the validity of Novus Ordo holy orders and why the new SSPX views conditional ordination as hardly ever necessary.

Why they should wish to propagandise the faithful with this particular issue right now is anyone's guess, but many are suspicious and with good cause. Is it that they are about to ask Rome for new bishops? Or is it just another symptom of their eagerness to avoid offending their new-found friends, the conciliar bishops? Just like the gradual disappearance of sermons and articles condemning the New Mass; just like their acceptance of *Ecclesia Dei* / Indult priests; just like their acceptance of the new code of canon law, and much else besides. Perhaps it is both.



A stained-glass window in the Vendee, France. 'Messe en Campagne' reads the caption, 'Mass in the countryside.' But hold on, why didn't they just go to the 'certainly valid' Masses in the churches?

These pages have long waged war and will continue to wage war against the crazy, dangerous and un-Catholic idea that all that matters is validity, that valid sacraments are everything and that a priest's teaching, his doctrine, his public profession of the Faith take a back seat just as long as his sacraments are valid. Clearly, validity is not all that matters, nor is it even the thing which matters most. But does that mean that it doesn't matter at all? Of course not. Hence the reader will find in these pages an article dealing with the Fr. Robinson interview (p.10) and the question of novus ordo holy orders.

“How can a valid Mass displease God?”

Even a sacrilegious Mass celebrated by an apostate priest to mock Christ can be valid. It is however evident that it offends God, and it would not be permitted to take part in it. In the same way, the Mass of a Greek Schismatic (valid and celebrated according a venerable rite) displeases God insofar as it is celebrated in opposition to Rome and to the unique Church of Christ.”

(Catechism of the Crisis in the Church by Fr. Mattias Gaudron SSPX, Angelus Press)

“It must be understood immediately that we do not hold to the absurd idea that if the New Mass is valid, we are then free to assist at it. The Church has always forbidden the faithful to assist at the Masses of heretics and schismatics, even when they are valid. It is clear that no one can assist at sacrilegious Masses or at Masses which endanger our Faith.”

(Archbishop Lefebvre, 08/11/1979)

The other thing which these pages carry is a lengthy article (p.30) which deals with the question of conciliar canonisations, and Cardinal Newman in particular. The conciliar church are about to make him a “Doctor” of their Vatican II church, but is he even really a Saint? The evidence, it seems, is very heavily against it. It is quite a large topic to deal with and one that deserves being looked at properly, so I hope the reader will forgive if this time around, little space has been left for anything else, including the usual sermon by Archbishop Lefebvre. As always, however, he is never very far away in these pages and, I hope, his guidance can still be felt, even when we are not quoting from him directly.

The SSPX pushing total acceptance of conciliar holy orders, and the conciliar church pushing Newman as a bogus “Doctor of the Church.” Those “current events” are given an airing in this issue, but other than their topicality, is there anything else connecting them? As different as those two things are, the answer is yes, and ironically (or perhaps not) it is that they both spring directly from Vatican II and both have done great harm to the Church. Like the new sacramental rites, the changes to the calendar which saw several genuine Saints being effectively “cancelled” were made by the Consilium appointed by Paul VI in the mid-60s: a vast bureaucracy with hundreds of “experts” and dozens of sub-committees, in which Fr. Annibale Bugnini reigned supreme and which ultimately gave us the New Mass. To borrow from the title of the John Vennari article (p.18), the result is “Doubt and Confusion” about who is a real priest or bishop, or for that matter who is a real Saint. As a result, millions have lost the Faith and it wasn’t even necessary, so it had to be motivated by something other than the common good, some undeclared nefarious end.

Nuala Sherwin RIP

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the soul of Nuala Sherwin. She was one of two old ladies who helped found the Resistance in Ireland, back in 2013. Shiela White was the other: she died at the start of 2019 - RIP. The two were firm friends but very different in temperament. Whereas Shiela was clearly the more outgoing, “larger than life” one might almost say, Nuala was far more reserved. Diminutive in stature, she was as devout as she was diligent and once convinced of a thing, followed it through with a tenacity and consistency rarely seen in our day. She was also one of the most generous souls whom I have ever met and never balked at a sacrifice, no matter how personally inconvenient it might be.

In June 2012 Bishop Fellay, accompanied by the District Superior of Great Britain and Ireland, visited SSPX in Dublin for confirmations and afterwards treated the faithful to his usual sleep-inducing “Our Relations With Rome” talk. One lone voice against his antics was raised. Not only was Nuala prepared to ask him awkward questions: when no satisfactory answer was forthcoming she refused to sit down and be silent. Faithful of the Resistance in Ireland today remember the sight and sound of a tiny old lady being physically manhandled out of the hall by two large men, still shouting at the top of her voice: “You’re betraying us, Bishop Fellay! You’re betraying Archbishop Lefebvre! You’re a traitor!” Incidentally, the District Superior who had her ejected, to his lasting shame, was one Fr. Paul Morgan.

Not surprisingly, she soon helped found of the first Resistance Mass centre in Ireland, at the Skylon Hotel, Dublin, where Fr. Pfeiffer and Fr. Hewko would offer Mass. After a couple of years, some new priests showed up unannounced at the Skylon Hotel and took things over, priests whom Fr. Pfeiffer and Fr. Hewko had not heard from and whom we now call the Fake Resistance. Nuala regarded them as interlopers. She was the first one in Ireland to declare that she would not go to their Masses if they would not publicly stand for the Faith and endorse the Resistance. Others would join her, but to begin with she was alone. Incidentally, one of those priests is now a Bishop and his name is Giacomo Ballini.

Unimposing, small, soft-spoken - it is hard to convey fully in writing the contrast between her external appearance and her indomitable spirit. She not only read this newsletter from cover to cover, she annotated it all over with her own hand-written notes to the point where it was almost unrecognisable. She once told me that her family had come over to Ireland from England during the Protestant Reformation and that there was good reason to believe that they were the same family as that of the English martyr St. Ralph Sherwin. God grant that we be able to follow the example she left us and grant to her eternal rest. Requiescat in Pace.

- The Editor

Just one of many excellent articles available at: <https://thecatholictrumpet.com/>

The Fake Resistance and its mini- Lavender Mafia Must Speak!



July 1, the Feast of the Precious Blood, calls us to remember Christ’s sacrifice for the salvation of souls. In that spirit, we write with loving zeal and firm charity: how long will Bishops Paul (sic “Richard”) Morgan and Giacomo (“Jean-Michel”) Ballini hide in silence as the scandal of Fr. Joseph (Kerry/Ciaran) Moran – a defrocked priest accused of child abuse – festers among Traditional Catholics? For years [months - Ed.] evidence of Moran’s crimes and his illicit ordination has circulated on the True Resistance forums (notably *The Catacombs*) and was published in *The Recusant* (Issue #63, Easter 2025). Yet when laymen raised these allegations publicly, even involving civil authorities, the bishops who introduced Moran to their flocks have not defended the innocent – they have defended a predator by their silence.

The Arrest that Exposed the Scandal

On June 24, 2025, YouTube pianist Brendan “Dr. K” Kavanagh released footage of Bedfordshire Police arresting him and his wife, handcuffing them before their young children, and seizing their computers. The charge: “harassment” – after Kavanagh sent emails warning the local traditional chapel that one of their visiting priests had a history of abuse. In fact, Kavanagh had asked Caribbean Church officials about someone who celebrated a Latin Mass last year at a chapel on his land. They confirmed that this priest (Father Moran) had once faced “allegations of inappropriate behaviour” in Martinique. In other words, Kavanagh was acting out of genuine concern for children in his community. Yet after Brendan emailed both Father Moran and Bishop Morgan - for which he was then arrested - Bishop Morgan blocked him completely, leaving the family to endure a humiliating raid and seizure of their devices, only to be told afterward that no offence had occurred.

No honest man could watch that footage and not ask: if these allegations are baseless, why were six officers needed? Why were electronic devices confiscated? Why were devoted parents made to look like criminals? British media reported Kavanagh’s words: “My wife and I were arrested and handcuffed in front of our children. Our children were terrified and did not understand what was going on.” All charges were later dropped. But the damage remains: the public saw a Catholic family branded “harassers” by the very clergy who should have protected them.

In fact, this is not new

The Recusant (#63) spells it out: Kerry Michael Moran was a Martinique seminarian and deacon (2017) whose bishop in Fort-de-France warned the faithful after allegations of serious misconduct (child abuse). The Martinique diocesan chancellor officially confirmed this in a letter – an email from the Chancery itself – emphatically authentic and cautioning Catholics to beware. By early 2024 Moran surfaced in Europe under false names (even using “Ciaran

Moran” in Ireland) and began offering Masses for Bishop Morgan (England) and Bishop Ballini (Ireland) of the Fake Resistance.

Readers of *The Recusant* have noted how Moran’s story sounded suspiciously convenient: he claimed his diocese “fabricated” charges because he was “too Traditional.” *The Recusant* retorts that if he were truly so “Traditional,” he would not have joined a Novus Ordo seminary in the first place, nor be accused by an FSSP chancellor. Moreover, Mr. Moran has been inconsistent about his ordination: sometimes crediting Bishop Williamson, sometimes Archbishop Viganò. *The Recusant* pointed out that Viganò did write to warn Bishop Ballini about Moran – but Ballini “chose to ignore the warning,” even disappearing to Italy when confronted. Morgan’s response was no better: he blocked the emails entirely. In short, those who ordained and sheltered Moran have no credible defense of their protege – only a stubborn refusal to acknowledge him as the paedo-priest that so many now call him.

Viganò, Williamson, and the Shadow of Absolution

Why mention Viganò and Williamson? Because their names hang over this case. The very fact that Moran (a white Englishman) was ordained at all in Martinique or Trinidad in 2018 (as news reports show) is itself odd, and *The Recusant* notes that Moran’s deaconship (2017) needed explanation. One rumour – aired by Moran himself – was that Archbishop Viganò had secretly ordained him priest. Another version (apparently promoted by Moran) is that Bishop Williamson did a “conditional” ordination. Whether true or not, it means that two prominent Catholic figures are implicated in his clerical claim. Thus *The Recusant* was right to ask: if either Viganò or Williamson really ordained Moran, did they know of his abuse allegations? We do know the silence of Morgan and Ballini suggests that no forthright answers are forthcoming.

The Grave Duty of Bishops to Protect

As Traditional Catholics, we stand on the shoulders of saints and doctors. Recall St. Athanasius, who stood alone against the Arians and would never “flee from those who challenge us” on matters of truth. Our forefathers taught that *salus animarum suprema lex*: the salvation of souls is the supreme law. In our days, that law demands that no priest with even a whiff of sexual misconduct touch a child. Church and canon law entrust bishops especially with this duty. The 1917 Code of Canon Law (Canon 1752) solemnly declares: Let the salvation of souls be the supreme law. Hence any silence, any cover-up of an abuser, is gravely illicit. Blessed Pope St. Pius X himself insisted that scandal “forces the way to hell.” How much more this modern episcopal indifference!

By refusing to speak, Bishops Morgan and Ballini violate that supreme law. *The Recusant* puts it bluntly: “Bishops Morgan and Ballini refuse to take any responsibility for the man they introduced to their own faithful.” Not only do they remain “mute as the grave,” but their laity are now scrambling to defend a man almost everyone calls a monster. Even these lay apologists defy church teaching – as some have recently vouched for Fr. Stephen Abraham (another Williamson protege) with equally unbelievable claims of innocence. The really astonishing fact is that so many will cling to their loyalty to Williamson that no charge can ever stick against “his priests.” But as Athanasius would say, “He is not of us who is not against error.” Indeed, the Church Fathers taught that loyalty to Tradition requires confronting sin, not sweeping it under the rug. (Recall how Pope St. Damasus condemned Hilary of Arles and Faustinus of Lyons for cover-ups – those bishops were obliged to act, not defend each other’s errors.)

No More ‘Convenient Discretion’

The Moran scandal embodies the lukewarm “traditionalism” that +Archbishop Lefebvre condemned. Yet for all this, he was embraced by the Fake “Resistance” hierarchy – until questions arose. Now, because the usual habit of Williamson’s followers is to keep everything secret, there is no official word at all from Morgan or Ballini. This creates an atmosphere “in which pederasts and child sexual abusers can breathe a little more easily,” *The Recusant* warns. They are consummate liars, who rely on that silence to reinvent themselves, and only open communication can bring them to justice.

We have reached a crossroads: either these bishops confess the truth and repent, or the whole Resistance movement will be tainted by their cover-up. As *The Recusant* starkly notes, Williamson’s death has left behind three known child-molesters in the “Resistance,” and yet Williamson cannot have been wrong, so everyone connected to him must be defended at all costs. This is not true Catholic charity; it is the rotten fruit of a mini-lavender mafia – a hidden network of sexual abusers and their protectors. In the spirit of +Archbishop Lefebvre, we must distinguish the faithful priests who uphold Tradition from those who have sold out to modernism and secret sins.

The Call to Speak and to Pray

Our plea, then, is simple and urgent: Bishops Morgan and Ballini, come forward with the truth. Defend the innocent, not the guilty. Protect children and repent if you erred in judgment – the Church has always given grace to those who confess. Speak plainly: say whether Father Moran was ever validly ordained, explain the nature of the accusations, and grant your people clarity. If you remain silent, the faithful will draw the only conclusion left: that you have chosen “convenient silence” over Christ’s command to feed and safeguard the flock. Remember that on this Feast of the Precious Blood, our Lord shed His blood to redeem sinners – He calls every shepherd to shed the pride that fosters sin, even if it costs him esteem among clerical “friends.”

We echo St. Athanasius’s example: let there be but one true shepherd who speaks and a hundred false ones who rail; the shepherd who speaks truth will triumph in the end. Our Lady of Fatima promised that Her Immaculate Heart would triumph; surely this triumph involves the purification of the Church at every level. As *The Catholic Trumpet* has long urged, we will not “bivouac with the hostile forces” – we stand “face-to-face with the enemy” and “resist at every point.” Error and silence will not pass.

Finally, we call on every good Catholic, to pray and fast for these shepherds’ consciences and for the safety of our children. Let no one be deceived: abusers must not be sheltered, and cover-up is a mortal wound to the Church. As Pope Pius IX taught, the first order of the hierarchy is the care of souls. Let us invoke the Precious Blood for those victims and for the conversion of those who have hidden the truth. May this Feast of the Sacred Blood be a renewal of our courage to speak only truth, in humble charity. In the words of St. Athanasius: “He who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for Christ will find it.” We pray that Bishops Morgan and Ballini choose the path of truth and life, leaving no doubt where the Catholic Resistance really stands – for Christ and His little ones, always.



For *Catholic Trumpet* videos, subscribe to: <https://www.youtube.com/@thecatholictrumpet>

As usual, Fr. Hewko needs no introduction...

Mary, Cause of Our Joy

+

Summer 2025

Dear Faithful Fighting in the Trenches,

“Woe to the world should it lack monasteries and convents! Men do not comprehend their importance, for if they understood, they would do all in their power to multiply them, because in them can be found the remedy for all the physical and moral evils... No one on the face of the earth is aware from where comes the salvation of souls, the conversion of great sinners, the end of great scourges, the fertility of the land, the end of pestilence and wars, and the harmony between nations. All this is due to the prayers that rise up from monasteries and convents!” (Words of Our Lady to Mother Mariana de Jesus, Quito, Ecuador (1563 - 1635)

One of the catastrophic effects of the Second Vatican Council was the *aggiornamento*, the so-called “updating,” of the Religious Orders. In the name of *aggiornamento* the entire rules, statutes, and constitutions of religious houses were changed, bringing in the spirit of the world and the abandonment of the former habits, penances, and prayers of the Religious Orders founded by saints and approved for centuries by Mother Church. It truly was the crowbar Satan cunningly swung to break the backbone of the Catholic Church!

This was the reason why Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre resigned from the position of Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968, the largest missionary order in the Church! He refused to lend a hand to the dismantling and destruction of his congregation.

Shortly after Vatican II, the changes to the Mass began in stages, first introducing English prayers, omissions of the Signs of the Cross and genuflections, then erupting in the contemptible New Mass of Pope Paul VI in 1969. Abp. Lefebvre soon detected the anti-Catholic spirit of this novelty and told Modernist Rome that he can never accept the New Mass nor possibly form priests with it. How right he was! Soon he would label it the “Messe batarde,” the Mass “that represents a different faith; no longer the Catholic Faith,” that Mass that “poisons and corrupts the Faith,” which, furthermore, “cannot fulfill the Sunday obligation.”

With the recent pontificate of Pope Francis, which unleashed every effort to eradicate the last-standing-traditional-bent religious orders, the modernization of nearly all religious orders, congregations, and pious unions in the world have been accomplished! They have been compromised and contaminated with the smoke of Satan, coming from Vatican II! Even the beloved Society of St. Pius X, a pious union of priests founded by the Archbishop himself, has compromised the Faith at the Doctrinal level, as proven by the treasonous public documents of the Doctrinal Declaration of April 15, 2012, the General Chapter Statement of July, 2012, and the accompanying Six Conditions for the Agreement with Rome.

Faced with this universal collapse of the Faith, the conclusion for us Catholics is obvious. We must not give up, nor must we abandon the fight for Tradition by a false obedience to Modernist Rome, but, on the contrary, we must offer a vigorous, unwavering resistance to Modernism and stay attached to Catholic Tradition! The blueprints of reconstruction have already long been established by Mother Church, as Pope St. Pius X declared in Our Apostolic Mandate, and the guiding directives and example given by Abp. Lefebvre clearly marks the path to follow! This program is:

Firstly, the Catholic priesthood with a solid counter-Revolutionary formation rooted in the great anti-Liberal Popes and authors such as: Cardinal Pie of Poitiers, Bp. Emile Freppel, St. Pius X, Fr. Denis Fahey, Bp. De Castro Meyer, Louis Veuillot, and Abp. Lefebvre.

Secondly, the defense of the integral Tridentine Mass and traditional sacraments.

Thirdly, the revival of the monastic and religious orders.

Fourthly, the revival of solid traditional Catholic education at every level! All of it aimed at the proclamation of the Social Reign of Christ the King over all nations.

Fifthly, the Catholic parishes and smaller missions, with large families gathered around good schools and the True Mass at their very heart.

It is true, the SSPX had accomplished most of this “Traditional Restoration Program” and it was successful in many parts of the world. But as the fish rots first in the head, so with the compromise at the Doctrinal level in 2012, the SSPX is destined to go the route of all traditional communities who had compromised the Faith, which is a gradual slide to Modernism. Just for example, look at the towering fortress of defense of Catholic Tradition that Bp. De Castro Meyer had established in Campos, Brazil. Now, since their Agreement with Rome in 2003, they are saying the New Mass with altar girls and Communion in the hand! One cannot compromise the Holy Faith and get away with it! Impossible!

So our humble beginnings at the Oratory of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary have seen the first year of priestly formation with more arrivals for the Fall of 2025. It all belongs to Her and may She see it fructify under Her care and vigilance!

But now, the opportunity has arisen of an adjacent property with the perfect landscape and buildings for an initial Convent for sisters consecrated to Our Lord Jesus Christ. May St. Joseph be pleased to see to it and the success of the fundraiser to obtain the property for \$300,000.00, with \$180,000.00 in addition, to pay for the necessary repairs. They are: a new roof, new boiler, entire log-replacements for the log cabin house, an extension for the sisters’ chapel, barn repairs, and insulation, etc.



Our Divine Lord cannot NOT want beloved brides who seek Him with all their hearts and marry Him by the consecrated life! Our apostolate of the priests needs them. This anti-Catholic world needs them! The Church devastated by Vatican II needs them! YOU need them!

“As dust is scattered when blown by the wind, so our adversary the Devil, is put to flight in confusion and terror by the voices of those who chant [the psalms] with humble devotion.”

(St. John Chrysostom, Comm. in Ps. 145)

In Christ the King,

Fr. David Hewko

The Oratory of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary is looking to purchase the property next door that has recently become available to be used as a home for the formation of Sisters who wish to consecrate their lives to the Eternal Bridegroom.



The Sisters, living a semi-contemplative life while following the Rule established by Archbishop Lefebvre, would spend their days supporting the clergy and laity with their prayers, with a particular focus on making reparation to the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts.

“The contemplative life means the keeping of charity towards God and our neighbors and fixing all our desires on our Creator.” – St. Gregory the Great



The future convent will need several repairs and upgrades. As seen in these photos, several of the logs forming the home's exterior (real logs, not log siding) need either repair or replacement. A possible option may be that this end of the home will be extended to increase the size of the future chapel. An interesting tidbit, many of the logs used in the creation of the exterior walls were taken from the woods surrounding the home.

The logs are affected in different areas with dry rot or carpenter ant damage, thus the need for repair or replacement.

The large barn on the property would be divided into a workshop area and an area for animals to help keep the convent more self-sufficient.



But it too needs some attention: some of the the lower barn boards need replacement, below, and the workshop area will need insulation to allow continued use during the colder northern New England months.

But overall, the purchase price is very reasonable and well under its formal appraised value. Of course, it goes without mentioning that there is an invaluable advantage of owning the property right next door to the Oratory!

But overall, the purchase price is very reasonable and well under its formal appraised value. Of course, it goes without mentioning that there is an invaluable advantage of owning the property right next door to the Oratory!

(Right: Archbishop Lefebvre greets his sister, Mother Marie Christiane, one of several of his sisters who became nuns. Mother Marie Christiane played a significant role in the establishment of the Carmelite convent in the United States. She founded the American Carmel in Phoenixville, PA, in 1985. She passed away in 1997.)



Fr. Paul Robinson and his obsequious sidekick are being wheeled-out again...!

Fr. Robinson: It's All Valid, Trust Us!

Yes that title is an exaggeration. But only a slight one. Like his previous podcast videos, this was a penance to watch, and not just because there are youtube adverts every few minutes! In this [“SSPX Podcast” video](#), released in July 2025, we are told in the introduction that:

“Fr. Paul Robinson responds to objections surrounding the Society of St. Pius X’s decision not to conditionally ordain every priest ordained in the Novus Ordo rite who joins the Society. Why doesn’t the SSPX re-ordain across the board?”

This is already misleading the audience. The real question ought to be why the SSPX has so radically changed its approach to this question: conditional ordination is now the exception whereas it used to be the rule. The real question which needs looking into, then, is what has changed. Why is the SSPX now so reluctant to conditionally ordain Novus Ordo priests?

Fr. Robinson begins by telling his listeners that: “We do believe that the new rites are valid. ... And then secondly, we believe that you need to have serious grounds before repeating a non-repeatable sacrament,” which, he says, means, “you have to have a positive doubt.” This is, of course: a straw man. Nobody is claiming that conditional ordinations should be done without a good reason. The issue then is whether there are serious grounds, whether there is a positive doubt and if so, what it might look like. Incredibly, this question is not actually addressed in the entire hour-long video.

“Case by case”

Archbishop Lefebvre, Fr. Robinson admits, wanted to go case-by-case and he claims that that is what the SSPX does today. But the more he says, the more it becomes clear that what the Archbishop meant by “case by case” and what the SSPX does today are quite different. What the SSPX does today, it seems, is to look at the actual ceremony in which the priest was ordained by watching a video of it. That, according to what Fr. Robinson says, is what the present-day SSPX calls looking at an ordination “case by case.”

“So, you know, when we have a new priest who comes to us, we typically receive the ordination video and then I send that on to [US District Superior] Fr. Fullerton and Bishop Fellay and they make the judgement, they assess what they think.”

He then adds that “The last thing anyone wants us to do is to change our principles” which he says haven’t changed “for the last fifty years” - (God forbid that that should ever happen!) - adding that those who don’t like it are taking a sedevacantist line, before going on to discuss “the nine” sedevacantist priests in 1983 as though that is what this is really all about.

Andrew then raises as an objection the claim that “Archbishop Lefebvre always conditionally re-ordained *any* priest ordained in the new rite who came to him: another straw man! To this, Fr. Robinson replies: “This is an easy objection to answer because it’s just not true.” You write your own objections and then you find them easy to answer? Fancy that! It is true that the Archbishop, when looking at Novus Ordo priests case-by-case did sometimes come across one whose ordination gave no real grounds for doubt. This is largely because the new rite of priestly ordination, at least in Latin, is so similar to the Traditional Rite (the only difference being “ut” - a word whose absence does not obscure what is taking place) and because in the 1970s and 80s many Novus Ordo ordinations were still being done by men who had become bishops before the changes to the rite of episcopal consecration in 1968.

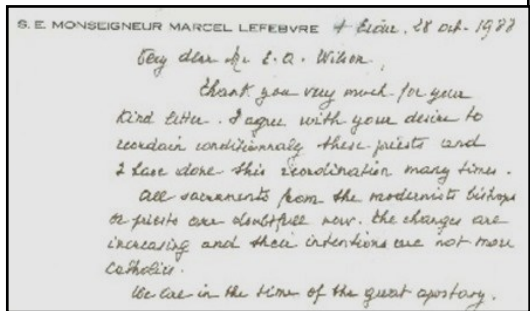
This was the case with Fr. Glover, one of the examples brought up by Fr. Robinson (the other being a Fr. Stark, presumably an American?). Fr. Glover was an Oratorian ordained in the new rite of in Latin, by a bishop consecrated in the Traditional Rite before 1968. A doctor of canon law and member of the Roman Rota, he was a larger than life character whom plenty of people in England still remember.

The same is true of the late Fr. Gregory Hesse who was ordained in the new rite of priestly ordination in 1981 by Archbishop Sabattini, who himself had been consecrated as a bishop before the changes. And there were others too in those days; but clearly, as time progressed, such cases would become less likely. Archbishop Lefebvre himself as good as said that the situation surrounding doubtful conciliar sacraments was becoming worse. What he would have said in 2025, fully fifty-seven years after the changes to the rite of episcopal consecration, is anyone's guess, but something tells me he wouldn't be *more* favourably inclined towards it!

“Invalid” or “Doubtful”...?

Andrew brings up the 1988 letter from Archbishop Lefebvre to a Mr. Wilson, reproduced in these pages a few years ago ([Recusant 50](#), p.16). We will quote it again, not only because Fr. Robinson was unable to deal with it properly, but also because it speaks for itself in all its simplicity. It reads:

“Very dear Mr. Wilson, thank you very much for your kind letter. I agree with your desire to re-ordain conditionally these priests, and I have done this re-ordination many times. All sacraments from the modernists bishops or priests are doubtful now. The changes are increasing and their intentions are no more [i.e. no longer] Catholic. We are in the time of great apostasy. [...]”



This letter is so clear and straightforward that it ought not to surprise us that Fr. Robinson struggles to deal with it properly at all. In the end, he simply comments:

“This letter does not prove that Archbishop Lefebvre decided that he was going to universally conditionally ordain all [Novus Ordo] priests.”

Well no, but it does, at the very least, show that his position, and that of the SSPX, was that the “rule” was to conditionally ordain and the “exception,” those who did not require conditional ordination, were a small and ever-shrinking minority. By contrast, the SSPX of today appear to have exactly the opposite approach: to assume that the ordination is valid unless they happen to become aware of an obvious defect in the actual ceremony of priestly ordination itself. At one point Fr. Robinson even admits that:

“He [i.e. Lefebvre] did consider the new rites doubtful. Not invalid, but doubtful.”

But then, not long after, he confuses the issue by saying:

“Like, even in that letter, Archbishop Lefebvre says they’re doubtful. So if they’re doubtful, that means some of them are valid, right?”

Like, no, that’s not what it means. “Doubtful” means that although we can’t be sure, there’s a real possibility that it didn’t happen, so the sacrament (or in this case, the priest) must be avoided, and that the way to fix it is for the sacrament (in this case, the ordination) to be done again conditionally, so that one can be certain. Even if, for argument’s sake, some of those “doubtful” holy orders are in fact valid, as Fr. Robinson says, what use is that if you can’t know which ones? But this seems to be lost on Fr. Robinson: his approach throughout the entire interview is to talk terms of: “whether it’s valid or invalid” - which misses the point. A doubtful sacrament might be valid, yes, but “might be” isn’t enough because when it comes to sacraments one must always take the *pars tutior* - play it safe, in other words.

After the Wilson letter, Andrew brings up an extract from a sermon by the late Bishop Tissier de Mallerais which also ends up being dismissed far too flippantly and unconvincingly by Fr. Robinson. In a sermon given at the 2016 ordinations in Écône, Bishop Tissier said:

“We cannot, of course, accept this new sabotaged rite of ordination which poses doubts about the validity of many ordinations according to the new rite. ... So this new rite of ordination is not Catholic. And so we will of course continue faithfully transmitting the real and valid priesthood – made valid by the traditional rite of ordination.”

Take note: Bishop Tissier clearly says that “many” of these new priests are doubtful. This is, as noted above, in contrast to the new SSPX policy. Fr. Robinson, however, merely remarks:

“He’s not saying ‘We think its invalid’. ... So he’s not really saying anything different here from Archbishop Lefebvre and the position of the SSPX. ... Again, this is not the position of the SSPX, that the new rite is invalid.”

Notice the dishonesty, the changing of terms. “That the new rite is invalid”? It doesn’t have to be *invalid*, it only has to be *doubtful*! Fr. Robinson continues:

“If people want to find quotations that will establish that sort of position, they have to find a quote that says the new rites are intrinsically invalid or all the ordinations in the new rites are invalid.”

Nonsense! Firstly, nobody is saying that, at least in our corner. Secondly, it only has to be doubtful, not invalid. In fact, to be alarmed at the SSPX’s new approach one doesn’t even have to regard *all* new rite ordinations as are doubtful, merely a sufficient number of them and on sufficiently diverse grounds (not just when wacky things happen during the actual ceremony itself) to begin to see conditional ordination as necessary.

“Investigation” means watching a video!

With this in mind, it is concerning to note that during this entire hour-long video the question of the new rite of episcopal consecration is never raised, never even acknowledged, never once even given a passing nod. And yet it ought to be central to the discussion, since only a bishop can ordain a priest and therefore a doubtful bishop can only ordain priests at best only doubtfully.

What other grounds for doubt might there be far beyond what happened on the day during the ceremony itself? Well, for instance: who was the bishop? If he was a man given to telling

people that he didn't believe in mediaeval superstitions, that no magic takes place, it's all just a community leadership rite of passage (Novus Ordo bishops have been known to say such things!), then might that not affect his intention? What exactly does such a man think he is doing? What if his intention is above suspicion, but he was himself made a bishop using the 1968 new rite of episcopal consecration? Does not the very fact of the new rite of episcopal consecration being substantially different from the Traditional one (the Catholic one!) itself raise questions of its own? How about the priest - were his baptism and confirmation valid? What about those public cases in recent years where a novus ordo priest discovered that his own baptism as a baby had been performed using a do-it-yourself, made-up formula of words? Even modern Rome ordered it to be done again, meaning that the ordination had to be done again too, because priestly ordination is invalid if the candidate is unbaptised. We could go on.

But none of these things are even acknowledged, much less discussed by Fr. Robinson and Andrew. Why is that? It is as though they haven't considered that when it comes to Novus Ordo ordinations there are some issues which aren't visible on a video of the ceremony. Or perhaps they don't want us to be aware of that. Fr. Robinson even admits at one point that the SSPX conditionally ordains far fewer ex-novus ordo priests today than used to be the case. His facile justification for this is that in the old days, priests didn't need to possess a video of their own ordination. Consider the implications: wouldn't that mean that the SSPX (including Archbishop Lefebvre) conditionally ordained far too many men who ought never to have had it done? And that their only justification for doing so was that, not being able to see a video of the ceremony, they couldn't be certain that the conciliar ritual had been followed correctly, and nothing more? Later on in the video, Fr. Robinson condemns this approach as "not safe."

As though to underline the fact that watching a video of the ceremony is the only "investigation" being done by today's SSPX, Fr. Robinson offers Andrew this reflection:

"If you watch the video of the ordination and you see nothing wrong, then you shouldn't conditionally ordain. And sometimes I say to people: if you came to me and said, 'Please re-baptise me, I was baptised in the new rite,' and you give me a video of your baptism and I look at it and I was like, there's nothing wrong, then it would obviously be wrong for me to re-baptise you."

Who can spot the fallacy here? The person performing the baptism does not himself need to have been baptised. Of course, it is fitting for a priest to do it, but it isn't necessary as such. The sacrament of baptism can be performed validly by anyone, a Muslim, a Jew or an atheist can do it, as Fr. Robinson himself says later in the video. The sacrament of holy orders, on the other hand, requires a bishop who in turn must himself have been validly ordained and consecrated by another real bishop, and so on, which is why the new rite of episcopal consecration will always be central to questions of doubtful sacraments. It should trouble everyone a great deal that the modern SSPX's official spokesman on this question cannot see that obvious distinction, or alternately, that he should be deliberately seeking to hide it from his audience.

Anyone Who Disagrees With Me Is A Sedevacantist!

All of the above is in the first half of the video. The second half includes a lot of talk about other things, such as whether Archbishop Lefebvre was a sedevacantist, Traditional Catholics falling prey to bitterness and hatred and a discussion about Archbishop Thuc and the history of Palmar de Troya. Just how relevant this is in a video entitled: "Why the SSPX Doesn't Always Conditionally Ordain" is unclear. The fairly obvious explanation is that this is just more guilt-by-association and "whataboutism" - the same sort of dishonest ploy to which we have seen Fr. Robinson so often resort in his past discussion of "realist science," in other words.

The attempt has worked on some, it seems. “Very grateful for you all addressing this.” reads one youtube comment, “Seems the gnostic tendency is creeping from the Sedevacapist [sic] to deny the reality of things and thus a continued doubt and uncertainty arises.”

Not everyone has been fooled, however. Another comment reads:

“Misleading title. It should say, ‘Why the SSPX Rarely Conditionally Ordains after Nearly Reconciling with Rome in 2012’ ”

And another asks:

“Would the SSPX have Traditional SSPX friendly Novus Ordo Bishops consecrate new Bishops for the SSPX?”

That is almost certainly what is really going on here. The answer, by the way, is surely a resounding “yes” hence the need for the sort of propaganda contained in this video: they are preparing everyone for the day when the SSPX asks permission for new bishops and modernist Rome insists on their own candidates, their own consecrators, if not their own rites.

Doctrine > Validity

There is one final thing which is troubling about this video, and here let us end on a familiar (in these pages at least!) note: validity is one thing, doctrine is another. Yes, validity matters, but doctrine matters more. Priests who come out of the Novus Ordo are often very badly formed. But don’t worry, the SSPX has a programme for their formation, which in the USA is run by...? Yes, Fr. Paul Robinson! That little admission is buried near the start of the interview: blink and you’ll miss it! So at the SSPX in America there will no doubt be ex–Novus Ordo priests not only saying the Traditional Mass with doubtful orders, but also telling people that the earth is billions of years old, that Genesis was “written for a primitive people,” that you should just go ahead and get the latest vaccine, that you must avoid conspiracy theories and be a good little obedient citizen of the New World Order... and more besides.

Lest anyone doubt that valid holy orders is not enough, consider the fact that priests such as Fr. Robinson have holy orders which are beyond any doubt valid, and yet look at the result. The spirit of the New SSPX, so different from what it used to be pervades this entire video. There is a lot of talk, for instance, about how Bishop Fellay, Fr. Fullerton, the SSPX superiors in general have “the grace of state” to decide things - a seriously flawed argument which will be familiar to anyone who lived through the 2012 SSPX crisis. The faithful are told “you’re not trained in this” and that instead of concerning themselves, they “should just pursue peace of soul” – yes, those are exact quotes.

“It’s just not the position of the faithful to tell us what to do in that case. Because we’re the ones who have to be responsible for that, just as we have to be responsible for what we say in the confessional of what we say from the pulpit and how we guide the faithful. So it’s just, I guess, one of the purposes here is to say: this is our position and you can agree with it or not agree with it but that’s what it is. So if you come to our chapels, it’s just expected that you’re going to accept the priests that we have say public Mass and trust that we’re making good decisions.”

I agree with Fr. Robinson here, although not in a way with which he would be happy. He is right in that you do need to decide whether or not you trust the SSPX as an institution, and that if the answer is “no” then you should stop going there. This interview is yet one more serious piece of evidence (the “x+1”) for why one cannot trust them and why one ought no longer to go there. As he says, if you can’t trust them on the question of Novus Ordo holy orders (or evolutionary cosmology, covid vaccines, and so much more besides...), how far can you really trust their advice in the confessional, their sermons, their guidance on retreats, etc? It is a long

established fact, to take just one example, that in America, in Germany and elsewhere, their advice to newly-weds is to avoid having too many children, “It’s not a race!” and so forth. For once Fr. Robinson is quite right: you can’t just pick and choose, you either trust the SSPX or you don’t. As he himself comments,

“I do understand there’s a lack of trust today. The Church has lost credibility, priests have lost credibility...”

Although spoken about the conciliar church (of course, he himself never actually uses that term because, like the institution which he represents, it is a distinction which he doesn’t recognise), these words apply to the modern SSPX. What he and others ought to be asking is why the SSPX has lost credibility, how that has happened and what the implications might be.

Indeed, ironically, if there is one thing which represents in stark relief the difference between the SSPX before and after its Rome-friendly makeover, it is this attitude. The old SSPX used to tell the faithful: You need to read, to study, don’t just take our word for it, read this book, look at this interview, do your homework, see for yourselves! By contrast, the new SSPX tells them: Who do you think you are? You’re just a layman! Go back to sleep! Leave this to us, we’re the experts, you wouldn’t understand, don’t worry you’re pretty little head about it!

Let us close with a comment from Andrew which we think sums it up nicely.

“You have to trust. There’s something to be said for just accepting that sometimes things are OK. ... Sometimes we just have to be able to trust that Christ is watching over the Church still.”

Alright then - *yawn* - I must have just imagined the crisis in the Church, the worst crisis in human history which is still getting worse every day. Goodnight everyone!

Further Reading:

General:

“**Validity of the Sacraments Reformed by Paul VI**” - the Avrillé Dominicans - <https://dominicansavrille.us/validity-of-the-sacraments-reformed-by-paul-vi/>

“**The Order of Mechisadech: Ch.7 The New Catholic Rite of Ordination**” - Michael Davies - <https://www.catholictradition.org/Eucharist/melchisedech-chp7.htm>

“**Sacramentum Ordinis**” - Pius XII - <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius12/p12sacrao.htm>

“**Apostolicae Curae**” - Leo XIII - <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113curae.htm>

Novus Ordo Bishops - Two Opposing Views:

“**Why the New Rite of Episcopal Consecration is Valid**” - Fr. Pierre-Marie OP, *The Angelus*, Jan. 2006 - https://isidore.co/misc/Res%20pro%20Deo/Pope%20St.%20Pius%20X%20&or%20SSPX/The%20Angelus/PDFs/394_2006_jan.pdf

“**Absolutely Null and Utterly Void: The 1968 Rite of Episcopal Consecration**” - Fr. Anthony Cekada - <https://archive.org/details/new-ep-cons-art-pdf-2/>

Novus Ordo Holy Orders: Are they Doubtful and Why?

“All agree that the Sacraments of the New Law, as sensible signs which produce invisible grace, must both signify the grace which they produce and produce the grace which they signify. Now the effects which must be produced and hence also signified by Sacred Ordination to the Diaconate, the Priesthood, and the Episcopacy, namely power and grace, in all the rites of various times and places in the universal Church, are found to be sufficiently signified by the imposition of hands and the words which determine it. [...]

Wherefore, after invoking the divine light, We of Our Apostolic Authority and from certain knowledge declare, and as far as may be necessary decree and provide: that the matter, and the only matter, of the Sacred Orders of the Diaconate, the Priesthood, and the Episcopacy is the imposition of hands; and that the form, and the only form, is the words which determine the application of this matter, which univocally signify the sacramental effects – namely the power of Order and the grace of the Holy Spirit – and which are accepted and used by the Church in that sense.”

- Pius XII, *Sacramentum Ordinis*, 1947

“But the words which until recently were commonly held by Anglicans to constitute the proper form of priestly ordination namely, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” certainly do not in the least definitely express the sacred Order of Priesthood (sacerdotium) or its grace and power ... This form had, indeed, afterwards added to it the words “for the office and work of a priest,” etc.; but this rather shows that the Anglicans themselves perceived that the first form was defective and inadequate.”

- Leo XIII, *Apostolicae Curae*, 1896

We all learn in catechism that a sacrament is “an outward sign of inward grace” but what does that mean in practice? It means that the entire ceremony and in particular the essential form - the words which make the sacrament happen and without which no sacrament can take place - must signify outwardly what is invisibly taking place. The form: “I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” clearly signifies that a baptism is taking place. On hearing those words, an ignorant pagan, stumbling into a church half-way through a strange ceremony, could, in theory, understand that a baptism is taking place.

The same is true of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The words can be expected to describe, or represent outwardly, what is inwardly taking place in that sacrament. So what, precisely, is taking place at the consecration of a bishop? The priest is being given the episcopacy, that is, the fullness of the priesthood. He may or may not be going to “govern” - that would signify his being appointed to a diocese and given ordinary jurisdiction - but even if he is an auxiliary bishop and has no jurisdiction, he will still exercise the fullness of the ministry of a priest.

A sacramental form is valid *because* the words clearly signify what is taking place; therefore, to the extent that they fail to signify it, its validity is put in doubt. That is why the Church decided (and Leo XIII repeated the decision) that Anglican holy orders are invalid. The essential form used by the Anglicans for a hundred years had said only “Receive the Holy Ghost” which is a true but inadequate description of what is happening at an ordination: it doesn't sufficiently signify what is taking place because there is no mention of the priesthood.

Essential Form of Priestly Ordination:

Traditional Rite

“Da, quaesumus, omnipotens Pater, in hunc famulum tuum presbyterii dignitatem; innova in visceribus eius spiritum sanctitatis, ut acceptum a Te Deus, secundi meriti munus obtineat censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuet.”

[Meaning:

“Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty Father, to this thy servant, the dignity of the priesthood; renew deep within him the Spirit of holiness, that he may henceforth possess this office which comes from thee, O God, and is next in rank to the office of bishop; and by the example of his manner of life, may he instil right conduct.”]

Novus Ordo

“Da, quaesumus, omnipotens Pater, in hunc famulum tuum presbyterii dignitatem; innova in visceribus eorum Spiritum sanctitatis; acceptum a Te Deus, secundi meriti munus obtineant, censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuent.”

[Meaning:

“Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty Father, to this thy servant, the dignity of the priesthood; renew deep within him the Spirit of holiness; may he henceforth possess this office which comes from thee, O God, and is next in rank to the office of bishop; and by the example of their manner of life, may they instil right conduct.”]

What does this signify? In both cases, a man is being given “the dignity of the priesthood,” an “office which comes from” God and is the next one down from that of a bishop.

Essential Form of Episcopal Consecration:

Traditional Rite

“Comple in Sacerdote tuo ministerii tui summam, et ornamentis totius glorificationis instructum coelestis unguenti rore sanctifica.”

[Meaning:

“Perfect in Thy priest the fullness of thy ministry and, clothing him in all the ornaments of spiritual glorification, sanctify him with the Heavenly anointing.”]

Novus Ordo

“Et nunc effunde super hunc electum eam virtutem quae a te est, Spiritum principalem, quem dedisti dilecto Filio Tuo Jesu Christo, quem Ipse donavit sanctis Apostolis, qui constituerunt Ecclesiam per singula loca, ut sanctuarium tuum, in gloriam et laudem indeficientem nominis tui.”

[Meaning:

“So now pour out upon this chosen one the power that is from you, the governing Spirit whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by him to his holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.”]

What does this signify? In the traditional form a “priest” being given “the fullness of thy ministry” which is the definition of a bishop. In the Novus Ordo form a “candidate” is being given “power” which is “the governing spirit” given to the apostles. Is that the same as the fullness of the priesthood, i.e. the episcopacy, or might it conceivably be something distinct?

The following article appeared in the August 2013 *Catholic Family News* and can be found here: <https://catholicfamilynews.com/blog/2014/03/31/doubt-and-confusion-the-new-canonizations/>

Doubt and Confusion: The New “Canonizations”

By John Vennari

Speaking of the rigorous pre-Vatican II procedure for beatifications, eminent Catholic historian William Thomas Walsh, who died in 1949, wrote the following:

“No secular court trying a man for his life is more thorough and scrupulous than the Congregation of Rites in seeking to establish whether or not the servant of God practiced virtues both theological and cardinal, and to a heroic degree. If that is established, the advocate of the cause must next prove that his presence in Heaven has been indicated by at least two miracles, while a cardinal who is an expert theologian does all he can to discredit the evidence - hence his popular title of *advocatus diaboli*, or Devil’s Advocate. If the evidence survives every attempt to destroy it after months, years and sometimes centuries of discussion, he is then beatified, that is, he is declared to be blessed.”

We will later note the new 1983 process of canonization dispenses with the Devil’s Advocate and eliminates the stringent juridical method in favor of an academic approach. The discarding of the “thorough and scrupulous” procedure praised by Mr. Walsh cannot help but introduce doubt to the integrity of the entire new process—especially in the case of “fast-track” canonizations.

Mr. Walsh further noted the following about the traditional process: “The final stage of canonization, the last of twenty distinct steps, may take even more years or centuries. It must be proved beyond any reasonable doubt that two additional miracles have been performed through the instance of the servant of God, since the beatification. When and if this is done, the Pope issues a bull (a sealed letter) of canonization.”

Sound Orthodoxy

Walsh also stressed the demand for sound orthodoxy regarding anyone considered for canonization: “Theologians carefully scrutinize all the available writings - books, letters and so on - of the servant of God whose claim to holiness is being urged, together with all the depositions obtainable from those who spoke with him and knew him well. If nothing contrary to faith or morals is found, a decree is published authorizing further investigation.” [1]

If we begin with the criteria that “nothing contrary to faith or morals” can be found in any legitimate claim to beatification, we read with concern an invocation uttered by one who is now slated for “canonization” [and who was, indeed, “canonized” in 2014]: “Hear our prayers for the intention of the Jewish people, which You continue to cherish according to the Patriarchs....Be mindful of the new generation, the young and the children: may they persevere in fidelity to You, in what is the exceptional mystery of their vocation.” [2]

Note: the man who offers this prayer does not indicate that Jews should convert to Our Lord's one true Church for salvation but prays they "persevere in fidelity" to a counterfeit religious system that formally rejects Jesus Christ.

Commenting on The Book of the Dead at Auschwitz, the same man says:

"Persons whose names are contained in these books were incarcerated, they underwent tortures and were finally deprived of life solely, in most cases, because they belonged to a certain nation rather than another....In the light of faith, we see the witness of heroic fidelity, which united them to God in eternity, and a seed of peace for future generations." [3]

While we grieve for anyone who undergoes persecution and torture, our speaker indicates that the Jewish people who suffered at Auschwitz suffered a kind of Jewish martyrdom "which united them to God in eternity," a concept unheard of in Church history.

In days of doctrinal sanity, these radical statements - and there are countless more such utterances from the same man - would have stopped any process of beatification in its tracks and disqualified the candidate permanently.

The Catholic who made these questionable remarks was Pope John Paul II, whom Pope Francis has just approved for "canonization." [4] In our post-Conciliar period of ecclesiastical sentimentality, the age-old truths of the Faith no longer stand as the central criteria for determining heroic virtue. As Fr. Patrick de La Rocque notes, "Far from practicing the theological virtue of Faith to a heroic degree, the late pope [John Paul II] departed from it dangerously in a number of his teachings." [5]

Nor do we see with John Paul II the virtue of true Charity, since John Paul throughout his entire pontificate refused to remind non-Catholics - Jews included - that they must convert to Christ's one true Church for salvation.

While presenting an entire chapter full of such quotes from the Polish pope, [6] Fr. La Rocque notes:

"By systematically concealing the [objective] sin of disbelief that is involved in formal adherence to Judaism, so as to praise instead the [alleged] fidelity to God of present-day Judaism...Pope John Paul II was seriously lacking in that delicate but important pastoral charity that consists in denouncing sin so as to allow the conversion of the sinner." [7]

Yet Fr. La Rocque, or anyone else, who advances reasoned objections to John Paul II's orthodoxy and objections to the claim that John Paul practiced heroic virtue, is simply ignored. The challenges are neither acknowledged nor answered. "We in the Vatican have decided that John Paul II is a saint, and that is that!" This type of thinking is due primarily to the laxer system of canonization introduced in 1983, as well as to the "new understanding" of what it means to be Catholic that was spawned by the Second Vatican Council, and by its most zealous evangelist, Pope John Paul II.

The New Process

On January 25, 1983, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*, the long-awaited revision of the beatification and canonization process. Cardinal Suenens, Paul VI, and other progressivists since the Council had encouraged such an update. John Paul brought it to fruition.[8]

The change was part of the alleged goal to make the canonization process “simpler, faster, cheaper, more ‘collegial’ and ultimately more productive.” [9]

In the new system, the Devil’s Advocate has been eliminated. The “Promoter of the Faith,” as the Devil’s Advocate has been called, is given the new title “Prelate Theologian.” His main task is to choose the theological consultants and preside at the meetings.

Catholic journalist Kenneth L. Woodward spotlights the root difference between the old and new systems: “At the core of the reform is a striking paradigm shift: no longer would the Church look to the courtroom as its model for arriving at the truth of a saint’s life; instead, it would employ the academic model of researching and writing a doctoral dissertation.”

Woodward continues, “In effect, then, the relator had replaced both the Devil’s Advocate and the defense lawyer. He alone was responsible for establishing martyrdom or heroic virtue, and it was up to the theological and historical consultants to give his work a passing or failing grade.” [10]

Though there may have been some abuses by the lawyers over the centuries, the elimination of lawyers radically transforms the procedure that had been at the heart of the saint-making process for half a millennium: a system deemed necessary by the great master of ascetical and mystical theology, Pope Benedict XIV (1740-58) in his monumental work, *The Beatification and Canonization of Saints*. [11]

Though many in the post-Conciliar Vatican welcomed John Paul II’s new method, not all were thrilled. Msgr. Luigi Porsi, a 20-year veteran of the Church’s legal system, decried the elimination of the Devil’s Advocate and the accompanying lawyers as part of the beatification process. In an unanswered letter to Pope John Paul II, Porsi complained the reform went too far: “There is no longer any room for an adversarial function.” [12]

Thus, a central question arises: if there is a radical change in what was the rigorous procedure for making saints, how can we expect the same secure results?

Indeed, the “fast-track” beatifications of the past few decades already introduce doubt to the integrity of the process. The two cases that first come to mind are that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and *Opus Dei* Founder Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer.

Mother Teresa: Doctors Insist, No Miracle

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a popular figure recognized as a “saint” while she was still alive, even though, despite her many good works, she seemed to embrace a theology of indifference. She is on record saying, “I’ve always said we should help a Hindu become a better Hindu, a Muslim become a better Muslim, a Catholic become a better Catholic.” [13]

In 1976, Mother Teresa organized a 25th anniversary celebration of the Missionaries of Charity. As part of the celebration, she obtained permission from the Archbishop of Calcutta for her and her sisters to pray in some pagan temples - non-Christian houses of worship - each day of the jubilee. “Her desire was for each group to hold its own worship service of thanksgiving. Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and so forth joined her and her sisters to thank the one true God in their own way. She and her sisters prayed at eighteen different worship sites,” including Hindu temples. [14]

The central “miracle” employed to justify Mother Teresa’s 2003 “beatification” was the alleged cure of Monica Besra in September 1998. Besra, from Dangram, 460 miles northeast of Calcutta, claimed to have been cured of a tumor after praying to Mother Teresa while pressing a medallion of Mother Teresa’s image to her side.

Despite this claim, Besra’s doctors insist the cure had nothing miraculous about it, but was the result of strong anti-TB drugs administered over a period of nine months.

“This miraculous claim is absolute nonsense and should be condemned by everyone,” said Dr. R. K. Musafi. “She had a medium-sized tumor in her lower abdomen caused by tuberculosis. The drugs she was given eventually reduced the cystic mass and it disappeared after a year’s treatment.”

Likewise, Dr. T. K. Biswas, the first doctor to treat Besra, said, “With all due respect to Mother Teresa, there should not be any talk of a miracle by her. We advised her a prolonged anti-tubercular treatment and she was cured.”

Remember, the Catholic Church has always demanded that a miraculous cure requires rigorous proof beyond any reasonable doubt. The integrity of the Mother Teresa “miracle” is thus seriously compromised.

Dr. Manju Murshet, Superintendent of the Balurghat Hospital, complained that the doctors were under pressure from Church members to declare a miraculous cure: “They want us to say Monica Besra’s recovery was a miracle and beyond the comprehension of medical science.” [15]

Besra’s husband Deiku also challenges the claim of a miraculous cure. “It is much ado about nothing,” he said, “My wife was cured by the doctors, not by any miracle.” [16]

Further, Besra’s medical records have disappeared from the hospital. The records containing her physician’s notes, prescriptions, and sonograms were taken by Sister Betta of the Missionaries of Charity. When *Time* magazine contacted Sister Betta to ask about Besra’s medical records, the only response was “no comment.” [17]

Besra herself now claims she has been abandoned by the Missionary sisters who flocked to her home at the time of the alleged miracle and promised support. “My hut was frequented by nuns of the Missionaries of Charity before the beatification of Mother Teresa,” said Mrs. Besra, squatting on the floor of her thatched and mud house.

“They made a lot of promises to me and assured me of financial help for my livelihood and my children’s education. After that, they forgot me. I am living in penury. My husband is sick. My children have stopped going to school as I have no money. I have to work in the fields to feed my husband and five children.” [18]

It is not our intention to pass a judgment on these events. We merely wish to observe the following: it is hard to imagine this flurry of questions and abuses occurring under the former rigorous system of canonization. With the Devil’s Advocate now eliminated, abuse and suspicion sully not only Mother Teresa’s case, but the entire new beatification process itself.

Once again, regarding the integrity of the new process, we encounter doubt.

Monsignor Escriva

Msgr. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, the founder of the controversial *Opus Dei* organization who died in 1975, was also placed on the fast track. Fr. Peter Scott, the then rector of SSPX's Holy Cross Seminary in Australia, wrote in November 2002 of what he called Escriva's "shameful" and "highly questionable canonization."

Noting that due process was not followed, Father Scott objected that the procedure contained no Devil's Advocate, and that "former members of *Opus Dei* who personally knew Msgr. Escriva and who attempted to register their objections, were not allowed to express their opinion."

In a last-ditch effort to provide more objective thinking regarding the hasty canonization, a group of former *Opus Dei* members wrote an Open Letter to Pope John Paul II in which they said:

"It is because we believe that the truth has been in large part hidden that we now give our testimony in order to avoid a danger for the Faith brought about by the unjustifiable reverence for the man that you have the intention of canonizing soon."

They went on to explain that the authors of this Open Letter include: "people who have intimately known Msgr. Escriva and who can testify to his arrogance, to his evil character, to his improper seeking of a title (Marquise of Peralta), to his dishonesty, to his indifference towards the poor, to his love of luxury and ostentation, to his lack of compassion, and to his idolatrous devotion towards 'Opus Dei.'" [19]

After having pointed out that the process was uncanonical and dishonest, they had this to say:

"It [the canonization] will offend God. It will stain the Church forever. It will take away from the saints their special holiness. It will call into question the credibility of all the canonizations made during your Papacy. It will undermine the future authority of the Papacy."

Father Scott notes that those who wrote the Open Letter were not traditionalists; they were former members of Escriva's organization, "but their supplication was not heard, and the ceremony took place as arranged on October 6, 2002.

"Their letter will certainly turn out to be prophetic, for in time they will be proven to be right in their assessment concerning Escriva as well as concerning *Opus Dei* that they so aptly compare to the liberal Sillon movement, rightly condemned by St. Pius X in 1910. This kind of last-minute objection is unheard of in the history of the Church. How could Catholics possibly regard such a man as heroic in virtue, as an extraordinary model of Catholic spirituality, as a saint must be? For all the reasons that they give, we cannot possibly consider this 'canonization' as a valid, infallible papal pronouncement." [20]

In a similar vein, Catholic author Kenneth Woodward expressed grave reservations about the procedure regarding Escriva's rapid "beatification."

When Fr. Richard John Neuhaus criticized this negative assessment, claiming the liberal-leaning Woodward was always unfavorable to *Opus Dei*, Woodward responded, "My writing about *Opus Dei* has focused almost entirely on the beatification of its founder, not the organization itself. On this point, the only fair-minded conclusion I can reach, given the evidence of the *positio* itself and interviews with people in Rome involved in the process, is that *Opus Dei*

subverted the canonization process to get its man beatified. In a word, it was a scandal - from the conduct of the tribunals through the writing of the *positio* to the high-handed treatment of the experts picked to judge the cause. That *Newsweek* caught *Opus Dei* officials making claims that were not true is a matter of record. Escriva may have been a saint - who am I to judge? But you could never tell from the way his cause was handled.”[21]

Once again, regarding the integrity of the process, we encounter doubt and more doubt.

Assisi: Catholic Youngsters Can’t Believe It

It seems clear that the real purpose of the upcoming “canonizations” of John XXIII and John Paul II [NB: Once again, they took place in 2014] is to “canonize” Vatican II and its entire liberal orientation of religious liberty, ecumenism, and pan-religious activity.

For now, we will content ourselves with another objection to John Paul’s canonization.

At the time of the 2011 “beatification” of John Paul II, I learned of a homeschool online discussion taking place among sixth to ninth graders. A traditional Catholic youth (whom I know) was telling non-traditionalist Catholic acquaintances about Pope John Paul II’s pan-religious meeting at Assisi; that John Paul invited Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Jains, and pagans to pray together at the event in October 1986. He also posted photos of the Assisi gathering.

The homeschooled youngsters refused to believe it. They claimed it could not be true; that the John Paul II / Assisi photos were doctored, that no pope - especially one “beatified” by the allegedly conservative Benedict XVI - would perform this act of ecclesiastical treason.

The young traditional Catholic who told his acquaintances about Assisi was accused of making up the account; of trying to defame the name of “Blessed” Pope John Paul II; of inventing a malicious story about a pagan-packed, pan-religious prayer-fest that no pope would countenance.

Here, then, is the striking point: The children knew the Assisi prayer meeting was not Catholic. The children knew it was not a manifestation of heroic virtue. The children knew it was a scandal of colossal dimension, and thus refused to believe John Paul could be guilty of it. To their credit, these youngsters displayed a better *sensus Catholicus* than today’s Vatican leaders.

If Catholic homeschool children, age 13 and under, recognize the outrage of the pan-religious meeting at Assisi, why did not Pope Benedict XVI, who placed Papa Wojtyla on the fast-track to beatification? Why does not Pope Francis, who on July 5 [NB: 2013] approved John Paul II’s “canonization”? Under today’s streamlined procedure, these crucial questions are ignored as irrelevant.

Once again regarding the integrity of the process, we encounter doubt, doubt and more doubt.

Defect in Procedure

There is an apparent quick-fix solution to the modern canonization dilemma: it is to declare that today’s popes are not popes at all; that they have lost their office due to heresy, and that we have not had a true pope since Pius XII. Yet this Sedevacantist reaction, I believe, merely substitutes one collection of thorny questions with others of greater magnitude. A thorough response to the details of our unprecedented situation calls for the genius of a Bellarmine or a Garrigou-Lagrange - genius seemingly lacking in our post-Conciliar period. [22]

To conclude: Fast-track beatifications, where the will to beatify supersedes the worthiness of the proposed candidate, are a dangerous and questionable development. This is what we see with the determined push to rapidly canonize John XXIII and John Paul II. Under the new system that eliminates the Devil's Advocate, legitimate challenges to the sanctity, orthodoxy, and miraculous intervention of the candidate are left unaddressed. As Vatican postulator Msgr. Luigi Porsi warned, "There is no longer any room for an adversarial function."

Everything in the Catholic Faith conforms to reason. [23] It seems unreasonable, then, to assume that a drastic loosening in the procedure for canonization would yield the same secure results as the "thorough and scrupulous" method that had been in place for centuries. [24]

Thus, I believe modern beatifications and canonizations are at best doubtful due to defect in procedure, and due to a new criteria for holiness engendered by the new "ecumenical Catholicism" of Vatican II.

Notes:

[1] William Thomas Walsh, *The Saints in Action* (New York: Hanover, 1961), p. 14 (emphasis added). Though Walsh died in 1949, *The Saints in Action* was not published until 1961.

[2] Fr. Patrick de La Rocque, FSSPX, *Pope John Paul II: Doubts about a Beatification* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2011), p. 99.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[4] "Pope Francis Signs Canonization Decrees for John XXIII and John Paul II," Vatican Radio, July 5, 2013. Pope Francis "waived" the second necessary miracle for the "canonization" of John XXIII.

[5] La Rocque, *Doubts about a Beatification*, p. xviii.

[6] See Chapter III (pp. 89-113), "John Paul II and the Virtue of Charity," *Pope John Paul II: Doubts about a Beatification*.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[8] Some background: In the year 1234, Pope Gregory IX established procedures to investigate the life of a candidate saint and any attributed miracles. In 1588, Pope Sixtus V entrusted the Congregation of Rites (later named the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints) to oversee the entire process. Beginning with Pope Urban VIII in 1634, various Popes have revised and improved the norms and procedures for canonization. Prospero Lambertini, a brilliant canonist who had come from the ranks of the Congregation of Rites to become Pope Benedict XIV, set himself the task of reviewing and clarifying the Church's practice of making saints. His long and masterful work in five volumes, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione* (On the Beatification of the Servants of God and the Canonization of the Blessed), published between 1734 and 1738, is the touchstone text for the making of saints.

[9] Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 91.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] See "Advocatus Diaboli" (Devil's Advocate), *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, Robert Appleton Company, 1907.

[12] Woodward, *Making Saints*, p. 95.

[13] Mark Zima, *Mother Teresa: The Case for the Cause (Is Mother Teresa of Calcutta a Saint?)* (Nashville: Cold Tree Press, 2007), p. 29.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[15] Quotes from Doctors Musafi, Biswas, and Murshet are taken from Zima's *Mother Teresa: The Case for the Cause*, pp. 190-191.

[16] "Mother Teresa 'miracle' patient accuses nuns," *Telegraph*, Sept. 5, 2007.

[17] "What's Mother Teresa Got to Do with It?" *Time.com*, Oct. 14, 2002.

[18] "Mother Teresa 'miracle' patient accuses nuns." It should be noted that Besra still believes she was miraculously cured by Mother Teresa. Her doctors, however, testify that there was nothing miraculous about it.

[19] These complaints about Escriva surface elsewhere, including the book by a former Opus Dei member, *Beyond the Threshold—A Life in Opus Dei: The True, Unfinished Story* (Maria del Carmen Tapia, 1998); and were also mentioned by Fr. Gregory Hesse in speeches at our CFN conference, 1998.

[20] *Holy Cross Seminary Newsletter*, Nov. 1, 2002.

[21] "Fair to Opus Dei?" Letter to the Editor of *First Things*, No. 61, March 1996, pp. 2-7. [Note: Woodward's response was written after Escriva's "beatification" but prior to his "canonization"]. Posted on *Opus Dei Awareness Network* webpage, updated June 20, 2005.

[22] For example, it is argued that any "infallibility" that deals with canonization would not extend beyond the fact that the soul of the saint is in Heaven. Period. Yet the way in which the Church would judge that the soul is in Heaven is by means of authentic miracles attributed to the "saint's" intercession. This is why the old system for determining this was, as William Thomas Walsh noted, "thorough and scrupulous." Yet if the stringent procedure for determining a miracle is not followed—such as what appears to be the case with the "miracle" attributed to Mother Teresa of Calcutta—how is the "saint's" presence in Heaven determined beyond the pronouncement of a post-Conciliar pope and his will to canonize a given individual?

[23] Though the mysteries, such as the Blessed Trinity and Transubstantiation, are said to be above reason, but not contrary to it.

[24] Fr. Joseph de Sainte Marie was a capable Carmelite theologian who worked in Rome in the 1970s and '80s. An expert on Fatima and a loyal son of Pope John Paul II, he helped compose the formula for the Pope's 1982 Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Despite this, Father de Saint Marie issued the following warning about the unfortunate present state of the Church and those at its highest levels: "In our time, and it is one of the most obvious signs of the extraordinarily abnormal character of the current state of the Church, it is very often the case that the acts of the Holy See demand of us prudence and discernment." (Cited from *Apropos*, *Isle of Sky*, No. 16, 1994, p. 5.) Fr. Joseph de Saint Marie thus tells in a respectful and gentlemanly manner, that our Holy Church now passes through an extraordinary period of history. He uses the word "abnormal." Yet in the face of this "extraordinarily abnormal character of the current state of the Church," he does not advise us to follow the Pope blindly. Aligning himself, rather, with the traditional teaching of Popes and Saints (for example, that of Pope Innocent III, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Francis de Sales, John of St. Thomas and others) Father de Saint Marie cautions us that "in our time," we have to be careful. We have to exercise "prudence and discernment" when it comes to the actions of the Holy See itself; that is, even when it comes to papal actions. Further, he tells us it is "very often the case" that we have to now exercise this caution.





**July 2025 -
Young Adults
Gathering
with
Fr. Hewko, USA**





**June 2025 -
Pilgrimage
to
Canterbury**



May
2025 -
visit of
**Fr. David
Hewko**



London: First Holy Communion





Blessing the ducklings (Durham)...



...a visit to the shrine of Ss. Aelric & Godric.



Adult baptisms & brown scapular enrolments in Durham

Contact information for Fr. Hewko:

<https://spxmc.com/contact-fr-hewko/>



Is John Henry Newman a Saint? Is He a Doctor of the Church?



The short answer is, no. There is enough to be wary of with Newman, enough to at least give any sensible Catholic pause for thought and in any case, Novus Ordo conciliar canonisations aren't worth the paper they're written on. These modern canonisations are proposed to us by men who don't believe in real Saints, just as the miracles which confirm them are not real miracles and are proposed to us by men who don't believe in real miracles. John Henry Newman is as much a Saint as Paul VI or John Paul II. The first part of this article will deal with the question of real Saints and conciliar "Saints"; the second part with Newman himself.

Part 1: When is a Saint not a Saint?

Remember that Novus Ordo calendar removed many genuine Saints as though they no longer existed and were therefore no longer to be venerated. Take, for instance, the fourteen holy helpers: few modern Catholics have even heard of them today, although they were venerated for centuries and were the object of widespread popular devotion across Christendom. Their feast was removed from the calendar and some of them lost individual feast days too and became in effect "un-canonised," including some very popular Saints. That did not stop modernist Rome casting doubt on whether they had ever even existed to begin with, declaring that the stories about them were mere fables, not really worthy of belief in other words. Here, for instance, is what Paul VI's Rome had to say concerning St. Barbara:

“Memoria S. Barbarae, Saeculo XII in Calendario romano ascripta, deletur: acta S. Barbarae sunt omnino fabulosa et etiam de loco ubi passa sit summa inter peritos est dissentio.”

[“The feast of St. Barbara, added to the Roman Calendar in the Twelfth Century, is to be removed. The life of St. Barbara is totally legendary and even the place of her martyrdom is not agreed-upon by experts.”]

([Calendarium Romanum](#), 1969, p.147).

And similarly, concerning St. Catherine of Alexandria:

“Memoria S. Catharinae, saeculo XII in Calendario romano ascripta, deletur: non solum Passio S. Catharinae est omnino fabulosa, sed de ipsa persona Catharinae nihil certum affirmari potest.”

[“The feast of St. Catherine, added to the Roman Calendar in the Twelfth Century, is to be removed. Not only is the martyrdom of St. Catherine entirely legendary, but nothing certain can be asserted about the person of Catherine herself.”]

(Ibid.)

By the way, it is difficult to appreciate what is conveyed by those words “omnino fabulosa” which keep cropping up. A total fable. A complete fairytale. Not in any way true, in other words, not just an exaggeration, but a total, utter fabrication. And it is not just St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Barbara who are treated his way: St. Christopher is another example of a very popular Saint who was nonetheless removed completely from the calendar, as well as St. Dorothy, St. Pius I, and many more besides. Others, such as St. George and St. Valentine, were demoted to a commemoration in certain local places only, which had much the same effect as removing them altogether. In the motu proprio presenting his new calendar (*Mysterii Paschalis*, 1969), Paul VI cites - you’ve guessed it! - Vatican II as his justification, quoting the following passage from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §111:

“Lest the feasts of the saints should take precedence over the feasts which commemorate the very mysteries of salvation, many of them should be left to be celebrated by a particular Church or nation or family of religious; only those should be extended to the universal Church which commemorate saints who are truly of universal importance.”

Even the secular media has picked up on this from time to time. Here, for instance, is a 2014 article from ABC News:

“The Catholic Church removed 93 saints from the universal calendar and revoked their feast days in 1969 when Pope Paul VI revised the canon of saints and determined that some of the names had only ever been alive as legends or not enough was known about them to determine their status. [...] Among Catholicism’s most popular saints, Christopher was listed as a martyr. [...] But there wasn’t enough historical evidence the man ever existed, so Pope Paul VI dropped him.”

(‘Once a Saint, Always a Saint? Kind Of - Unless You’re Demoted’ - [here](#))

Another remarkable victim of the modernists is St. Philomena. One of the most popular Saints of the last two centuries, the Curé of Ars, St. John Vianney, had a particularly strong devotion to her. She was not only removed from the calendar, but modern Rome since then has cast doubt on whether she even existed at all to being with! And yet, like St. Christopher, St. Barbara and the others she still has her own following and devotion to her is still alive and well today, despite her attempted assassination and un-canonisation by modernist unbelievers. One of the important proofs of Sainthood is a *cultus*, a following, and an enduring one. John Paul II had plenty of flatterers and sycophants while he was still alive, and he died adored and praised by the world. Not a good sign!

200 Catholic Saints Lose Their Feast Days

By ALFRED BRUNDAGE, Jr.
Special to The New York Times

ROME, May 9—Two of the best-known saints in the Roman Catholic Church, Valentine, patron of sweethearts, and Christopher, patron of travelers, were dropped from the official liturgical calendar today in a sweeping change that removed more than 200 from the list of saints whose feast days are celebrated by the whole church.

The anniversary celebrations of 92 other saints, including St. George of England and St. Nicholas, who has been celebrated as Santa Claus, were made optional.

The revised calendar, including 58 obligatory saints' feast days, was formally approved by Pope Paul VI last Feb. 14.

The listing, which changes a number of saint days from those established by



A St. Christopher medal

tradition to the actual days of their deaths, is part of the church's general liturgical reform specifically ordered by the Ecumenical Council Vatican II (1962-65).

The removal of such saints as Valentine and Vitus, to whom epileptics once prayed for intercession, does not diminish their status as saints, those recognized by the church as being in Heaven.

For the others were removed from the list because there is serious doubt that they ever existed but, until

each case is examined by the Vatican Congregation of Rites, they too remain saints and can be venerated locally where they have special significance.

Included in this category were St. Christopher and St. Catherine of Alexandria, who gave her name to the spoke wheel on which she was to have been martyred. Their feast days had been July 25 and Nov. 25, respectively. St. Valentine and St. Vitus are honored Feb. 14 and June 15, while St. George's Day is

April 23 and that of St. Nicholas Dec. 6.

St. Valentine, a minor early churchman, had the good fortune to have his feast day fall on the same day observed as the beginning of the bird's mating season. From this comes his association with human love.

St. Christopher, according to one legend, was a strong man who sought to serve the strongest master and converting to Christianity when he discovered the devil's fear of Christ. Another legend had Christ appear to him as a child whom he carried across a river on his shoulders.

St. Catherine was, according to legend, beheaded on a mountain top after the spiked wheel on which she was to have been tortured broke miraculously.

St. George, whose reputation

Continued on Page 10, Column 3



St. Philomena



St. Valentine

Above: a New York Times article from 1969: “ROME, May 9 - Two of the best-known saints in the Roman Catholic Church, Valentine, patron of sweethearts, and Christopher, patron of travellers, were dropped from the official liturgical calendar today in a sweeping change that removed more than 200 from the list of saints whose feast days are celebrated by the whole church.”



St. Christopher, as depicted by the Italian renaissance painter Titian. ...but, it turns out, he wasn't really a Saint after all..?

Tony Blair and Bill Clinton were among those who attended his requiem. Hence there was no shortage of people who wanted him declared a Saint immediately (“Santo Subito!” - remember?). But a mere twenty years on, how often does one hear his name mentioned? Outside of Polish Novus Ordo Catholic parishes, is he not all-but forgotten already? And who has *ever* had a devotion to Paul VI or John XXIII...!? The very idea is absurd! Those men never had a *cultus* and never will! And yet we are asked to believe that they are Saints, by the very same modernists who tell us that St. Christopher, St. Catherine, St. Philomena and others not only aren't Saints, but weren't even real people...? Does that sound reasonable to you? The men who openly admit that they don't believe in real Saints are nonetheless going to tell us who is to be regarded as a Saint from now on! And whom do they propose for our veneration? Men such as John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II...! No thanks. You can keep your bogus, conciliar “Saints” - I'll stick with the real

ones, the ones which generations of our forefathers venerated for hundreds of years, thank you very much!

Regarding the details of the removal of Saints from the calendar and general “de-canonisation” which went on in the 1960s (some of which was already happening on the eve of Vatican II in the Tridentine calendar!) a great deal more could be said, but we shall not spend too long on it since it was not really meant to be the focus of this article, fascinating and horrifying though it is. Suffice it to say that the usual suspects are not very hard to find. An article from late 2020 by one Peter Kwasniewski which appeared on the website of the conservative / novus “New Liturgical Movement” provides some interesting and useful insight on this question and is perhaps worth quoting from here briefly. Among other things, the article identifies more than 300 Saints who were removed or demoted and provides tables showing which changes were made on which days of the year. And just see how long it takes before you spot the name which you knew all along was going to pop up!

“That the thinning out of the sanctoral cycle had long been on Bugnini's mind is evident from his 1949 article in *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, “Per una riforma liturgica generale” (“Towards a General Liturgical Reform”). Bugnini pressed the need for “a reduction of the Sanctoral . . . which requires not only a reduction of the present calendar, but also fixed and prescriptive norms to prevent new Saints' days from piling up again.” Yves Chiron summarizes:

‘A list of thirteen saints or groups of saints was already drawn up for elimination from the universal calendar, with no justification for any of them (Saint Martin for



St. Catherine, by Spanish painter of the counter-Reformation era, Murillo. ...also not a Saint after all!

example), whereas the calendar was supposed to abbinare (“pair together”) fourteen more Saints “because their life and work were alike or close to it,” for example Saint Thomas Becket and Saint Stanislaus or Saint Peter Canisius and Saint Robert Bellarmine.’ (*Annibale Bugnini: Reformer of the Liturgy*, p.34)”

(<https://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2020/10/the-sanctoral-killing-fields-on-removal.html>)



Miners in Poland honour their patron Saint with the St Barbara's day parade. ...has no one told them that she's also not a real Saint after all..?

By the way, next time you visit continental Europe keep an eye out for St. Martin: you see his name everywhere. France is covered with hundreds, if not thousands of churches, chapels and shrines to him and there are dozens of villages and towns named after him in Southern Germany and Austria. In that part of the world at least, it is hard to imagine a Saint who is more deeply embedded within Catholic culture! But then, this is the infamous Fr. Annibale Bugnini and his friends whom we are talking about, so it probably shouldn't surprise us that much...

The same article quotes the memoirs of the well-known “liturgical reformer” Fr. Louis

Bouyer, who was nonetheless horrified to see just how far some on his own side were taking things (also found in the excellent article by Dr Carol Byrne, [here](#)) :

“I prefer to say nothing, or little, about the new calendar, the handiwork of a trio of maniacs who suppressed, with no good reason, Septuagesima and the Octave of Pentecost and who scattered three quarters of the Saints higgledy-piggledy, all based on notions of their own devising! Because these three hotheads obstinately refused to change anything in their work and because the pope wanted to finish up quickly to avoid letting the chaos get out of hand, their project, however insane, was accepted!”

(Ibid.)



Paul VI addresses the U.N. in 1965:

“People turn to the United Nations as if it were their last hope for peace and harmony. We presume to bring here their tribute of honour and of hope along with our own.” ...the words of a real Saint..?

What is Canonisation?

Behind all this, underlying the question, is something which it is difficult to put one's finger on, an attitude which itself is wrong. There is more than a whiff of the "because I say so" type of argument which reeks of voluntarism and nominalism. Let us remind ourselves: it is the Saint that makes the canonisation, not the canonisation which makes the Saint. Let that sink in for just a moment. Is a Saint a Saint because Rome says he's a Saint? Or does Rome say he's a Saint because he is one? Which comes first, the reality, or the word, the pronouncement, the description of the reality? In previous centuries canonisation was simply a matter of popular acclamation; then it was done more formally, at a diocesan level by the local bishop; in the middle ages it became something reserved to the Holy See. Over time, the requirements understandably became stricter. The process which emerged in the modern era was something resembling a court case. The soul in question had to be proven a Saint beyond all doubt and was regarded almost as though guilty until proven innocent: not a Saint until proven a Saint. The prosecution, so to speak, was the famous *advocatus diaboli*. But that was not all. Several other criteria had to be met which were regarded as *sine qua non*, the first of which was a popular *cultus* among the faithful; another was some miracles. These things, if they exist, are facts. The canonisation itself was nothing more than a formal recognition of those already-existing facts.

Therefore, the real Saints are the ones who have a real following, who have worked real miracles, whom Divine Providence allows to become known and prayed-to all over the world and to become a central part of Catholic life and culture. The old, recently-removed Saints, in whom modern Rome appears no longer to believe, all pass the test with flying colours. Despite the machinations of the modernists, Catholics all over the world still give their children names such as Catherine, Philomena or Christopher; many people still pray to them, still wear their sacramentals and ask them for aid. Schools and parishes all over the world still bear their names, some of the finest artwork ever created depicts their lives and deaths and in some cases even whole nations, states or cities are under their patronage or have been named after them. And there is no shortage of modern-day miracles either: as mentioned above, the Curé of Ars alone procured many miracles through the intercession of St. Philomena.

More than eleven years ago, these pages ("On Recent Canonisations" - [Recusant 16](#), May 2014) cast doubt on the supposed canonisations of the late popes John XXIII and John Paul II. It was pointed out that the lives of these men were very far from being that of a Saint and that they were each a very bad example to follow. It was further pointed out that several ominous "coincidences" (if such they be) had accompanied the "canonisation" of John Paul II. The ugly bent-forwards crucifix which stood atop a hill as a memorial of his visit had suddenly collapsed, killing a man who was praying to him beneath it; that when his relics visited Lourdes, the sanctuary was soon underwater following the worst flooding in its history.

The same article suggested good reasons why one cannot simply say, "Canonisations are infallible!" and leave it at that - far from it. The object of infallibility is doctrine, that is, things to be believed by us, and necessary for our salvation. A canonisation on the other hand, is not a matter of doctrine necessary for our salvation: it is a saying that someone is a Saint, which



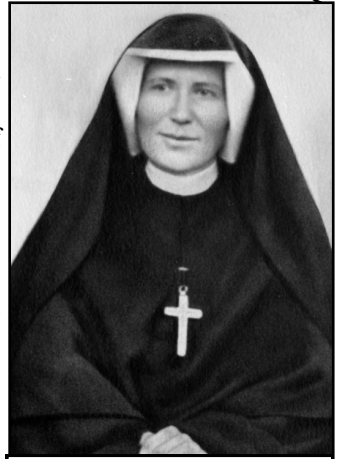
means not only that the person in question is in heaven, but that he or she is an example which you or I can follow and learn from as a means of achieving heaven ourselves. That is why not one single baptised infant has ever been canonised, despite there being presumably tens— or even hundreds-of-thousands of candidates (newly baptised babies die all the time, there is even one in our family). They are certainly in heaven, you can pray to them, but they are never canonised, no statues of them will ever be seen in churches, no feast days in the calendar. Why? Because there is no life to follow: they died too young to give an example for anyone to follow. That is also why it is such a scandal for even the conciliar church to claim that Paul VI or John Paul II are Saints. If that were true, then we can get to heaven is by kissing the koran, inviting pagans and devil-worshippers into a Catholic church to pray to their false gods, putting statues of Buddha on top of tabernacles; punishing good men such as Marcel Lefebvre while simultaneously promoting sexual predators like Marcial Maciel or Marie-Dominique Philippe; suppressing the true Mass which nourished countless true Saints, and giving everyone a Masonic, Protestant communion service with a Jewish offertory prayer... we could go on. The very thought is monstrous.

So on the question of a *cultus*, a genuine following and devotion among the faithful, the real, old-fashioned Saints win hands down, despite the disadvantage of their having been removed from calendars, their demotion and all the rest. The conciliar Vatican II “Saints” usually have little or no *cultus*, despite the fact that it always used to be regarded as a *sine qua non*, an essential prerequisite to becoming a Saint.

Likewise, on the question of leading a life of heroic virtue, a life which is such a good example that if followed by you and I it will lead us to heaven too, we see the same thing. Many of these the conciliar “Saints” (the conciliar Popes, Faustina, Escriva, et al.) fail spectacularly. Their lives were such that they would never, *could* never have been canonised before Vatican II. The real Saints, by contrast, led such exemplary lives that many today find it hard to believe and doubt is cast not only on their lives and deaths, but even on their very existence.

The soundness of their teaching is something which will no doubt be at the forefront of the minds of many readers, and so it should be. Unsound teaching, let alone actual heresy, is something which in saner times meant that an investigation into the candidate’s life could not go ahead, never mind the beatification or canonisation itself, as the John Vennari article makes clear elsewhere in these pages. Strictly speaking, the false teaching of these bogus “Saints” is itself enough to say with certainty that they are not Saints. But since many of our acquaintance will not accept that, and since many of us will at some point experience doubt or scruples, let us continue to spell it out in detail.

Miracles are the last thing to consider. A real canonisation in the old days used to require two miracles, after all the other criteria had been met. Two *genuine* miracles. The new, bogus “canonisations” require only one, and often it is a “miracle” of highly dubious quality. Again, refer to the John Vennari article elsewhere in these pages to see details of the “miracle” used for Mother Theresa: it was as dodgy as a nine-bob note, the doctors involved







Polish nun Faustina Kowalska, whose fake “revelations” were condemned by the Church, claimed that Christ told her:

“I am uniting Myself with you so intimately as with no other creature.”

After Vatican II, John Paul II promoted her condemned messages and made her a into a “Saint”. See [Recusant 29](#), p.33

and even the lady's husband said it wasn't a miracle! In previous years, these pages have contained a close-up look into other conciliar "miracles"- long-time readers might recall our examination of the Buenos Aires "eucharistic miracle" from the 1990s (in [Recusant 34](#), p.26) and that it most certainly did not stand up to close scrutiny! We have neither the time, nor the resources, nor even the patience to examine each and every so-called "miracle" approved by the conciliar authorities, but should it be necessary? How many definitely bogus "miracles" do we need to see until we decide to treat them all with extreme caution? Finally let us consider this. The men approving these "miracles" don't believe in actual real miracles, even when they are contained in Sacred Scripture! The feeding of the five-thousand? No, you see, what the gospel-writer wished to emphasise in telling this story was that the real miracle was when everyone learned to share. The crossing of the Red Sea? No, you see it was really called the "Reed Sea" because it was like a marsh... Those are things I have heard from conciliar priests with my own ears (as have many of you too, no doubt). We could go on. The point to bear in mind here is this. Just as we are being asked to accept new "Saints" from men who don't believe in real Saints, we also are being asked to believe in bogus "miracles" by men who cast doubt on real miracles.

In case all of that is all a bit much to remember, below is a handy table for ease of reference!

The Recusant patent "How-Bogus-Is-My-Saint?" Calculator™					
	Exemplary Life?	Sound Doctrine?	Popular Cultus?	Genuine Miracles?	Promoted by Modernists?
 Conciliar "Saints"	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
 Real Saints	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
 Padre Pio	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
 Cardinal Newman	?	?	?	?	✓

It is of course worth remembering that the other scandal regarding conciliar "canonisations" is the sheer number. John Paul II earned a reputation as a veritable "Saint factory," canonising hundreds in one go. His successors are no better. Not only does this practice severely damage the prestige and credibility of the Church in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics alike, it also defeats the very point of a canonisation: how can you possibly have a devotion to these new "Saints" when it would take forever just to read their names, never mind learn a bit about them? The whole point of Saints is that they are held out to us as an example to follow; you can't hold out a couple of hundred examples in one go and expect to be taken seriously.

But beyond that, it has yet another unfortunate side-effect, in that it means that many genuine Saints may well be mixed in with the conciliar “Saints.” The first canonisation done by Pope Francis, for instance, was of more than 800 people in one go. They were the inhabitants of Otranto who were killed by the Turks in 1480 for refusing to convert to Islam: martyrs. At a cursory glance, it may well be that some or all of them really are martyrs, and therefore Saints.

But can we be certain? And which ones? Does anyone have the time or patience to try to find out? To take one more example, in 2001 John Paul II canonised a group of 233 martyrs of the Spanish Civil War. Again, there were many Catholics who died for the Faith at the hands of the communists at that time, so it is not inconceivable that at least some of them, many of them even, are genuine Saints and martyrs. But again, doesn’t it just leave one frustrated and demoralised? How certain can anyone be that there wasn’t the odd semi-degenerate “right-winger” whom the reds rounded up with a load of Catholics into the same firing-squad and buried in the same pit? So the answer is it is probably a mixture, but very difficult to say. And then there are men such as Padre Pio. Well, they couldn’t very well *not* canonise him, could they? They know full well that his presence in amongst all those other conciliar “Saints” will lend them credibility. And what about the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales? Well, they were of course martyrs at the hands of the English Protestant regime, they were beatified in 1929 and most of the work for their canonisations was surely done before the Council, so despite the fact that the actual canonisation wasn’t done until 1970, surely one can take them as being genuine Saints who were always going to be canonised, even had Vatican II and the crisis in the Church never happened.

We could go on, but all this really means is that the conciliar “Saints” are a bit of a mixed bag, to put it mildly. Some unmistakably genuine Saints have probably been given a conciliar “canonisation” (what an insult to them - they’ll need to be given a real canonisation when the crisis is over!). Then there are others who may well have been Saints. Then there are a lot of highly dubious “Saints” and finally there are those who are definitely not Saints. So a conciliar canonisation doesn’t necessarily mean that the person is a Saint. But it doesn’t necessarily mean that he isn’t a Saint either. What a mess.

Where does Newman fit into all this?

All of which is by way of demonstrating that just because the conciliar church says that Newman is a Saint, that doesn’t really mean anything. It means is that he is somewhere on the spectrum of conciliar Saints, somewhere between Padre Pio at one end and Paul VI at the other. Newman may not be a Paul VI, but he may not necessarily be a Padre Pio either.

So what are we to make of him? It doesn’t help that he has long been someone whom all sides seem to be trying to claim. The liberals and modernists claim that he is one of them. The “conservatives” of various sorts say that the liberals are twisting things and that really, Newman is on their side. Readers of a certain age who made their way out of the Novus Ordo to Tradition may well be reminded of similar debates which used to surround John Paul II and Benedict XVI while they were alive and on the papal throne. In the 1980s, 90s and early-2000s, John Paul II’s encyclicals would have the more orthodox soundbites quoted by



The bones of the 813 martyrs of Otranto, Italy. But just how certain can we be that every single one of them is in fact a Saint..?

people who were still trying to remain faithful inside the Novus Ordo (a shrinking constituency which has now all-but disappeared in this country); whereas out-and-out modernists and politically correct semi-Marxists could quote other passages from the very same encyclical. Many conservative Novus Ordo people became Traditionalists after realising that the liberals and modernists actually had a point: John Paul II really was a modernist and a liberal, and not the conservative they had always thought him to be. Well, is it possible that something similar is going on with John Henry Newman?

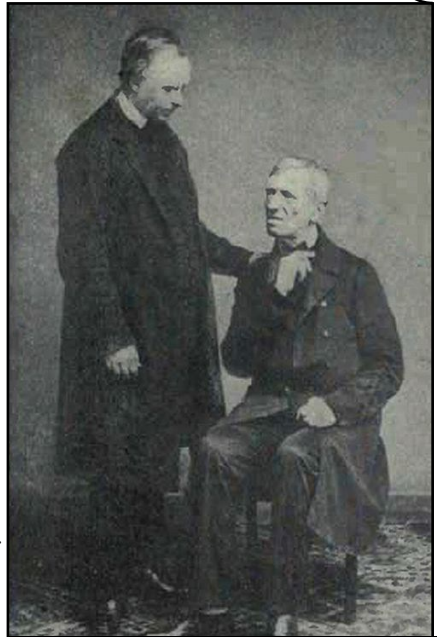
With that in mind, let us briefly look at some of the criteria mentioned above.

1. An Exemplary Life of Heroic Virtue

Compared to many of the worst conciliar “Saints” Newman comes out looking pretty good here. He certainly didn’t have the love of luxury, or outbursts of bad temper of a Josemaria Escriva, for instance. But then, he was a Victorian, who lived (1801-1890) a good three generations before the latter, so that is as one might expect: people back then knew far better how to behave. Nor does one find in his writing the shameless self-praise of a “Saint” Faustina, whose fake apparition made her sound more exulted than even the Blessed Virgin Mary. That is as it should be, too; but then, we are setting the bar rather low, aren’t we?

One thing which does need mentioning here is the accusations of some kind of latent homosexuality. A not very flattering picture of him was painted by Geoffrey Faber, the nephew of Newman’s colleague Fr. Frederick Faber. Since then, all sorts of “gay rights” people (Peter Tatchell, for instance) have tried to claim Newman as one of their own. Critics point to his friendship with Fr. Ambrose St. John, one of his disciples who together with him left the Anglican religion, entered the Catholic Church and became an Oratorian priest. They often point to the fact that Newman asked to be buried in his friend’s grave. His defenders say that it was a passionate friendship and nothing more. Well, it is true that there can be such a thing as a passionate friendship and it is also true that we shouldn’t always go to the lowest common denominator and assume something sexual which might have been nothing of the sort. The Victorian era, an age not that long past and yet unimaginably more innocent than our own, understood this far better than we do today: only a degenerate age such as our own will automatically equate love with lust. And it is true that the endorsement of “gay rights” activists such as Tatchell means very little. And Geoffrey Faber, by the way, was a non-Catholic who seems to have been a disciple of Sigmund Freud; furthermore, one of the things he seems to have a problem with, in common with many Anglicans of Newman’s day (Charles Kingsley, for instance), is the very idea itself of clerical celibacy. So we can probably take what he says with a pinch of salt.

All of which is to say that Newman is almost certainly not guilty of this particular charge, but in passing we should perhaps add that it would have been nice to know for certain, and that had there been a proper, thorough investigation of his life and morals, with a Devil’s Advocate



An early photograph of Fr. St. John (pronounced “Sinjun”) and Fr. Newman

and all the rest, greater certainty might have been possible. As things stand, however, since the modern Vatican changed the entire process, the matter won't have been looked-into as it once would have been, effectively robbing the man himself of a proper defence.

Other than that, the main points of Newman's life seem to be what one would expect. He sacrificed his position in the establishment of his day, and undoubtedly lost friends and family connections when he converted. This is what one would expect and is what happened to all English converts in those days, but it is still something which counts in his favour. There are others who point to the fact that he had already got himself into trouble within the (so-called) Church of England due to his position within the Oxford Movement and Tract 90 in particular, and that therefore he didn't give up as much as, say, Henry (later Cardinal) Manning who had been at the height of his popularity when he left the Anglican religion and became a Catholic. There is doubtless some truth in that, too.

Finally, it is perhaps worth mentioning that for the life of a Saint, although one expects to find controversy, one does not expect to find quite so much and with all the wrong people. It has been said of Newman that during the latter (Catholic) part of his life, his friends and admirers were all liberals and his enemies anti-liberals. There is some truth to that. And having read some of his correspondence with Fr. Faber (more about whom later), the tone and content of many of his letters is not edifying and betrays a petulance bordering on self-pity which somehow one cannot imagine witnessing from the pen of a genuine Saint. That is, however, only my opinion - the reader may take it or leave it as he wishes.

2. A Popular *Cultus*

Even Newman's promoters have admitted that it is alarming how little devotion to him there is or has ever been in his own country. I have heard it said that he has more of a following in the USA, which is interesting: perhaps a case of a prophet never being accepted in his own home? But it still ought to be a concern to anyone interested, and ought to have been of great interest and great concern to anyone involved in his cause for canonisation. It is not merely that he didn't have much of a following in England: he had none at all! Nobody was praying to him, nobody had a devotion to him. In this aspect at least, he appears to be more in the Paul VI camp and all the other definitely bogus conciliar "Saints". And since, as mentioned above, this one really is (or used to be and ought still to be) the first pre-requisite, that ought to concern us all the more. (Perhaps we ought to have made this number 1, instead of 2..?)

What popularity or respect Newman does have today, as in his own day, seems to some degree to arise from the prestige which he brought with him into the Church. Imagine: at a time when Catholics were still a vanishingly small minority in England (maybe two percent, and most of those were Irish immigrant labourers, unskilled and largely un-educated, who had come over for work), and before the steady flow of converts which would follow his own conversion, he was one of the first "big catches" for a Catholic Church which was only just being re-established in England. One can understand and sympathise with an English Catholic in those days who might be pleased and proud of such a well-known, high-profile academic leaving it all behind to enter the Catholic Church. But that doesn't really help us. In the late-19th and early 20th Centuries, there was no suggestion that Newman had been a Saint and no devotion to him anywhere, from what we can see. What very little exists in recent years appears to have been drummed up by conciliar liberals in the wake of Vatican II.

In summary then: in the old days, before the Vatican II revolution, the lack of a *cultus* would have meant that Newman would not even have been considered for beatification or canonisation in the first place. And in the days before Vatican II, he had no *cultus* at all.

Therefore, he ought never to have been considered to begin with and on these grounds alone there is good cause to doubt whether he is a real Saint, even if he is a conciliar “Saint.”

3. Genuine Miracles

Oh dear. Have you ever noticed how all the bogus conciliar “Saints” always seem to work medical “miracles”? Both miracles allegedly worked by Paul VI, for instance, involved an unborn child: the doctors predicted it would have a defect but in the end it was born healthy. Anyone with any experience of these things will tell you that doctors continually make dire predictions about unborn babies which turn out not to be true, especially when they are using it to push the mother into getting an abortion (as was the case here). I have even known it within my own immediate family circle, as I am sure many of you will have too. That the baby is then born perfectly fine and healthy does not in any way mean that a miracle has taken place: it means you can’t trust modern doctors! In a similar vein there is the medical “miracle” allegedly worked by Mother Theresa, details of which are given in the John Vennari article found elsewhere in these pages.

Regrettably, Newman’s “miracles” do appear to be of a similar kind: more of these medical miracles which seem to take place whenever a conciliar “Saint” is made. His beatification miracle was curing a Novus Ordo married deacon of a spinal condition. But details of this supposed “miracle” are surprisingly hard to find in both Catholic and secular press and even the official Oratorian website (<https://www.newmancanonisation.com/newmans-miracle>) which gives a detailed account of his canonisation “miracle” is silent regarding the prior “miracle” used to beatify him. Why might that be? Well, our suspicions, it seems, are well-founded and we can be grateful to SSPX priest Fr. Paul Kimball for including them in the introduction to his 2019 book on Newman:

“On July 3, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI recognised the healing of Deacon Jack Sullivan in 2001 as a miracle for Newman’s beatification, which occurred on September 19, 2010. Now, Mr. Sullivan underwent the operation of ‘...a laminectomy to remove part of the spinal bones that was causing the problem... Although successfully performed in August 2001, this operation left Jack Sullivan in immense pain and he was warned a full recovery might take months. With the new term approaching, Mr. Sullivan was becoming increasingly anxious about returning to class, and just a few days after his operation he tried to get out of bed. Having taken an excruciating few minutes, with a nurse’s help, to get his feet on the floor, he said he leant on his forearms and recited his prayer to Newman. Michael Powell, a consultant neurosurgeon at London’s University College Hospital, said a typical laminectomy took ‘about 40 minutes, and most patients ... walk out happy at two days.’ ” (Michael Hirst, Papal Visit: Cardinal Newman’s ‘miracle cure,’ BBC News, September 13, 2010)

Furthermore, the directive *de Canonizatione* of Prospero Cardinal Lambertini, who was later crowned Benedict XIV, spelt out the rules for working out if a healing was really a miracle from heaven. It is astounding that this miracle has been approved, for it directly violates the third rule of Benedict XIV for the verification of miracles during the process of canonization of Saints, namely, ‘The patient should not be getting medical treatment around the time of the cure.’ (*Doctrina de servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione*, lib. 4, p.1, c.7, n.1-2.)”

(*Cardinal Newman: Trojan Horse in the Church*, Fr. Paul Kimball)

This alone was used by the enemies of the Church to pour scorn and ridicule. John Cornwell, author of “Hitler’s Pope,” wrote an [article for *The Times*](#) spelling out in great detail how this



Jack Sullivan giving out communion in the hand at the New Mass in 2010 following his “miraculous” recovery.

miracle did not abide by the Vatican’s own rules and making it look totally ridiculous. Though far too long to quote here, it is well worth a read and we encourage the reader to take a look. The author is a well-known anti-Catholic but the worst thing is, he isn’t being dishonest and has clearly done his homework. As to Michael Powell, the London consultant neurosurgeon mentioned above, in 2010 he appeared in a brief segment during a [BBC documentary](#). About 7 minutes in, he can be seen telling Ann Widdecombe:

“The events that occurred in Jack Sullivan’s case are all explicable, perhaps not so frequently that it would be commonplace, but certainly all of them perfectly reasonable. ... To us British neurosurgeons, these are events that don’t at all sound [so] surprising or un-commonplace that it should be considered miraculous.”

Newman’s canonisation miracle appears to be not much better and, like that of Paul VI, it involves a pregnant lady and her unborn child. In this case the mother suffered bleeding during the pregnancy. She stopped bleeding after she prayed to him, and although the doctors said there was a chance that the baby would be born premature, in the end it was born at the right time and was healthy. As Fr. Kimball points out, this too violates the old rules for canonisation miracles, namely the sixth rule, that: “The cure must not come at a time when some natural cause could make the patient think he is cured or which stimulates a cure.” There is also the fact that at least one of the doctors who lent his name to this “miracle” is a Novus Ordo Catholic who gave a gushing interview to the Novus Ordo press in which he described his deposition in favour of the miracle as a “spiritual experience”:

“The true spiritual experience was in the stages of the depositions. I literally cried when we were deposing her. It struck to my very heart...”

(<https://www.archbalt.org/illinois-doctor-newman-miracle-depositions-were-spiritual-experiences/>)

Yuck. Now, it might be objected that all this still doesn’t mean that it definitely *wasn’t* a miracle, that despite all those less-than-encouraging circumstances, it might still have been a miracle anyway. But that would be missing the point: what is required is not a “might-have-been-a” miracle but an absolutely *bullet-proof* miracle, one which cannot be explained any other way, since the credibility of the entire process and with it the credibility of the Church (or in this case, the conciliar church) is at stake. And besides which, given all that we have already seen from the conciliar church, do we not have, at the very least, the right, or even the duty, to be a little sceptical? Let us just say that it is a very great shame that these miracle couldn’t have been a little more... unimpeachable. Ah well.

4. Sound doctrine

Newman’s canonisation is almost certainly due to the fact that the modernists recognise in him a man whose thinking paved the way for Vatican II. As mentioned above, “conservative” Novus Ordo Catholics and even some Traditionalists say that he is being misrepresented and “claimed,” in much the same way as the “gay rights” lobby claim him for themselves. On the other hand, that is not the whole story. Despite what his supporters say, there undoubtedly is something not quite right with his teaching, but this is so important that it is worth examining at some length.

Part 2: What is the Real Problem with Newman?

If Newman is not a Saint, then he cannot, by definition, be considered a Doctor of the Church and we could end this article here. However, it is as one becomes gradually better acquainted with the man and his thinking that the picture which emerges becomes increasingly disturbing.

Newman's Background

Lest we be accused of ignoring it, let us begin, then, with the question of Newman's family background and antecedents. The introduction to Fr. Kimball's fascinating book *Cardinal Newman: Trojan Horse in the Church* quotes an extract from Rev. Dr. William Francis Barry's 1903 biography of Newman:

"Born in the City of London, not far from the Bank, on February 21st 1801, John Henry was the son of John Newman and Jemima Fourdinier his wife, the eldest of six children, three boys and three girls. "His Father," says Thomas Mozley, "was of a family of small landed proprietors in Cambridgeshire, and had an hereditary taste for music, of which he had a practical and scientific knowledge, together with much general culture." He was chief clerk and afterwards partner in a banking firm, was also a Freemason, with a high standing in the craft, an admirer of Franklin and an enthusiastic reader of Shakespeare. These particulars, except the last, will prepare us for the fact that in an earlier generation the family had spelt its name "Newmann"; that it was understood to be of Dutch origin; and that its real descent was Hebrew. The talent for music, calculation and business, the untiring energy, legal acumen, and dislike of speculative metaphysics, which were conspicuous in John Henry, bear out this interesting genealogy. A large part of his character and writings will become intelligible if we keep it in mind. That his features had a strong Jewish cast, is evident from his portraits, and was especially to be noted in old age. It may be conjectured that the migration of these Dutch Jews to England fell within a period not very distant from the death of Spinoza in 1675."

Barry would later change his mind and retract what he had written here (for whatever that is worth: some might say that his words stand or fall on their own merit). The Thomas Mozley to whom he refers was a friend and contemporary of Newman who became his brother-in-law after marrying one of Newman's younger sisters. He too was part of the Oxford Movement and almost became a Catholic in 1843, until Newman talked him out of it. He was someone who ought to know what he was talking about, in other words. His work "Reminiscences of the Oxford Movement" is available here: <https://archive.org/details/reminiscenceschi01mozl/page/12/mode/2up>. Mozley also tells us that Newman's mother was a Calvinist of French Huguenot extraction and as for the father's having been a high-ranking Freemason, he is careful to add that, "...no one of his three sons was initiated" into it.

Well, what if Newman's family were originally Jews? Does that in itself mean that we cannot trust the man? No, of course not: on its own, that fact doesn't mean a great deal, and if it is tempting to look at parallels between Newman's thought and Jewish thought, it is also true that there are several very great Saints whose families were of Jewish origin, St Therese of Avila for instance. And if there were to be found a link between his family and upbringing and the thinking evident in his later writings, then the question still hinges on the soundness of that thinking. If there is, as Barry suggested, a dislike of metaphysics then that is the real issue.

Hence, for what follows, we will simply state what others appear already to have spotted in Newman's thinking, and point the reader who wishes to know more in the direction of greater,

more diligent minds than the author of these few pages. What follows is a non-exhaustive sample: we will try to focus on the relevant quotations and keep our own commentary to a minimum.

The Influence of Kant and Hegel

“...Newman’s writings have a marked influence from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who is commonly known to have provided the philosophic groundwork of Modernism, even though Newman himself categorically twice declares, ‘I never read a word of Kant’ in letters to W.S. Lilly in 1884-5, but he also said, ‘I never read a word of Coleridge.’ This latter remark is, as Wilfrid Ward says, ‘not the only instance in which his memory was in later years at fault.’ (Wilfrid Ward, *Life of Cardinal Newman*, 1912, vol.1, p.8)”

(*Cardinal Newman: Trojan Horse in the Church*, Ch.6)

“He possessed it is true, a copy of Mickeljohn’s translation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1855), and its leaves are cut from the beginning to the doctrine of categories.”

(Johannes Artz, *Newman in contact with Kant’s Thought* in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol.31 (1980), n.2, p.517)

“The philosophical basis of the Oxford Movement was indirectly derived from Kant. [...] Coleridge was the first among English thinkers to study and understand Kant, to assimilate his teaching, and to reproduce it in a new form... I am concerned with his effect upon...the Tractarian Movement. Cardinal Newman, in a paper published in the *British Critic* in 1839, reckons him one of his precursors, as ‘providing a philosophical basis for it, as instilling a higher philosophy into inquiring minds than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept.’”

(W.S. Lilly, *Ancient Religion and Modern Thought* (London, 1884) p.ii, r 59-61)

“It was Newman’s contention that the intense theological study which had preceded *Ineffabilis Deus* [the Apostolic Constitution of Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception] ‘had brought Catholic Schools into union about it, while it secured the accuracy of each.’ He believed that each of the two schools of thought which had previously existed on the subject of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception ‘had its own extreme points eliminated, and they became one, because the truth to which they converged was one.’

Newman seemed to assert that the only means of doctrinal progress was along the Hegelian lines of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. He apparently imagined that when two groups are opposed on some issue, the ultimate resolution can come only through a sort of compromise, in which the ‘extreme’ points of both opposing theories are abandoned while all the contestants unite in their adherence to a middle position. He seems not to have considered the possibility of a situation in which two parties might debate, and one turn out to have defended a truth which the other attacked.”

(Mgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton: *John Henry Newman and the Vatican Definition of Papal Infallibility* in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol.113, n.4 (Oct.1945), p.313)

Proto- Ecumenism and Salvation Outside the Church:

“As to the prospect of those countless multitudes of a country like this, who apparently have no supernatural vision of the next world at all, and die without fear because they die without thought, with these, alas! I am not here concerned. But the remarks I have

been making suggest much of comfort, when we look out into what is called the religious world in all its varieties, whether it be the High Church section, or the Evangelical, whether it be in the Establishment, or in Methodism, or in Dissent, so far as there seems to be real earnestness and invincible prejudice. One cannot but hope that that written Word of God, for which they desire to be jealous, though exhibited to them in a mutilated form and in a translation unsanctioned by Holy Church, is of incalculable blessing to their souls, and may be through God's grace, the divine instrument of bringing many to contrition and to a happy death who have received no sacrament since they were baptised in their infancy. One cannot hope but that the Anglican Prayer Book, with its Psalter and Catholic prayers, even though these, in the translation, have passed through heretical intellects, may retain so much of its old virtue as to cooperate with divine grace in the instruction and salvation of a large remnant. In these and many other ways, even in England, and much more in Greece, the difficulty is softened which is presented to the imagination by the view of such large populations, who, though called Christian, are not Catholic or orthodox in creed."

(Newman: *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching: In Twelve Lectures addressed in 1850 to the Party of the Religious Movement of 1833, 1901, vol.2, pp.356-357*)

"All this is quite consistent with believing, as I firmly do, that individuals in the English [i.e. Anglican] Church are invisibly knit into that True Body of which they are not outwardly members; and consistent, too, with thinking it highly injudicious, indiscreet, wanton, to interfere with them in particular cases - only it is a matter of judgment in the particular case."

(Newman: Letter to Jemima Mozley, October 9th 1845 [*i.e. the very day of his reception into the Catholic Church!* - Ed.])

"[Newman writes that his fellow Catholics in England are complaining that he is doing nothing and are saying:] 'Why, he has made no converts, as Manning and Faber have.' Here is the real secret of my 'doing nothing.' The only thing of course which it is worth producing, is fruit - but with the Cardinal, immediate show is fruit, and conversions the sole fruit. At Propaganda [i.e. in Rome], conversions, and nothing else, are the proof of doing anything. Everywhere with Catholics, to make converts, is doing something; and not to make them is 'doing nothing.' [...] But I am altogether different - my objects, my theory of acting, my powers, go in a different direction, and one not understood or contemplated at Rome or elsewhere. [...] I am afraid to make hasty converts of educated men, lest they should not have counted the cost, and should have difficulties after they have entered the Church, I do but imply the same thing, that the Church must be prepared for converts, as well as converts prepared for the Church. How can this be understood at Rome? What do they know there of the state of English Catholics? Of the minds of English Protestants? What do they know of the antagonism of Protestantism and Catholicism in England? The Cardinal might know something, were he not so one-sided, so slow to throw himself into other minds, so sanguine, so controversial and unphilosophical in his attitude of mind, so desirous to make himself agreeable to the authorities at Rome."

(An extract from Newman's journal, January 1863, which can be found here: www.newmanreader.org/biography/ward/volume1/chapter19.html)

"Manning" of course refers to Cardinal Manning, the Cardinal Archbishop primate of England and Wales from 1865 to his death in 1892 and therefore one of Newman's superiors. "Faber" is Fr. Frederick Faber, contemporary and former-colleague of Newman, like him an Oratorian

and the founder of the London Oratory (Newman's Oratory was in Birmingham). This is not the only time that we will see Newman and Faber at odds, and the differences between the two always seem to be favourable to Fr. Faber. But more on that later. In the meantime, lest there be any doubt at all, what Newman is expressing is contrary to sound Catholic teaching:

“Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ.”

(Pius IX, *Syllabus Errorum*, 1863 - condemned proposition 17)

“Some say they are not bound by the doctrine, explained in Our Encyclical Letter of a few years ago [*Mystici Corporis Christi*], and based on the Sources of Revelation, which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing. Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation.”

(Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, 27)

“The teaching that the dogma of the necessity of the Church for salvation admits of exceptions is, in the last analysis, a denial of the dogma as it has been stated in the authoritative declarations of the ecclesiastical magisterium and even as it is expressed in the axiom or formula *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*. It is important to note that that teaching is found in Cardinal Newman's last published study on this subject. [...] Obviously, there could be no more effective way of reducing the teaching on the necessity of the Church for the attainment of eternal salvation to an empty formula than the explanation advanced by Newman in what are probably the least felicitous pages of all his published works. That explanation is certainly one of those reproved in the encyclical letter *Humani Generis*.”

(Mgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, *The Catholic Church and Salvation*, 1958, quoted by Fr. Kimball in *Cardinal Newman: Trojan Horse in the Church*, Ch.7).

The picture which emerges is that when the Vatican II modernists of today claim Newman as a precursor and one of their own, this is not mere wishful thinking on their part, but based, at least in part, on a genuine understanding and appreciation his thinking:

“After his conversion he could and did publish dismissive statements about Anglicanism that were wounding to his former Anglican friends. But at a more fundamental level, Newman was a bridge figure between Catholicism and Anglicanism. His *Apologia pro Vita Sua* insisted on the reality and permanent value of his teenage Evangelical conversion, and the book is pervaded by affection and gratitude for the Anglican mentors from whom he learned and deepened his Christian faith. More fundamentally, he never abandoned the historical, scriptural and patristic studies that shaped his Anglican writings. [...] But perhaps Newman's greatest contribution to Ecumenism is the extraordinary fact that after his conversion, instead of repudiating his Anglican writings, he republished most of them, with only minor changes, a body of work shaped by Anglican theological method, which has proved a new and fertilising force for the ongoing renewal of Catholic theology.”

(Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Scripture, the Fathers and Ecumenism*, cbcw.org.uk/newman-scripture-the-fathers-and-ecumenism)

The idea that even after being received into the Church, Newman somehow remained an Anglican in his heart and in his thinking is something of a recurring theme and does seem to explain a great deal, including why so many of his fans today are converts to the conciliar Church from Anglicanism (and who, all too often, are found to be still Anglican in all but name). It would explain the fact that he seems to have been rather reluctant to attack the

“Church of England” and even a little reluctant to convert too many of them, or even risk offending them. Concerning the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales, which took place in 1850 and offended many Anglicans at the time, his biographer tells us:

“He was not in complete sympathy with the Cardinal’s [i.e. the new Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Wiseman] constructive programme. He had already deprecated in his letters to Faber the policy of unnecessary advertisement akin to boasting, and the proclaiming of supposed triumphs out of all proportion to facts and realities. This feeling henceforth steadily deepened in his mind. He seems from his letters to have regarded the institution of the new hierarchy as part of the movement associated with the name of Augustus Welby Pugin. [...] He did not wish to weaken the hold of the Church of England on the masses. The Established Church was in his eyes a great power in English society for good - for religion and against the growth of infidelity. The ‘conversion of England’ was, moreover, not a practical prospect. To weaken the Establishment was to damage a bulwark of religion, while Catholics had as yet no adequate force to supply in its place. It was true enough that the Bishops and clergymen up and down the country had used most violent and unjustifiable language against Catholicism. But Newman’s more normal policy was to be above cheap retort, to consider solely the practical interests of religion. From his letters at this time we may gather that he would have been glad rather than sorry if the new hierarchy had been abandoned [...]”

(Wilfrid Ward, *Life of Cardinal Newman*, vol.1, p.257 ff)

And of course, latent Anglican sympathy or manner of thinking also would explain his surprising attitude towards devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Readers outside of England may not fully appreciate that, unlike Baptists, Calvinists and other “low church” Protestants, the Protestants of the so-called ‘Church of England’ had retained *some* devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary of a kind (as they still do in some places today), although only a pale imitation of the true devotion to her found in the Catholic Church. Hence we find that Anglicans then, as now, were very uncomfortable with Catholic Marian devotion as found, for instance in the writings of St. Louis de Montfort or St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

“Low Views About the Mother of God”

“Whether he knows it or not he has become the centre of those who hold low views about the Holy See, are anti-Roman, cold and silent, to say no more, about the Temporal Power, national, English, critical of Catholic devotions, and are always on the lower side. [...] It is the old Anglican, patristic, literary, Oxford tone transplanted into the Church. It takes the line of deprecating foreign devotions, Ultramontanism, anti-national sympathies. In one word it is worldly Catholicism, and it will have the worldly on its side and will deceive many. [...] The thing which will save us from low views about the Mother of God and the Vicar of Our Lord is the million Irish in England, and the sympathy of the Catholics in Ireland. I am thankful to know that they have no sympathy for the watered, literary, worldly Catholicism of certain Englishmen.”

(Cardinal Manning, letter to Mgr. Talbot, 25th Feb. 1866)

Newman’s perceived (in the eyes of his own superiors) Anglican Mariology is another stark contrast with his fellow Oratorian, Fr. Frederick Faber. Faber was the first to translate St. Louis de Montfort’s *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* into English, and was a great proponent of popular Marian devotions for the faithful, devotions which doubtless were of the sort regarded as “foreign” by Newman and his friends, at least in Cardinal Manning’s view. Processions, devotional candles, the May crowning and other things which were commonplace in other countries had fallen out of use in England and were being reintroduced by men like

Faber. In his introduction to *True Devotion*, Faber echoed Manning's complaint about a certain type of English Catholic who is always trying to downplay the Blessed Virgin Mary. Though he does not name names, it is difficult not to see Newman in his complaint:

"Here in England, Mary is not half enough preached. Devotion to her is low and thin and poor. It is frightened out of its wits by the sneers of heresy. It is always invoking human respect and carnal prudence wishing to make Mary so little of a Mary that Protestants may feel at ease about her. Its ignorance of theology makes it unsubstantial and unworthy. It is not the prominent characteristic of our religion which it ought to be."

(F.W. Faber, Introduction to *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*)

Newman's own writings show that Manning's opinion of him wasn't so wide of the mark. Extravagant devotions are all very well for foreigners, but here in England it just won't do:

"I suppose we owe it to the national good sense that English Catholics have been protected from the extravagances which are elsewhere to be found. [...] In the case of our own common people I think such a forced style of devotion would be simply unintelligible; as to the educated, I doubt whether it can have more than an occasional or temporary influence. If the Catholic faith spreads in England, these peculiarities will not spread with it."

(Newman: *Letter to John Keeble*, 8th October 1865)

Once again, it should come as no great surprise that today's episcopal modernists claim Newman as their fore-runner. On this question of Marian devotion, for instance, the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, like Cardinal Manning, identify Newman as a down-player of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Unlike Manning, however, they wholeheartedly approve:

"His 1866 Open Letter to Pusey formulated a rich Marian theology based entirely on Scripture and patristic writings, rather than the pious legends and extravagant emotion that partly characterised nineteenth-century Catholic Mariology. That reliance on Scripture and the Fathers would prove fruitful for the twentieth-century movement, "nouvelle theologie," which helped revitalise Catholic theology, and influenced the theological idiom of the Second Vatican Council – for instance, the chapter in *Lumen Gentium* on the role of Mary in salvation history owes a great deal to Newman's example."

(<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/newman-scripture-the-fathers-and-ecumenism/>)

The reader will no doubt recall that John XXIII appointed a preparatory commission which included, among others, Archbishop Lefebvre; that the preparatory commission spent two years prior to Vatican II preparing draft documents for discussion at the Council; that once the Council began, John XXIII allowed the modernists to hijack the proceedings and to throw out all the far too Traditional schemata and replace them with documents of their own which were far more modernist; that one of those new documents was *Lumen Gentium*; and one of the drafts thrown in the bin at the start of the Council was, according to Archbishop Lefebvre who helped draft it, a beautiful document on the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix. Perhaps that is one of the "pious legends" they have in mind here?

What might have been the cause of Newman's retention of so much Anglican baggage after his conversion is another question altogether and is anyone's guess. Ultimately, of course, it is not really what matters, but perhaps some light is shed in a letter written to Cardinal Manning by Mgr. Talbot, the papal chamberlain of Pius IX, in which he suggests that Newman suffered from a combination of being idolised and living in a bubble :

“Newman’s work none here can understand. Poor man, by living almost ever since he has been a Catholic surrounded by a set of inferior men who idolize him, I do not think he has ever acquired the Catholic instincts.”

(Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning*, vol.2 p.323)

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was not the only point of dispute which Newman had with Faber, or with Manning for that matter. But it is noticeable that in all these disputes and controversies, it is Newman who always seems to be on the wrong side, whereas:

“Faber’s name was to be coupled with Manning and Ward, those Catholics who were opposed during the next decades to liberal Catholicism - and by implication to Newman.”

(Ronald Chapman: *Father Faber*, p.342)

Latent Modernism?

An, at best, horrifyingly ambivalent attitude towards the soundness of Sacred Scripture is by no means unique to Newman, especially when one thinks of Catholic writers of the mid- to late-19th century, a generation or so before St. Pius X. Given the war which has been waged for some time in these very pages against Fr. Paul Robinson’s ideas, however, this deserves at least a passing mention:

“Far removed from fundamentalism, Newman was dubious about the historical accuracy of many biblical stories; but he lamented the reckless attacks of liberals on the reliability of the Bible because they deprived conservative Protestants of a needed support. ‘To unsettle the minds of a generation, when you give them no landmarks and no causeway across the morass is to undertake a great responsibility.’ (Newman to Malcolm Maccoll, March, 24 1861)”

(Avery Cardinal Dulles S.J., *Church and Society* p.61)

“His friends included some of a type known to history as ‘Liberal Catholics.’ Of Montalembert and Lacordaire he wrote in 1864: ‘In their general line of thought and conduct I enthusiastically concur and consider them to be before their age.’ He speaks of ‘the unselfish aims, the thwarted projects, the unrequited toils, the grand and tender resignation of Lacordaire.’ That moving description might be applied to Newman himself. He was intent on the problems of the time and not alarmed at Darwin’s *Origin of Species*.”

(Catholic Encyclopaedia: [John Henry Newman](#))

Lacordaire was a French priest and a self-proclaimed “Liberal Catholic”. Quite apart from Pius IX’s *Syllabus*, he is clearly the sort whom Gregory XVI’s *Mirari Vos* was aimed just prior to the period; and in the years just after it the sort whom Fr. Sarda’s excellent little book *Liberalism is a Sin* had in mind. Lacordaire is also said to have announced that he would die, “a repentant Catholic but an unrepentant liberal.”

On the issue of modernism, it is worth reading the introduction to Fr. Kimball’s book, together with Chapters 4 and 15. Although never condemned by St Pius X (he had been dead twenty-odd years in any case), it seems that Newman’s friends and followers were worried that his writings would end up falling under the condemnation of *Pascendi*, which is itself telling. What seems fairly clear is that Newman himself was aware during the 1850s, 60s and 70s that he was under suspicion by his superiors in England and in Rome. Hence when one encounters a certain ambiguity in his writings, might that not be, at least in part, because he was trying to avoid getting into trouble? Such ambiguity - orthodox one moment, novel the next, hard to pin down - is a classic symptom of the modernists a generation or so after Newman:

“Hence in their books you find some things which might well be expressed by a Catholic, but in the next page you find other things which might have been dictated by a rationalist.”

(St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, 18)

This is why merely quoting from Newman is not enough: it is when one begins to see him in context, through the eyes of his contemporaries, that the picture begins to come into focus. Here, for instance, is one of the leading modernists condemned by St. Pius X, Fr. George Tyrell, who although not a disciple of Newman in the strict sense, nonetheless did claim Newman’s thought as having laid the foundations for his own modernism:

“The solidarity of Newmanism with Modernism cannot be denied. Newman might have shuddered at his progeny, but it is nonetheless his. He is the founder of a method which has led to results which he could not have foreseen or desired. The growth of his system has made its divergence from scholasticism clearer every day. If scholasticism is essential to Catholicism, Newman must go overboard and the defiance hurled in the face of history at the [First] Vatican Council and reiterated with emphasis by Pius X is superabundantly justified.”

(Fr. George Tyrell, in *the Hibbert Journal*, vol.6 p.243)

Another modernist condemned by St. Pius X, Fr. Alfred Loisy, wrote to his friend Freidrich von Hugel in 1896, saying that he was reading Newman “with enthusiasm” and that:

“Newman must have been the most open-minded theologian that had existed in the Church since Origen.”

(*Mémoires pour servir a l’histoire religieuse de notre temps*, Vol.1, 426)

Seven years later, in *Auteur d’un Petit Livre* (1903), Loisy explicitly named Newman as having been his guide in formulating his novel ideas.

How was Newman Viewed by Pius IX?

We have already seen that Fr. Newman’s anti-liberal contemporaries during the reign of Pius IX were not fans. What about the Pope himself? Immediately following his conversion, it would seem that he was favourable:

“In February 1846, Newman left Oxford for St. Mary’s College, Oscott, where Nicholas Wiseman, then vicar-apostolic of the Midland district, resided; and in October he went to Rome, where he was ordained priest by Cardinal Giacomo Filippo Fransoni and awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Pope Pius IX.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Henry_Newman)

Pius IX is the Pope who, it is said, started out a liberal and became an anti-liberal during the course of his own papacy, especially after witnessing the Revolutions of 1848. He became Pope eight months after Newman was received into the Church, and it was only three or four months after that that he awarded a doctorate to the newly converted Newman. From the same article:

“In 1878, Newman’s old college elected him an honorary fellow, and he revisited Oxford after an interval of thirty-two years, on the same day Pope Pius IX died. Pius had mistrusted Newman but his successor, Pope Leo XIII, was encouraged by the Duke of Norfolk and other English Catholic laymen to make Newman a cardinal, despite the fact that he was neither a bishop nor resident in Rome. Cardinal Manning seems not to have been interested in having Newman become a cardinal and remained silent when the Pope asked him about it.”

(Ibid.)

Thus it would appear Pius IX favoured Newman when he first became Pope but soon changed his mind and then spent the remaining thirty-odd years of his papacy regarding Newman with suspicion. Newman himself as good as admits that fact, writing to Mr. R. W. Church in March 1879 that his being made a Cardinal would put an end to:

“...all the stories which have gone about of my being a half Catholic, a Liberal Catholic, [and] not to be trusted . . . The cloud is lifted from me forever. . . For 20 or 30 years ignorant or hot-headed Catholics had said almost that I was a heretic . . . it had long riled me, that Protestants should condescendingly say that I was only half a Catholic”

(Letters and Diaries, vol. 29, 72 & 160)

The current modernist scions of the conciliar Church, too, also recognise that fact about Newman - it is something which they like about him!

“Following his conversion, St. John Henry Newman faced both misunderstandings from the Anglican world and misgivings in the Catholic world, where he was even seen as an ‘infiltrator’ or ‘a kind of Trojan horse.’ ”

(<https://ewtn.ie/2025/08/08/st-john-henry-newman-from-being-considered-an-infiltrator-to-doctor-of-the-church/>)

This is all consistent with the changing fortunes of modernism and the war of ideas which was going on during that time. The liberals, for want of a better term, were repressed during the reigns of Pius IX and St. Pius X but in-between they had a brief respite during the reign of Leo XIII. And yet who can doubt that Pius IX and his allies were right to see Newman as suspect? In hindsight, Leo XIII’s decision to make Newman a Cardinal was ill-judged and brought with it terrible, unforeseen consequences. The attempt by modernists and enemies of sound thinking to use Newman to further their own ends began the moment he died, if not even before, and has continued down to our own day: does not that fact alone tell its own tale?

Newman’s Unsound Philosophy

This is where things become really interesting, but also not a little complicated and abstract. It is also arguably the most important point to grasp about Newman, as well as the one which is most often overlooked by his ‘conservative’ would-be supporters. The excellent little book *My Life with Thomas Aquinas*, (a 1980s *Angelus Press* reprint of articles originally from *Integrity* magazine in the 1940s and 50s), names Cardinal Newman as a leading light of what the author calls the “Thank-God-I’m-not-a-Thomist Club”, along with Dietrich von Hildebrand, William Marra and others. In doing so, the author identifies what is perhaps the most important piece of Anglican baggage which Newman brought into the Church with him when he converted, the one thing which links everything together: his unsound philosophy. It is also his legacy to the Catholic Church, and a very dangerous legacy it is too!

“Through no fault of their own, most of the great and learned converts to Catholicism in the last 150 years brought Platonism into the Church with them, and along with it a strong bias against the robust intellectual thought of St. Thomas. Over my lifetime these two influences, the educational, cultural and cosmopolitan thought of the converts, and their covert detestation of St. Thomas, have both spread among native Catholics, especially in the United States. Lately, with the seeming weakening of the Church’s claims for St. Thomas, the philosophical positions of these ‘Platonists’ are making rival claims in their own right. Phenomenology is one of these currently in vogue. Even its language traces to Kant, and remotely to Platonic errors. Philosophical pluralism is claimed, to put them on a par with the thought of St. Thomas, with a view to eventually replacing him, in the Hegelian manner.”

“Through no fault of their own” is perhaps being generous, but how culpable Newman may or may not have been is hardly the point: unsound philosophy is still dangerous, even if it is brought forward in good faith. How is it dangerous? So that we do not fill another twenty pages with a discussion of Plato and Aristotle, let us take just one fairly obvious example, that of “conscience.” Here is a neat little summary from the official website for Newman’s 2019 Novus Ordo “canonisation” :

“The great gift, which Newman saw could safely steer a person through all this controversy, is conscience. Conscience – the ‘aboriginal vicar of Christ’ – is that faculty every human being has to know what is right. It is the voice of God Himself speaking in our soul.”

(<https://www.newmancanonisation.com/blog/newman-and-conscience>)

This concept is not Catholic, it is a novelty, but it is not the word “conscience” itself which is novel, rather the meaning being attached to it. For St. Thomas Aquinas, “conscience” is a thing which one does, much as we might say “knowing” or “understanding” (which is the Latin root of the word); it is not an “aboriginal conscience” which informs us of right and wrong and how we ought to act: that honour belongs to the virtue of Prudence. Prudence, being one of the four cardinal virtues, is not a thing one does so much as a thing which one has, which one possesses (which is the Latin root of the word “habit” - a “habitus,” a thing which is had).

This concept of “a conscience” as a faculty which each of us possesses, the aboriginal voice of God within us and all the rest, is not new and wasn’t even in Newman’s day. How then can it be that Newman is given the credit for it? The answer is that it was new within the Catholic Church, because it is a Protestant idea and the fact that many Catholics have in some degree fallen for it in the years since does not change that fact. Newman himself as good as admitted that his concept of “conscience” was essentially Protestant:

“When Anglicans, Wesleyans, the various Presbyterian sects in Scotland, and other denominations among us, speak of conscience, they mean what we mean, the voice of God in the nature and heart of man...”

(Letter to the Duke of Norfolk, p.247)

Very well, but what difference does this make in practice? Well, as we have already seen above, Newman admitted to “thinking it highly injudicious, indiscreet, wanton, to interfere with” Anglicans by urging their conversion. Yes, that could be attributed to a lingering sympathy for the (false) religion which formed him, a nostalgia, Anglican baggage, and so forth - but how can an intelligent man justify it to himself? It is because these Anglicans must follow their conscience, even if what it says is wrong, even leads to them being in error:

“...still he must act according to that error, while he is in it, because he in full sincerity thinks the error to be truth.”

(Letter to the Duke of Norfolk, p.259)

It is no coincidence that liberalism as a phenomenon grew up in Protestant countries long before it began to take root inside Catholic ones. It is, after all, a fruit of the so-called Protestant “reformation”. It is also not hard to see where this leads, the link between a mistaken view of obeying one’s “conscience,” the “Religious Liberty” of Vatican II’s *Dignitatis Humanae* and the dismantling of so many Catholic states in the years after, where everyone has a right to follow his conscience, whatever his religion may be. Is that what Newman intended all along? Almost certainly not, but as the modernist George Tyrrell so neatly puts it: “Newman might have shuddered at his progeny, but it is nonetheless his.” And yet, had

Newman simply been more ready to listen to the Popes of his own day, perhaps this could have been avoided. How he deals with the fact that both Gregory XVI in *Mirari Vos* and Pius IX in *Quanta Cura* condemn (or “scoff at” to use Newman’s exact words) “liberty of conscience” we will leave to the reader who has sufficient curiosity, leisure and patience to go beyond this article. For our purposes, it is enough to show that when Newman is accused of having brought foreign, un-Catholic ideas with him into the Church, that is not an unfair or fanciful charge.

And “conscience” is not the only example of his unsound thinking. Newman’s ideas about probability he owed to having read the works of Anglican “bishop” Joseph Butler, as he himself admitted; his “Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine” was viewed as highly suspect by eminent Catholics then and since; and his article for *The Rambler*, “On Consulting the Faithful on Matters of Doctrine,” so controversial that he had it published anonymously, was denounced to Rome as heretical by the Catholic bishop of Newport and even Newman’s own ordinary, Bishop Ullathorne, intervened and told him to stop writing for that magazine.

Final Verdict?

Whether he intended it or not, there can be no doubt that John Henry Cardinal Newman was used by the enemies of the Church ultimately to bring about the revolution through which we are all living. His philosophy is Anglican and un-Thomistic; he held “low views” about the Blessed Virgin Mary; and he was *at least* hesitant about the need for Anglicans to abandon their heretical false religion and enter the One, True Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like his modernist offspring, the liberal Catholic is a slippery customer. He seems to say now one thing, now another; now sound, now unsound; wholly orthodox-sounding one moment, the next, virtually heretical. For this reason he is hard to nail down, hence it is a difficult task for anyone to convict him. If he is a prolific writer it is all the harder, and Newman wrote a huge amount. For this reason, as we have already said, it makes sense not merely to look at his words in a vacuum, but to consider how they were received at that time. And it is when we look at how Newman was viewed by his contemporaries, that a clear picture begins to emerge.

Newman’s opponents, many of whom were great men in their own day, all seem to agree that his ideas were unsound and suspect: in a word, that he was a liberal. But if we look to his friends and admirers in his own day, very often liberal Catholics themselves, they too all seem to agree that Newman was a liberal. The one thing that both sides seem to agree on was that Newman was a liberal.

Newman died in 1890. In the period immediately after his death, the men who took up his banner and kept his writings alive were liberals and modernists: some of them went on to be condemned by St. Pius X even if Newman himself was not, but condemned or not, they too all seem to have regarded him as a liberal and a proto-modernist. In our own day, the liberals and modernists claim him as one of their own and the basis for their own ideas.

The picture is remarkably consistent, the only inconsistency being today’s “conservatives” - among whom are some who call themselves “Traditional” - who insist on the mistaken belief that Newman was somehow a sound Catholic, an anti-liberal, Traditional. Perhaps what is lacking is their own understanding of what those terms really mean. At any rate, Newman was not and is not; nor is he a Saint, nor is he a Doctor, nor ever will be. There is a reason that the conciliarists of today have raised him this far and seek to raise him further: they are not stupid, they know a fellow-traveller when they see him and they are doubtless hoping that their new “Doctor” will be of great use to them in the years ahead in slowly unravelling what little there remains of Traditionalist resistance to the Vatican II revolution in the Church. Let us hope that an ever greater number of Traditional Catholics will not allow themselves to be fooled.

“Hear this maxim, O you, Catholics full of temerity, who so quickly adopt the ideas and the language of your time, you who speak of reconciling the faith and of reconciling the Church with the modern spirit and with the new law. And you who accept with so much confidence the most dangerous pursuits of what our age so pridefully labels ‘Science,’ see to what extent you are straying from the program set out by the great Apostle, ‘*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so-called*’ (I Tim. 6:20). But take heed. With such temerities, one is soon led farther than he first had thought. And in placing themselves on the slope of profane novelties - in obeying the currents of so-called science - many have lost the Faith.



Have you not often been saddened, and taken fright, my venerable brothers, on hearing the language of certain men, who believe themselves still to be sons of the Church, men who still practice occasionally as Catholics and who often approach the Lord's Table? Do you still believe them to be sons, do you still believe them to be members of the Church, those who, wrapping themselves in such vague phrases as modern aspirations and the force of progress and civilization, proclaim the existence of a ‘consciousness of the laity,’ of a secular and political conscience opposed to the ‘conscience of the Church,’ against which they assume the right to react, for its correction and renewal? Ah! So many passengers, and even pilots, who, believing themselves to be yet in the barque, and playing with profane novelties and the lying science of their time, have already sunk and are in the abyss.”

- Cardinal Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, 1864



“Liberal Catholicism is an error of the rich. It could never occur to a man who had lived among the people and had seen the difficulties with which the truth has to contend. ... In vain have liberal Catholics denied their brothers, scorned papal bulls, and explained away or disdained encyclicals: these excesses earned them scant praise and humiliating encouragements, but no converts. [...] Liberalism proclaims that ... ‘as soon as we become more subtle Catholics, modified Catholics, in a word, new Catholics, we will immediately convert the world.’ This illusion consoles their mind when their heart quails; they cherish it, and their eloquence on its behalf reveals how violently, like Esau, they desire a mess of pottage.”

- Louis Veuillot, *The Liberal Illusion*, 1866

SSPX Watch



Bishop de Galarreta: poor health - according to a very brief [report](#) from April 2025, Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta had to be admitted to hospital for surgery forcing the SSPX to cancel its Easter ordinations to the subdeaconate. Confirmations, also due to have taken place in April, were also postponed. In the weeks and months since then, word comes to us on the grapevine that he is still out of action and will be so for the foreseeable future due to poor health, meaning that he is effectively retired and the SSPX is effectively down to just one bishop from the original four.

Fr. Michel Simoulin RIP - in May 2025, the French [District website reported](#) the death of Fr. Michel Simoulin. One of the older SSPX priests who had known and worked with Archbishop Lefebvre, he later became a cheerleader for compromise with modernist in Rome and will be remembered by many for his disgraceful article in *Le Seignadou*, in May 2012, titled: *'We cannot be 88-ers'*. We will quote some extracts here but it is worth re-reading the whole thing ([here](#)) because it is a monument, an archetype of the 2012 SSPX internal revolution. It is all there: the misleading references to “the Church” without any distinction of the conciliar church, the appeals to authority and blind trust, the shameless discarding of Archbishop Lefebvre as being from a different era and therefore no longer relevant to us today.



“It is not an exaggeration,” he wrote, “to say that Bishop Fellay has achieved more than Archbishop Lefebvre asked for...” And he continued:

“Whatever the state of Rome may be, of all that still remains that is disturbing in Rome, plain common sense and honesty should lead us to consider the current situation with different eyes than those of 1988! Recalling the saying of one of our bishops, we cannot be ‘eighty-eighters’! ... let it not be said that the state of things is the same as in 1988, or worse. This is contrary to the reality and to the truth, and it cannot but be the effect of a more or less secret refusal of any reconciliation with Rome, perhaps of a lack of faith in the holiness of the Church ... Only Bishop Fellay and his assistants, who by definition hold all the cards, can most accurately judge the current situation. The question everyone must instead ask himself is our benevolence toward authority and, above all, our trust in it.”

Just bear in mind that the author of those words lived right through the pontificate of Pope Francis and yet it made not the slightest difference to him. Fr. Simoulin was far from being the only SSPX superior to tell everyone that Rome was far closer to Tradition than it had been in 1988, that things were getting better, and so forth. They all lived long enough to see their naïve ideas proved wrong a thousand times over - an honest man would have admitted as much, but none of them ever did. Quite the contrary, in January 2022 the very same Fr. Michel Simoulin wrote an [article](#) for the Indultist/Ecclesia Dei –aligned website *Renaissance Catholique*, entitled “What We Need in the Crisis in the Church is a bit of the true Roman spirit” [*“Dans la crise de l’Église, un peu de romanité. La vraie.”*], in which he repeated the same line about not being in 1988 any more and accused those of us who don’t see eye-to-eye with him of Manicheism. And of course, it goes without saying, he was never punished, much less expelled for publicly expressing his own view on the SSPX/Rome question and so forth. No, that only happens to a priest if he is *against* making friends with the modernists.

SSPX's Pilgrimage to Rome Advertised on the Vatican's own Holy Year website - here:

<https://www.iubilacum2025.va/it/pellegrinaggio/calendario-giubileo/pellegrinaggi/pellegrinaggio-fraternita-sacerdotale-san-pio.html>

- can you for one moment imagine something like this when Archbishop

Lefebvre was still alive? It is unthinkable. Go on, tell me again how nothing has changed...



FSSPX FAQ's

What if this is my first time in an SSPX chapel? Should I be wor...

Can I receive Communion? Do I have to kneel for communion a...

Are you different from our Catholic churches? What should I ex...

We are a Catholic chapel in union with Rome that maintains th...

We recognize that some aspects of this liturgy may be unfa...

Doesn't rather confirm what we have long maintained, that the reconciliation of the SSPX with modern Rome took place, but in secret, with no big announcement and is being revealed slowly, a bit at a time, to minimise the reaction against it? How much more obvious does it need to be?

Here, for instance, is the *FAQ* page of the SSPX chapel in Arcadia, California (<https://fsspx.today/chapel/ca-arcadia/fsspx-faqs/>). In answer to the question about what makes them different, they say: **"We are a Catholic chapel in union with Rome."** No further distinctions, nothing, for

instance, about being against the Council or the New Mass. They say that they are "in union with Rome" and then talk about how the Mass is in Latin and not facing the people. A conservative Novus Ordo parish wouldn't say anything different. Consider: if the SSPX say they are "in union with" modern Rome, and if even the modern Vatican advertises their pilgrimage, what right has anyone to say that no agreement was ever reached?

No More Conditional Confirmations? - Holy Orders aren't the only Novus Ordo Sacrament the SSPX are now trying to get us all to accept without question. In the [May/June 2025 District Newsletter](#) *Ite Missa Est*, Redemptorist Fr. Nicholas Mary pours scorn on the idea of faithful from the Novus Ordo seeking conditional confirmation from the SSPX. He takes the same line as Fr. Paul Robinson: unless you happened to spot something amiss during the ceremony itself, you are duty-bound to regard it as certain and it would be wrong to re-do it conditionally. What about the intention, what does a priest or bishop who doesn't believe in the sacrament of confirmation actually think he's doing? Fr. Nicholas doesn't address this. What about the fact that they can't be relied on to use olive oil, the correct matter? "The use of chrism not made of olive oil is doubtless a rarity in Britain at least..." he says. "Doubtless"...! How can he be so sure? And even if it were a rarity, that still means it might have happened in any given case, you cannot be certain, hence positive doubt. "Be at peace," the article concludes, "and accept that there are many things that God does not expect you to know with dogmatic certainty in this life." In the old days, a significant number of the confirmations done by the SSPX were conditional. Those days, it seems, are now over.

Doubtful Priests Multiplying - don't be tempted to think that this is an America-only problem. There are two Novus Ordo priests helping the SSPX in Germany, that we know of, neither of whom was conditionally ordained. Now, it seems, a Fr. Michael O'Reilly, ordained in the Novus Ordo in 1995, is joining the SSPX in Ireland. It is now happening everywhere.



“Holy abandonment is found ‘not in resignation and laziness but at the heart of action and initiative.’ It would be dishonest to pray for victory without really fighting for it. [...] ‘The things I pray for’, St. Thomas More prayed magnanimously, ‘dear Lord, give me the grace to work for.’”

(“The Biography of Marcel Lefebvre” p. 568)

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