

In Re:
Sean Johnson is a Dishonest, Deceitful Buffoon who Needs to Stop Writing Garbage
By
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What joy. Another inept and dishonest attempt to defend the indefensible. Entitled, with typically Sean Johnson-esque long-winded pomposity: “In Re: Some Recent Comments of Fr. Hewko on +Williamson and the New Mass, By Sean Johnson 7/20/22” (Why “in re” – is he now studying to become a lawyer?), anyone who thinks that my title is a little harsh might wish to recall that this is the man who, in his last attempt to defend his hero, took Bishop Williamsons words:

“While the new religion is false, it’s dangerous, it strangles grace and it’s helping many people to lose the Faith: at the same time, there are still cases where it can be used and is used still to build the Faith.”

And twisted them into:

“The new religion is false, and it strangles grace.”

Adding as his own commentary: “Conclusion: the new Mass is bad.” Yes he is dishonest, yes, he is without question deceitful; he is a man who will allow himself any number of liberties in serving the one overriding goal of defending his hero. That he is also a buffoon, the reader will have to determine for himself, although the fact that he is still wasting everyone’s time with these poor quality arguments is a fact which hardly counts in his favour.

Anyone who is not already familiar with Sean Johnson’s club-footed attempts to sanitise Bishop Williamson’s scandalous and delinquent new teaching may wish first of all to familiarise himself with [The Recusant 36](#), particularly pages 38-54. In the meantime, let me add that Sean Johnson seeking yet again to defend his Great Hero is something which would not, on its own, have motivated a response. I have surely said all that need be said on the topic. Since, however, he has also taken it upon himself to use this as an opportunity to attack Fr. David Hewko for having the nerve to disagree with the Great One (and to attack him secretly, in private, and not in public, it should be added!) a response follows.

The infantile “Valid-Means-You-Can-Always-Get-Grace-From-It!” argument

Most of Sean Johnson’s arguments appear to be nothing new. Perhaps he thinks everyone has already forgotten the last time he tried to defend Bishop Williamson? He repeats his novel reading of Session VII of the Council of Trent, which seems to run something like this:

“If anyone saith that a sacrament, regardless of any other circumstance whatever, not excluding the sacrilegious manner in which it is confected, so long as it is valid only, will not always give grace, let him be anathema.”

Or perhaps:

“If anyone saith that a valid Mass will not always and everywhere be a source of grace to those who assist at it, let him be anathema.”

Needless to add, the Council of Trent says nothing of the sort. What it does say is that the sacraments do actually contain the grace they signify and are not mere outward signs or empty symbols as the Protestants assert - something which is utterly irrelevant to the debate and which nobody, least of all Fr. Hewko, has ever denied.

He even mentions in passing, the idea of there being such a thing as,

“an *obex gratiae* (i.e., obstacle to grace)”

...but it never occurs to him that such an *obex* might be the circumstances in which a sacrament is confected, such as a valid Mass said outside the Church, or a valid Mass said in a deliberately sacrilegious manner so as to deliberately offend to God, in the manner of apostate Masonic clergy or Satanists. In the buffoonish theology of Mr. Sean Johnson, every Masonic or Satanic (but nonetheless valid) Mass, no matter how mocking or insulting a parody, is nonetheless an occasion where you and I can go to receive grace. It is absurd.

He even goes so far at one point as to state, that:

“...there can be validly confected sacraments which do not transmit the grace which they infallibly contain, but only because of the poor disposition of the recipient.”

Where does he find justification for the words “only because”? And how certain is he that there could be no other reason why a valid sacrament might not be a source of grace? Were one to find a validly ordained apostate Catholic priest-turned-Anglican (such as Fr. Peter Morgan, post c.1980) using the Tridentine Missal, could one receive grace by going along to his Anglican church? Can one go along to the schismatic Orthodox and receive grace from their valid sacraments? In the fourth century, was the way to receive grace to get oneself to the nearest Arian Mass? Were the Chinese Catholics of the 1970s and 1980s supposed to go to one of the many certainly valid Tridentine Masses offered by the certainly valid priests of the Communist Party -controlled ‘Patriotic Association’? Has the Church really been getting it wrong all these years? A quick panorama of the Catholic martyrs of all eras and nations is all that is needed to see how utterly absurd this argument really is.

The closest Mr Johnson comes to answering this, is when he says:

“So for example, should an Eastern rite Catholic in the state of grace mistakenly walk into a Greek Orthodox church (i.e., he has maintained his good disposition) and receive communion, Trent applies, and he infallibly receives the transmission of sanctifying grace.”

That one little word, “mistakenly,” is quite telling. Suppose he went there deliberately and not mistakenly? (Improbable, you say? Perhaps. But then, who knows, perhaps he had just been reading Sean Johnson and had been confused into thinking that a valid sacrament is always a source of grace for the faithful regardless of any other considerations...). Would such a Catholic who *deliberately* took himself along to a schismatic Orthodox Mass receive sanctifying grace? And if not, why not, given that it is (in the example above) a valid sacrament? I don’t think the lady in Mahopac was “mistakenly” going to the New Mass believing it to be the Traditional Mass, was she? Why must Sean Johnson qualify his example with the word “mistakenly”? Could it be that he knows full well that a Catholic may not avail himself of sacraments outside the Church, however “certainly valid” they may be and however piously he may assist at that Mass? That validity and personal disposition aren’t enough, in other words? In which case what are the implications for assisting at the New Mass, not least given that the New Mass is an illegitimate, schismatic non-Catholic rite and intrinsically offensive to God?

I have now twice waded through Mr. Sean Johnson's buffoonery and yet I cannot see this addressed anywhere. What he does say is that, because the Council of Trent teaches that a sacrament contains the grace it signifies and is not a mere empty symbol, therefore as regards the question of the New Mass: "Mother Church already definitively decided this matter 450 years ago at the Council of Trent." This is so infantile as to be laughable. The same Council of Trent emphatically condemns changing the traditional sacramental rituals into new man-made ones, which is an exact definition of the New Mass.

False Distinctions

He furthermore makes a great deal out of distinguishing the sacrament itself from the ritual (as does Fr. Edward MacDonald, it seems), as though it were not always a sin to separate the two in practice.

"Fr. Hewko," he complains, "tends not to distinguish between the rite of Mass and the sacrament, and often seems to use them interchangeably."

That is because, in practice, they are interchangeable, just as sacrament of matrimony will always in practice involve the ritual of matrimony, for instance. Again, he chastises Fr. Hewko for not sharing his own made-up distinctions:

"Fr. Hewko continuing to conflate rite and sacrament, when he should be distinguishing between the two."

One cannot "conflate" two things which necessarily always go together. The Mass happens using a rite, and the New Rite is what makes the New Mass the New Mass, just as the Tridentine Rite is what makes the Tridentine Mass the Tridentine Mass. In reality, the one at fault is Sean Johnson himself, for treating as separate two things which in reality cannot be separated. Of course, a priest could always, in theory, pronounce the words of consecration whilst sitting at the breakfast table in his dressing-gown with half a granary loaf and half-drunk glass of cheap wine in front of him, and produce what one could call a valid sacrament. But to do so will always be a sacrilege and nobody could ever obtain grace from willingly participating in such a serious sin. The whole point about the New Mass is that it is little better than that: even if it is sometimes valid, it is always being done outside of a Catholic ritual, in a profane and even heretical context and is therefore always displeasing to God. Why this is so hard for some people to grasp, I cannot quite understand.

Sean Johnson calls this "a condemned theory of sterile sacraments" though what is really "a theory" (we will leave the condemning to him) is his insistence that a valid sacrament will always give grace, something which the Church has never taught, which no Saint has ever taught, no Father, no Doctor, no Pope and no Council (Trent included) has ever come close to teaching and the very serious implications of which are denied by the entire history of the Catholic Church not to mention common sense.

Likewise, his distinction between the Mass and Holy Communion is equally a false one and not one which the reader will find any Catholic theologian making before the Council. The priest's communion is an essential part of the Mass – without it, Mass has not been celebrated, even if he managed to confect a valid sacrament by pronouncing the words of consecration over valid matter with the right intention. Likewise, every Holy Communion received by the faithful necessarily comes from the Mass. The true doctrine is that the Mass is both a sacrifice and a sacrament. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is not just Holy Communion, the Mass itself is part of the sacrament. Holy Communion always comes from a Mass and a Mass always produces Holy Communion. The other six Sacraments are received in the instant that they are confected, but the Holy Eucharist is confected

before It is received. Thus the idea that at a Mass which is schismatic and offensive to God, Holy Communion may nonetheless be received as a source of grace, is not a Catholic one; it betrays a failure to understand the nature of the Mass, not to mention a certain measure of desperation to square the circle in making Bishop Williamson's continued pronouncements seem somehow orthodox when an increasing number of priests and faithful can see that they are nothing of the sort.

Finally, it might be useful to recall that grace can only come through the Church. Therefore whether we are talking about Mass said by a schismatic priest (a Greek Orthodox, for instance) or in a schismatic rite (such as the New Mass), we are not talking about a Mass at which grace would come through the Catholic Church. Both the New Mass and a Greek Orthodox Mass are schismatic, though for different reasons: the former due to the rite used, the latter due to the celebrant.

Again, this seems fairly obvious to me, and if an amateur like me can grasp it, without any seminary training, then a priest such as Fr. MacDonald surely ought to be able to as well, even if Mr. Sean Johnson apparently cannot.

The "Poisoned Meat" Argument and the Archbishop Lefebvre quote from April 1974

A large part of Mr. Sean Johnson's writing is his re-use Mr. Samuel Loeman's unfortunate attempt to make Archbishop Lefebvre a forerunner of Bishop Williamson, by finding one quote from April 1974. Samuel Loeman, in fairness to him, appears to have realised that something had gone wrong with Bishop Williamson and left-off trying to defend him some time ago. Even Mr. Johnson has to admit, in presenting the quote, that: "the present version was lifted from Cathinfo, as Samuel's blog has now been closed." May all blogs go the same way. A pox on blogs, say I.

In any case, this was all thoroughly answered when it first appeared, and what was written back then still stands. We will not go over all the old ground: the attempt to make Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Williamson agree with each other is as hilarious as it is inept. Anyone who wishes to know more may wish to reread [The Recusant](#) 42, p.30 ff where it has been dealt with already.

No, Mr. Johnson. Finding *one* quote from Archbishop Lefebvre from the early days, a mere three-and-a-half years into the life of the SSPX, a quote from so far back in time that Franco's Spain and Salazaar's Portugal were still in power when he said it, and the new Mass had still not yet been introduced in some parts of the world – that isn't going to help you. Not least because Bishop Tissier's biography of Archbishop Lefebvre makes it explicitly clear that not long after this his position hardened against the New Mass.

In passing, let me say that the analogy of poisoned meat has always struck me as one which doesn't really work, whether Archbishop Lefebvre or anyone else is the one using it. Common sense ought surely to suggest that if you are starving, eating poison is hardly going to help matters. But I digress.

We have no qualms in saying that we disagree with the opinion of Archbishop Lefebvre tentatively expressed in April 1974. Why? Because post- April 1974 and for the rest of his life, [Archbishop Lefebvre](#) disagreed with Archbishop Lefebvre, and rather more forcefully too!

That is without mentioning the fact that what Archbishop Lefebvre is clearly talking about and what Bishop Williamson has been talking about are different in a number of ways. Bishop Williamson wasn't talking about what one *might* be allowed to do *in extremis*; he wasn't talking about someone who has no other alternative (the person whom he was addressing had already admitted to having a weekly Traditional Mass nearby). He didn't just "slip on a banana skin" as one priest would have it. He didn't give an ill-advised permission just the one time. Nor did he content himself with the notion that grace *can* pass through the New Mass in *some* circumstances. On the contrary, over the months

which followed, he would go on to reiterate and develop his novel pro- New Mass thesis in talk after talk and in several *Eleison Comments* emails, none of which have ever been addressed by Sean Johnson (or Samuel Loeman, or Fr. MacDonald... or any of Bishop Williamson's would-be defenders, from what I can see.) To add to Mahopac, New York, we also have Vienna Virginia; and Veneta Oregon; and Houston Texas; and Emmett Kansas... we could go on. And he doesn't just say that it's fine for conciliar Catholics to attend the New Mass. He explicitly says that Traditional Catholics can go there too and receive grace from the New Mass if they like, as long as they are "careful" and "judge the priest"(!) He tells his audience of Traditional Catholics that if their children and grandchildren end up keeping the Faith it will be by attending the New Mass. He also elaborates his notion that Our Lord positively *does not want* all those conciliar Catholics who attend the New Mass to become Traditional, but would rather save them in and through the new religion.

That is what Sean Johnson ought to be defending, and if he were honest, what he would be defending. But he isn't honest. And not content with making a buffoon of himself in public in this unworthy cause a few years ago, he is still at it in private where he doubtless hopes nobody will notice and call him on his nonsense.

Were he honest, Sean Johnson would also begin by admitting frankly that Fr. Hewko's position is no different to Bishop Williamson's own position until relatively recently. He ought, were he honest, to let his reader know that Bishop Williamson used to say this concerning attendance at the New Mass:

"Take for instance the Novus Ordo Mass. The New Rite as a whole so diminishes the expression of essential Catholic truths...that **it is as a whole so bad that no priest should use it, nor Catholic attend it. ... if I say that the new Mass must always be avoided, I am telling the truth.**"

(Eleison Comments #387 – emphasis ours)

"The New Mass is in any case illicit. In any case, it's designed to please Protestants, it's designed to undo Catholicism. **It's intrinsically offensive to God, it's intrinsically evil.** That's how it was designed and that's how it turned out. ... **If the New Mass is valid but illicit, may I attend? NO! The fact that it's valid does not mean it's ok to attend.**"

(See audio recording, [here](#))

Clearly the old Bishop Williamson disagrees with the new Bishop Williamson. But we aren't allowed to disagree with the new Bishop Williamson.

In passing, I don't recall Mr. Sean Johnson taking Bishop Williamson to task in public for saying this sort of thing back in the day. Why might that be, I wonder? Could it be that he used to agree with the old Bishop Williamson? And is he prepared to state now, unequivocally, that he regards the old teaching of Bishop Williamson as wrong, and that he was wrong too for agreeing with it?

Archbishop Lefebvre post-1974 doesn't count!

As regards what Archbishop Lefebvre said post-1974, Sean Johnson has this to say:

"What changed in later years was not +Lefebvre's theology (i.e., grace passes/grace does not pass), but his prudential directive regarding Novus Ordo Mass attendance (i.e., you can go/you cannot go)."

This sounds very much like the neo-SSPX when it tells people that they can get the experimental and unnecessary covid injections. It's *prudential*, you see. The intelligent reader will suspect that the distinction is a bogus one. What we're being asked to believe is that Archbishop Lefebvre maintained, to his dying day, that the new Mass is a source of grace, but that he decided nonetheless to tell people not to go, even if they had no other Mass available in the entire country. Does that make any sense? Does that sound at all probable? Or could it be that there is no real distinction, that Sean Johnson is misusing the virtue of Prudence or doesn't understand it correctly?

Whereas Mr. Sean Johnson would have us believe that Archbishop Lefebvre, despite telling people not to go to the New Mass, in fact did not change "his theology (i.e. grace passes)" - in reality we see the Archbishop little more than two years later, declaring in front of a massive hall packed with thousands of faithful and all the world's press taking down his every word in the hope of a juicy headline, that:

"...A union between the Church and the Revolution and subversion is, for the Church, an adulterous union, adulterous. And that adulterous union can produce only bastards. And who are those bastards? They are our rites: the rite of the Mass is a bastard rite, the sacraments are bastard sacraments – **we no longer know if they are sacraments which give grace or which do not give grace.**"

Does that not sound as though Archbishop Lefebvre, at the very least, is having serious doubts about whether there is any grace to be had from the "bastard rite of Mass", and doubts serious enough to air them in front of the world? This is hardly the behaviour of one who held to his dying day the notion that grace always flows from the New Mass, as Mr. Sean Johnson would have us believe.

Could it perhaps be that Bishop Tissier de Mallerai was telling the truth when he wrote that, from 1974 onwards:

"Little by little the Archbishop's position hardened: this Mass with its ecumenical rite was seriously ambiguous and harmful to the Catholic Faith."
(*Biography of Marcel Lefebvre*, p.464 ff.)

Does that sound like a "prudential directive" (whatever that is supposed to mean!), or does it sound like a judgement regarding the New Mass itself?

To continue with Bishop Tissier's account, he tells his reader that, from saying that one could assist *occasionally* at the New Mass, by the late 1970s Archbishop Lefebvre:

"considered that it was bad in itself and not only because of the circumstances in which the rite was performed (e.g. a table instead of an altar or communion in the hand.)" (Ibid.)

...and that by 1981 Archbishop Lefebvre was writing to people that:

"This Mass is not bad in a merely accidental or extrinsic way. There is something in it that is truly bad." (Ibid.)

Once again, is that a judgement about the New Mass itself? Or is it only a "prudential directive regarding Novus Ordo Mass attendance" from a man who is nonetheless convinced that the New Mass gives grace to those who assist at it? Why does Bishop Tissier nowhere indicate that, despite telling people those sorts of things, Archbishop Lefebvre nevertheless believed the New Mass to be a source of grace? Why is the reader left to take Sean Johnson's word for it?

Besides, there remains the unfortunate fact that if, as our unfortunate buffoon maintains, a valid Novus Ordo Mass is an “infallible” source of grace, then one can’t very well tell people not to go. If on the other hand, one arrives at the conclusion that the New Mass is “intrinsically evil,” “intrinsically offensive to God,” “a schismatic rite,” “a danger to the Catholic faith” and something “in itself sinful” which “no faithful should attend,” then all huffing and puffing in the world about theology and prudential directives and “obices gratiae” and all the rest, won’t change the fact that it needs to be avoided; nor will it change the fact that for a supposedly “Traditional” bishop to go about advising unsuspecting souls that they should attend it as a means of obtain grace from it, is a serious lapse of charity, a serious delinquency and utterly indefensible.

As though his misrepresentation of Archbishop Lefebvre were not already misleading and dishonest enough, our buffoon rounds off this section of his deceit by dismissing out-of-hand as “sophistries” what he calls:

“the same old, well-refuted, out of context and/or misunderstood quotes from ‘Open Letter to Confused Catholics’ and/or ‘A Bishop Speaks’ ”

Coming from the man who was caught so flagrantly twisting Bishop Williamson’s own words to make them seem the opposite of what they in fact said (as noted above in the introduction), nobody need take any lessons in “sophistries” or “out of context quotes” from Sean Johnson! Besides which, we have already provided three quotes above from Bishop Tissier’s biography of Archbishop Lefebvre, so it will be interesting to see the knots he ties himself into trying to claim that those words are “misunderstood”; but in the meantime, here is one such quote. Perhaps this is what he has in mind?

“The New Mass, even when said with piety and respect for the liturgical rules, is [still] impregnated with the spirit of Protestantism. It bears within it a poison harmful to the Faith.” (Open Letter to Confused Catholics, p.29)

Surely the meaning is quite clear. What is there to misunderstand there? What possible context could convert the Archbishop’s clear meaning into anything other than what he plainly says?

Or perhaps what he had in mind was the following:

“Your perplexity takes perhaps the following form: may I assist at a sacrilegious Mass which is nevertheless valid, in the absence of any other, in order to satisfy my Sunday obligation? The answer is simple: these Masses cannot be the object of an obligation; we must moreover apply to them the rules of moral theology and canon law as regards the participation or the attendance at an action which endangers the faith or may be sacrilegious.

The New Mass, even when said with piety and respect for the liturgical rules, is subject to the same reservations since it is impregnated with the spirit of Protestantism. It bears within it a poison harmful to the faith. That being the case the French Catholic of today finds himself in the conditions of religious practice which prevail in missionary countries. There, the inhabitants in some regions are able to attend Mass only three or four times a year. The faithful of our country should make the effort to attend once each month at the Mass of All Time, the true source of grace and sanctification, in one of those places where it continues to be held in honour.”
(Ibid., Ch.4)

Are those words somehow “out of context?” Or perhaps what he has in mind is this?

“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)

And yet that “absurd idea” is *precisely* what Sean Johnson is asking us to accept, and claiming that it is the infallible teaching of the Council of Trent, too! (People with poor reading comprehension should not presume to tell others what the Council of Trent *really means!*)

And here is some more Archbishop Lefebvre, this time not from the two sources about which our buffoon has complained (notice the way he tried sneakily to rule them out in advance! What is that, if not deceitful?) Ask yourself whether these words are in any way “out of context” or “misunderstood,” or whether, on the contrary, the Archbishop is perfectly capable of making himself quite clear and only a deceitful buffoon would pretend not to understand.

“So, I also advise you to have this in your library, this book by Salleron, and to give it to the people who are hesitant, who say: ‘But, even so, we know brave priests who are good and who are trying to say the New Mass well etc....’ Read this! You will see! It is the New Mass in itself! It is not about the priest who is saying it. It is not because he says it piously or anything that the new rite changes.

...

Because people are still asking us those questions: ‘I don’t have the Mass of St. Pius V on Sunday, and there is a Mass said by a priest that I know well, a holy man, so, wouldn’t it be better to go to the Mass of this priest, even if it is the New Mass but said with piety, instead of just staying away?’

No! That’s not true! That is not true! Because this rite is bad, is bad, is bad! This is the reason why this rite is bad, it is poisoned! It is a poisoned rite! Mr. Salleron says it very well here: ‘It is not a choice between two rites that would be good! This is a choice between a Catholic Rite and a practically Protestant rite!’ It’s harmful to our Faith, the Catholic Faith! So, it is out of the question to encourage people to go to Mass in the New Rite, because slowly, even without realizing it, they end up ecumenist! It’s strange, but it’s like that. It is a fact.”

(Conference at Écône, 11th April, 1990)

Here, moreover is Bishop de Castro Mayer, writing to his friend Archbishop Lefebvre.

“It seems to me preferable that scandal be given rather than a situation be maintained in which one slides into heresy. After considerable thought on the matter, I am convinced that one cannot take part in the New Mass, and even just to be present one must have a serious reason. We cannot collaborate in spreading a rite which, even if it is not heretical, leads to heresy. This is the rule I am giving my friends.”

(Bishop de Castro Mayer, Letter to Archbishop Lefebvre, 29th Jan. 1970)

By the 1980s, Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer were working openly together, sending joint letters of protest to Rome and happily allowing the world’s press to associate the two of them. Here it seems that Bishop de Castro Mayer did not take as long as Archbishop Lefebvre to “harden” against the New Mass, but there can be little doubt that by the 1980s they were in agreement and no record exists of Archbishop Lefebvre expressing disagreement with his comrade-in-arms on the question of the New Mass and its attendance.

Claiming Michael Davies as an ally?

When Fr. Hewko points out that “Abp. Lefebvre said that he believed the New Mass doesn't fulfil the Sunday obligation” (which is true, he did say that, again and again, as did the SSPX! See below...), Sean Johnson is so desperate to twist Archbishop Lefebvre into Bishop Williamson's (new) image and likeness, that rather admitting the obvious truth of Fr. Hewko's claim, he resorts to a quote from Michael Davies in the year 1980 to try to show that, in fact, Archbishop Lefebvre never really meant to say such a thing!

But - would you believe it? - this very quote of Michael Davies has already been dealt with by none other than... guess who..?!? That's right! ...Bishop Williamson! From way back in 1996, we read:

“Q: But does not Michael Davies say that attending the Novus Ordo Mass fulfils one's Sunday duty? And that Archbishop Lefebvre said the same thing?”

A: When Michael Davies says it, it is because he claims that the officially promulgated Novus Ordo Mass cannot be intrinsically evil, otherwise the Catholic Church would be defectible. When Archbishop Lefebvre said it, he meant that the Novus Ordo Mass is objectively and intrinsically evil, but Catholics unaware of, or disbelieving in, that evil, because of the rite's official promulgation, may subjectively fulfil their Sunday duty by attending the new Mass. The third Commandment says, thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy, not, thou shalt attend a semi-Protestant Mass.”

(Bishop Williamson, Letters of the Rector of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, December 1, 1996)

Remember that Archbishop Lefebvre himself said in one of his later conferences that the New Mass:

“...**does not oblige under pain of grave sin.** We are never forced to do something which would tend to diminish our Faith. It's not possible. God cannot force us to do that. On the other hand, we are seriously obliged to do everything possible to attend the Mass of St. Pius V, the Catholic Mass. There, the obligation remains, but not for a rite that is almost Protestant. **On the contrary, there is an obligation not to go.**”

(Écône, 11th April, 1990 – emphasis ours)

Compare with the Bishop Williamson of 2022 who positively advises even traditionally-minded souls who have begun to understand the great evil of the New Mass, that they should find a “decent Novus Ordo priest” somewhere nearby, even if it is one who is “forced to say the new Mass”.

Condemning the late Fr. Pulvermacher OFM

The late Fr. Carl Pulvermacher OFM was regarded, rightly, as a giant of the early decades of the SSPX and one of the ‘founding fathers’ of its apostolate in the USA, a man to whom many souls today owe a great deal for having helped their parents and grandparents, and in some cases, great-grandparents, to return to Tradition.

But Sean Johnson knows better. And with the supercilious air of superiority proper to one who has acquired a little learning and as a result thinks he knows it all, he proceeds to belittle and chastise this great man and to pour scorn on the memory of him.

“Fr Hewko,” he informs his reader, “thinks to find an ally in the independent Capuchin, Fr. Carl Pulvermacher (an early editor of the Angelus).”

First of all, Fr. Hewko doesn't "think to find" an ally in Fr. Pulvermacher: he *does* find an ally in him. Secondly, Fr. Carl Pulvermacher wasn't as "independent" as all that. He worked hand-in-glove with the SSPX from the very early days. He lived in a property of the SSPX, at Queen of Angels in Dickinson, Texas, until 1991, and *The Angelus* of which he was editor, was a publication of the SSPX, the main publication really. And he wasn't just "an early editor" – he was the founder the one who ran it for the better part of two decades. When he died in 2006, it was none other than Bishop Williamson who said his requiem, again in the SSPX church in Dickinson, Texas. Fr. David Hewko was also present along with several other SSPX priests, and helped shovel the dirt onto Fr. Pulvermacher's coffin at the end of the ceremony.

Mr. Johnson is forced to admit that what Fr. Pulvermacher wrote in *The Angelus* (and more than once, it ought to be added) concerning the New Mass is the same as what Fr. Hewko says: no grace to be had, it's not Catholic, don't go there.

And since he is clearly unable to accuse Fr. Pulvermacher of sedevacantism, he instead tries to focus the attention of his reader on the fact that there were some laity who found Fr. Pulvermacher's statements controversial. Fr. Pulvermacher, he tells us,

"ended up on the receiving end of the ire of orthodox traditionalists who knew better."

And again:

"What Fr. Hewko does not mention is the scandal that [Fr. Pulvermacher's] response generated, including responses from several *Angelus* readers (correctly) alleging that his opinion was heretical."

Oh really, "several" readers? How many, exactly? Two? Three? Four perhaps? Alleging correctly that what Fr. Pulvermacher wrote (more than once!) was heretical? Did any of Fr. Pulvermacher's fellow priests write and tell him that he was spreading heresy? Virtually all the priests of the North American SSPX, as well as others in England, Australia and elsewhere would surely have been readers of *The Angelus* and would therefore have read these "heretical" words too – did they write in protest? Perhaps they all told their faithful not to read *The Angelus* any more, and told their chapels not to sell it in the repository? What about Fr. Pulvermacher's superiors in the SSPX? One cannot have a priest spreading heresy in his publication and defending it! Did they rebuke him for his "heretical" obstinacy? Perhaps they removed him as editor and transferred him to somewhere where he could do less harm and perhaps be re-trained and shown the error of his ways? Did they make *The Angelus* magazine publish a correction in subsequent issues, stating clearly that the New Mass does "infallibly" give grace, that to say otherwise is "heretical" and apologising for the "heretical" words of its erstwhile editor? No? Hm. I wonder why not.

Who were these "several" faithful, what were their names? Surely these unsung heroes deserve to go down in the annals of Catholic history for being the only ones to spot heresy when so many others, including every one the priests of the SSPX, had failed to do so!

What are the chances that, as is usually the case, there were one or two newcomers to Tradition who, although having a great love for the Traditional Mass, yet still for whatever reason did not fully grasp the problem of the New Mass or the seriousness of the evil which they had just left behind? That couldn't possibly be what really happened, could it?

Of course not. Sean Johnson knows better than Fr. Pulvermacher, he knows better than Fr. Pulvermacher's superiors, he knows better than every one of those SSPX priests who buried Fr. Pulvermacher including Fr. Hewko. And for all that Sean's former playmate Samuel Loeman used to

shout and scream that *The Recusant* accuses everyone of heresy left, right and centre (which was never true and still isn't), yet here we see a real-life, genu-wine example of a layman, an ignorant layman who because he has a little learning think he knows it all, a layman who is on a holy crusade to defend a man whom he thinks can do no wrong, accusing of heresy a genuinely holy priest who was a pillar and foundation of the SSPX in the USA. If only Fr. Carl Pulvermacher had had Sean Johnson there alongside him in the 1970s and 80s to correct him and put him right! He continues:

“The point being that Fr. Hewko had to go all the way back nearly 40 years to find another non-sedevacantist priest who shared his opinion prior to +Williamson’s 2015 Mahopac comments, and this priest appears to have made the same error as Fr. Hewko.”

Or it could be that Fr. Pulvermacher made no error. Has that occurred to anyone? Of course it hasn't. Because then we'd have to admit that what Sean Johnson's hero said was, er, wrong.

Notice also the sly innuendo. Fr Hewko is trying “...to find *another non-sedevacantist priest*” who agrees with him. The clear implication being that there may be others more recent, or even current, who agree. But they don't count, being sedevacantist. Who are they? We don't know. Sean Johnson is potentially accusing quite a few priests of being sedevacantist but he names no names and provides no evidence. He just allows the shadow of suspicion to fall over every one of them. This is the level of charity, the level of honesty with which we are faced.

Is it only the late Fr. Pulvermacher who agrees with Fr. Hewko?

The claim that Fr. Hewko's having quoted from Fr. Pulvermacher *must be* because no other priest in almost forty years would have agreed is a laughable fantasy, a fantasy in which we are invited to believe that every single SSPX priest for forty years has been thinking and talking about the New Mass exactly along the lines of Bishop Williamson and his court jester.

“That's why he had to go back 40 years to find an ally in Fr. Pulvermacher.”

And what about all the priests alive today who agree with Fr. Hewko? What about Dom Rafael Arizaga OSB, who says the same? Does he not count? What about Fr. Hugo Ruiz? What about Fr. Sretenovik? Or Fr. Vargas? Or Fr. Persie? Or Fr. de Merode? Are they all sedevacantists? Even Fr. Edward MacDonald himself, though he now promotes Sean Johnson's writings, as recently as 2016 emphatically disagreed with him (see below).

What about Fr. Paul Kramer's conference in 2013, laying out exactly how and why the New Mass is a totally illegitimate, schismatic, non-Catholic rite which nobody should ever attend? Why didn't Sean Johnson object when it was published only a day or two later, or in the years immediately following? What about the conferences given around the year 2000 by the late Fr. Gregory Hesse? Was Fr. Hesse a secret sedevacantist, perhaps? Doubtless he too would have benefitted from having Sean Johnson by his side to point out how “heretical” he was being! Was Fr. Gaudron, when he published his *Catechism of the Crisis in the Church* also a sedevacantist? Was he also writing and publishing heresy? And when *Angelus* Press translated it into English and sold it worldwide, were they all guilty of being “heretical” too? Perhaps the ghost of Fr. Carl Pulvermacher lived on at *Angelus* Press!

Likewise, the old SSPX - by Sean Johnson's standard, we ought to condemn those priests as “heretical” or at best as having seriously misled the faithful. On the old US district website sspx.org (see below) we see the SSPX telling the faithful that the New Mass is: “a danger to our faith, and, as such, evil, given that it lacks the good which the sacred rite of Mass ought to have” and that, “any

Catholic who is aware of its harm, does not have the right to participate.” This is in flat contradiction to Bishop Williamson’s teaching that “the New Mass is ambiguous [and] can be what you make of it: a priest can celebrate it decently, a faithful can attend it devoutly” and that therefore even a Traditional Catholic who is well aware of the evil of the New Mass can and sometimes should choose to attend it as a means of obtaining grace. Those two positions are irreconcilable. Likewise, according to Fr. Peter Scott, the then- SSPX US District Superior, writing in 1997 in *The Angelus*, since the New Mass “is in itself sinful,” since “it is never permitted to knowingly and willingly participate in an evil or sinful thing,” that therefore “for a person aware of the sacrilege involved” in the New Mass or “who understands that the New Mass is insulting to Our Divine Saviour” to go there to get grace would be “opportunism ... even if it were the only Mass available” because “the end does not justify the means.” What could be clearer? And yet that is precisely what Bishop Williamson continues to advise unsuspecting faithful to do! How can those two positions be reconciled? They cannot.

Either the New Mass is evil, a danger to our faith and something which we have no right to attend; or it is something which might be sufficiently good that we can and sometimes should attend it and get grace from it. But perhaps the SSPX was guilty of “heretical” teaching too? Perhaps Fr. Peter Scott lack the *true and enlightened* understanding of the Council of Trent as propagated by Mr. Sean Johnson? That at any rate would explain why for years and years they did nothing at all about the “heretical” teaching of one of their most respected priests, Fr. Carl Pulvermacher!

The old Bishop Williamson too, it seems, was in agreement with the old SSPX. Was the old Bishop Williamson, the one who used to teach that the new Mass is “intrinsically evil” and “intrinsically offensive to God” also guilty of “heretical” teaching? Or perhaps there is a way in which something intrinsically evil and intrinsically offensive to God can nevertheless be a source of grace which we should make use of in order to sanctify ourselves? When the old Bishop Williamson taught that, “the fact that it’s valid does not mean it’s OK to attend” – why didn’t some priest or other, or even Sean Johnson himself, step in and correct him and point out that the faithful *can* attend and can receive grace from attending (per the new Bishop Williamson)? Of course, if the old Bishop Williamson was also wrong on this point and in need of Sean Johnson’s correction, then that might explain why he was the one who offered a requiem for the “heretical” Fr. Pulvermacher at Dickinson, Texas in 2006.

Even the present day Avrillé Dominicans, of whom Sean Johnson used once to claim to be a supporter (and perhaps still does, for all I know), when asked about the new Mass by the faithful, responded with an article using a quote from Fr. Gaudron’s *Catechism of the Crisis in the Church* still visible on their website today, which states that:

“Even if the New Mass is valid, it displeases God [and] ...must therefore be rejected. Whoever understands the problem of the New Mass must no longer assist at it ... The new Mass is one of the principal sources of the current crisis of the faith. It is therefore imperative that we distance ourselves from it.”

(<https://dominicansaville.us/attendance-at-the-new-mass/> and below)

Are the Avrillé Dominicans not aware that, according to the Council of Trent, the new Mass infallibly gives grace to all who attend it? Perhaps Sean Johnson should write and point it out to them, showing them how Fr. Gaudron got it so wrong. On the other hand, if they are aware, how can they be so foolish, so reckless as to tell people to that they must, as an imperative, distance themselves from and no longer assist at an “infallible” source of grace? It doesn’t really make any sense, does it? Unless the old SSPX, the old Bishop Williamson, the Avrillé Dominicans, Fr. Hewko and Fr. Pulvermacher are all correct and it is Sean Johnson who has got it wrong. But that can’t be. Because then the new version of Bishop Williamson would also have to be wrong.

It's ridiculous. If this is the sort of nonsense which Sean Johnson has become used to writing, no wonder he wants to keep it secret and prefers circulating it by private email to publishing it online where everyone can see! These are the depths of buffoonery and deceit to which the man is reduced by the overriding need to defend his Great Hero. Who knows what Bishop Williamson may come out with next, which Sean Johnson will then feel the need to attempt to defend!?

This latest piece of buffoonery finishes with a reference to Fr. Pfeiffer, whose relevance is less than clear, and an equally bizarre claim that he has not spoken to Fr. Hewko since "Fr. Hewko ... and Fr. Pfeiffer went to war with +Williamson nearly two years before Mahopac." My memory of that time is still fairly lucid: I was in contact with all the parties mentioned both in person and at a distance and I am certain that nobody had "gone to war" with anybody. I'm not quite sure whether Sean has acquired faulty information from somewhere or if it is perhaps his memory playing tricks on him. And if it is true, as he seems to imply, that he has refused even to speak to Fr. Hewko since 2013, then that is a scandal in its own right. Bishop Williamson's public delinquency at Mahopac took place in June 2015. Just under two years prior would bring us to August or perhaps September 2013. September 2013 was when the seminary in Kentucky, founded at the suggestion of Bishop Williamson and with his promise of support, opened its doors for the first time. This seminary would then become Fr. Pfeiffer and Fr. Hewko's joint effort for a few years to come. In December 2013, Bishop Williamson paid it a friendly visit: a video of him offering Mass on their main altar and preaching the sermon is still around somewhere on the internet. Shortly after (perhaps early 2014) he also visited some of Fr. Hewko and Fr. Pfeiffer's larger Mass centres in the United States and conferred the sacrament of confirmation. Shortly before he left to go to America, he preached a sermon in London in which he said that he supported Fr. Pfeiffer and Fr. Hewko's efforts and wished them luck. Plenty of people who were there will remember it, and again there is an audio recording somewhere. But Sean Johnson had already by that point decided that Fr. Hewko was reprobate and to be shunned? That may be true, though why he would want to brag about it is anybody's guess.

In any case, he has already occupied far too much of my time and yours. He is a deceitful buffoon and the enabler of a delinquent and misleader of souls. He needs to stop writing this sort of garbage.

Sean, please, don't embarrass yourself any further. Give it a rest.

Greg Taylor
Feast of the Blessed Martyrs of Douai

* * * * *

"His Excellency prefaced his remarks about the Novus Ordo Mass with the statement that what he was about to say was heresy for traditionalists. Therefore, he has pre-judged and pre-condemned himself. He is guilty by his own admission. He said that he was going to stick his neck out and people could chop it off. Thus he has given permission for people to attack what he has said. Those attacking him on this matter do so with his authorisation."

(Fr. Edward MacDonald, letter to Sean Johnson, 2016)

“Objective truth is above masters and people alike, so that if the people have the truth on their side, they are superior to their Masters if the Masters do not have the truth. ... In brief, if they are right, they have the right.”

(Bishop Williamson, Eleison Comments #366)

“If you are following me, it is because you are following not me but true Catholic doctrine. If one day I cease giving you true Catholic doctrine or change what I teach, leave me!”

(Archbishop Lefebvre, in various conferences to his seminarians at Écône)

“In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors - all the ancient priests, bishops and kings. ... For what have we taught, however much you may qualify it...that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these lights - not of England only, but of the world - by their degenerate descendants, is both gladness and glory to us. God lives; posterity will live; their judgement is not so liable to corruption as that of those who are now going to sentence us to death.”

(St. Edmund Campion)

“Woe to you who command others! If so many are damned by your fault, what will happen to you? If few out of those who are first in the Church of God are saved, what will happen to you?”

(St. Leonard of Port Maurice)

“I do not speak rashly, but as I feel and think. I do not think that many bishops are saved, but that those who perish are far more numerous.”

(St. John Chrysostom)

“If traitors have arisen from among the very clergy themselves, let not this undermine your confidence in God. We are saved not by names, but by mind and purpose, and genuine love toward our Creator.”

(St. Basil the Great)

“The fort is betrayed even of them that should have defended it.”

(St. John Fisher)

“We must remember that if all the manifestly good men were on one side and all the manifestly bad men on the other, there would be no danger of anyone, least of all the elect, being deceived by lying wonders. It is the good men, good once, we must hope good still, who are to do the work of Anti-Christ and so sadly to crucify the Lord afresh . . . Bear in mind this feature of the last days, that this deceitfulness arises from good men being on the wrong side.”

(Fr Frederick Faber)

“He that sees another in error and endeavours not to correct it, testifies himself to be in error”

(St. Leo the Great)

“bonum est confidere in Domino quam confidere in homine.”

(Ps. 117, 8)

“haec dicit Dominus: maledictus homo qui confidit in homine, et ponit carnem brachium suum, et a Domino recedit cor eius.”

(Jer. 17, 5)

What has become of Fr. Edward Macdonald?

Back in 2016, when Sean Johnson first wrote an article attempting to defend Bishop Williamson’s new teaching on the Novus Ordo, Fr. MacDonald responded with a letter to him which ran thus:

“Dear Mr. Johnson, I do not understand why you are defending Bishop Williamson.

- *His Excellency prefaced his remarks about the Novus Ordo Mass with the statement that what he was about to say was heresy for traditionalists.*

Therefore, he has pre-judged and pre-condemned himself. He is guilty by his own admission.

- *He said that he was going to stick his neck out and people could chop it off.*

Thus he has given permission for people to attack what he has said. Those attacking him on this matter do so with his authorisation. Therefore we should not think that we have to counter their arguments. It is curious that being an Englishman he did not offer to be hanged, drawn and quartered, rather than having his head chopped off which is more appropriate for a Frenchman.

In my view these two reasons preclude a defence of His Excellency.

- *His Excellency said that the Novus Ordo Mass was designed to destroy faith.*

There is plenty of empirical evidence to show that it was well designed and has successfully destroyed the faith of millions. Nothing is perfect and some people who attended the Novus Ordo Mass for many years managed to keep the faith. They are the exception. In those cases it is usually due to some other practise of theirs, e.g., morning and night prayers, the rosary, the little office...

Regarding the Archbishop Lefebvre quote, on page 2 of your document.

The Archbishop is talking about the pastoral care of one either saying the Novus Ordo Mass or actively assisting at it. He says that for some it may be NOT be subjectively a sin. It is OBJECTIVELY a sin. I would say that almost always someone attending the Novus Ordo Mass

is not guilty of grave sin. If they knew it was evil they would not attend. (In the seminary we were taught that it is intrinsically evil.)

“We admit that there is serious matter (materia grave) and that there is full consent. But if there is no knowledge, no knowledge of the seriousness of the sin, then the person is not aware of the grave matter (materia grave). They do not commit a subjective sin.”

This is not at all what Bishop Williamson said.

Note also, that the Archbishop is speaking of people who are ignorant. This woman did not want to be ignorant. She wanted to know. Probably she expected and wanted His Excellency to tell her why she should not go to the Novus Ordo Mass. She was not completely ignorant as she did know about the traditional Mass and was at the Bishop’s conference.

Bishop Williamson’s Criterion

According to His Excellency how do we know if we can attend the Novus Ordo Mass. “IF it nourishes your Faith”. This criterion is no good. It cannot be assessed. How do I know if my Faith is nourished or not? I don’t know. I do not even know if I am in the state of grace. If I am not in the state of grace my faith is dead and cannot be nourished. If I am in the state of grace I am incapable of measuring my faith. Faith is a supernatural reality. While we are in the wayfarer state our minds are limited to what is sensible. We cannot measure supernatural things. Do I have “little faith” or do I have “great faith”? Do I have more faith today than yesterday? I don’t know.

We do know that Catholic sacraments infallibly give grace and with an increase of grace there is an accompanying increase of the virtues. Worthily receiving Holy Communion at the Traditional Mass certainly nourishes my faith. Also if I assist at Mass in a dignified manner with attention and devotion it will nourish my faith. This is not the case with the NO Mass.

Another quote from Archbishop Lefebvre more pertinent than yours.

“Your perplexity takes perhaps the following form: may I assist at a sacrilegious Mass which is nevertheless valid, in the absence of any other, in order to satisfy my Sunday obligation? The answer is simple: these Masses cannot be the object of an obligation; we must moreover apply to them the rules of moral theology and canon law as regards the participation or the attendance at an action which endangers the faith or may be sacrilegious.

The New Mass, even when said with piety and respect for the liturgical rules, is subject to the same reservations since it is impregnated with the spirit of Protestantism. It bears within it a poison harmful to the faith. That being the case the French Catholic of today finds himself in the conditions of religious practice which prevail in missionary countries. There, the inhabitants in some regions are able to attend Mass only three or four times a year. The faithful of our country should make the effort to attend once each month at the Mass of All Time, the true source of grace and sanctification, in one of those places where it continues to be held in honour.”

(Open Letter to Confused Catholics, Ch.4)

If we cannot attend the Novus Ordo Mass on days of obligation, a fortiori, we cannot attend it on weekdays.

The Novus Ordo Mass, even when said devoutly bears within it a poison harmful to the faith. It poisons the faith. It is incapable of nourishing the faith. This was known long before Archbishop Lefebvre said it. Many priests who rejected the changes of the 60s already said this in 1969.

For many years, perhaps still now, the Novus Ordo Mass was/is said at Holy Family Church in Detroit, on the high altar, the priest having his back to the people, in Latin, following all the rules, with dignity and presumably devotion. The Communion rail is there and people kneel for Communion received on the tongue. However we cannot go there. Fr. Bonfil (I believe that is his Christian name) the priest there rejected all of the changes of the 60s. In the late 60s we traditionalists starting going there. However in about 1970 or 71 the Novus Ordo Mass was imposed on Holy Family Church. Fr. Bonfil left and cared of us traditionalists. He also invited the SSPX to come. When they came in 72 or 73 he retired to Italy. Fr. Bonfil taught that we could no longer attend Mass at Holy Family Church because now it was the Novus Ordo Mass. It is poison for the Faith.

The answer to the question “if it nourishes your faith” is that the Novus Ordo Mass cannot and does not nourish anyone’s faith. Therefore it cannot nourish the woman’s faith. Therefore she cannot go to it. In this case His Excellency gave bad advice. Most good priests do from time to time. The Church is infallible, priests and bishops are not. It is not a disaster because all traditional Catholics knew that he was wrong. Certainly none of the faithful in Ireland think him correct. [One woman] was certain that His Excellency was drunk when making these remarks.”

(Fr. Edward MacDonald, Letter to Sean Johnson - See [The Recusant 36](#), p.35 ff.)

And yet now Fr. MacDonald recommends an article by the very same Mr. Johnson, seeking still to defend Bishop Williamson, an article which uses largely the same fallacious arguments reheated for the purpose.

Is this the same man? Or are we witnessing an example of what happens when one is offered by Providence an opportunity to defend the Faith in public and instead one chooses to keep silent through motives of cowardice or personal convenience? Either way, the alarming but undeniable fact is that Fr. MacDonald has changed, he has slid. As with Bishop Williamson, I think we’re going to have to agree with the old Fr. MacDonald and disagree with the new Fr. MacDonald. The old Fr. MacDonald was right. The new one is a liberal.

The Old SSPX:

“However, regardless of the gravity of the sacrilege, the New Mass still remains a sacrilege, and it is still in itself sinful. Furthermore, it is never permitted to knowingly and willingly participate in an evil or sinful thing, even if it is only venially sinful. For the end does not justify the means. Consequently, although it is a good thing to want to assist at Mass and satisfy one’s Sunday obligation, it is never permitted to use a sinful means to do this. To assist at the New Mass, for a person who is aware of the objective sacrilege involved, is consequently at least a venial sin. It is opportunism. Consequently, it is not permissible for a traditional Catholic, who understands that the New Mass is insulting to Our Divine Savior, to assist at the New Mass, and this even if there is no danger of scandal to others or of the perversion of one’s own Faith (as in an older person, for example), and even if it is the only Mass available.”

(Fr. Peter Scott, “Questions & Answers”, *The Angelus*, September 2002)

“Now, even if one wanted to contest the heretical elements of the New Mass, the sole refusal to profess Catholic dogmas quintessential to the Mass renders the new liturgy deficient. It is like a captain who refuses to provide his shipmen with a proper diet. They soon become sick with scurvy due, not so much to direct poison, as from vitamin deficiency. Such is the new Mass. At best, it provides a deficient spiritual diet to the faithful. The correct definition of evil – lack of a due good – clearly shows that the New Mass is evil in and of itself regardless of the circumstances. It is not evil by positive profession of heresy. It is evil by lacking what Catholic dogma should profess: the True Sacrifice, the Real Presence, the ministerial priesthood.”

(“Is the New Mass Legit” published on www.sspix.org May 25, 2011)

“[The New Mass is] a danger to our faith, and, as such, evil, given that it lacks the good which the sacred rite of Mass ought to have.

By their fruits you shall know them:

We were promised the *Novus Ordo Missae* would renew Catholic fervour, inspire the young, draw back the lapsed and attract non-Catholics.

Who today can pretend that these things are its fruits? Together with the *Novus Ordo Missae* did there not instead come a dramatic decline in Mass attendance and vocations, an “identity crisis” among priests, a slowing in the rate of conversions, and an acceleration of apostasies? So, from the point of view of its fruits, the *Novus Ordo Missae* is not a rite conducive to the flourishing of the Church’s mission.

Does it follow from the apparent promulgation by the popes that the *Novus Ordo Missae* is truly Catholic? No, for the indefectibility of the Church does not prevent the pope personally from promoting defective and modernist rites in the Latin rite of the Church. Moreover, the *Novus Ordo Missae*:

- was not properly promulgated (and therefore does not have force of law; cf., [vi] above),
- the old Roman Mass (aka, the Tridentine or traditional Latin Mass) was not abolished or superseded in the constitution *Missale Romanum*, hence in virtue of the of Quo Primum (which de jure [by law] is still the liturgical law and therefore the official Mass of the Roman Rite), it can always be said (principle 19),
- and lastly, the constitution *Missale Romanum* does not engage the Church's infallibility.

Considering what has been said, are we obliged in conscience to attend the *Novus Ordo Missae*?

If the *Novus Ordo Missae* is not truly Catholic, then it cannot oblige for one’s Sunday obligation. Many Catholics who do assist at it are unaware of its all-pervasive degree of serious innovation and are exempt from guilt. However, any Catholic who is aware of its harm, does not have the right to participate. He could only then assist at it by a mere physical presence without positively taking part in it, and then and for major family reasons (weddings, funerals, etc).”

http://archives.sspix.org/SSPX_FAQs/q5_novus_ordo_missae.htm

“Consequently, **the new missal no longer propagates the ‘lex credendi’ of the Church** but rather a doctrine that smacks of heterodoxy. That is why one cannot say that the reformed rite of Mass of 1969 is ‘orthodox’ in the etymological sense of the word: it does not offer ‘right praise’ to God. Equally, one cannot say that the rite of Mass resulting from the reform of 1969 is that of the Church, even if it was conceived by churchmen. And lastly, **one cannot say that the new missal is for the faithful ‘the first and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit,’ where the Church ‘communicates in abundance the treasures of the depositum fidei, of the truth of Christ.’** In light of these serious deficiencies, ‘the only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine appropriate for our salvation is a categorical refusal to accept this reformation.

(“The Problem of the Liturgical Reform”, The Society of St. Pius X, 2001, Angelus Press, 122ff. – emphasis ours)

“I affirm that the new rite of Mass does not, it is true, formulate any heresy in an explicit manner, but that it departs “in a striking manner overall as well as in detail, from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass”, and for this reason **the new rite is in itself bad.**

That is why I shall never celebrate the Holy Mass according to this new rite, even if I am threatened with ecclesiastical sanctions; and **I shall never advise anyone in a positive manner to take an active part in such a Mass.”**

(Extract from an Oath taken by SSPX priests at their ordination – emphasis ours)

“Is it permitted to take part in the New Mass?”

Even if the New Mass is valid, it displeases God in so far as it is ecumenical and protestant. Besides that, it represents a danger for the faith in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It must therefore be rejected. Whoever understands the problem of the New Mass must no longer assist at it, because he puts voluntarily his faith in danger, and, at the same time, encourages others to do the same in appearing to give his assent to the reforms.

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.

Can one attend the New Mass however when it is celebrated in a worthy and pious manner by a Catholic priest with a faith that is absolutely certain?

It is not the celebrant who is called into question, but the rite that he is using. It is unfortunately a fact that the new rite has given very many Catholics a false notion of the Mass, which is closer to that of the protestant last supper than that of the Holy Sacrifice. The new Mass is one of the principal sources of the current crises of the faith. It is therefore imperative that we distance ourselves from it.”

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

See also: <https://dominicansaville.us/attendance-at-the-new-mass/>)

Bishop Williamson: Then and Now

Then:

“The New Mass is in any case illicit. In any case, it’s designed to please Protestants, it’s designed to undo Catholicism. It’s intrinsically offensive to God, it’s intrinsically evil. That’s how it was designed and that’s how it turned out. ... If the New Mass is valid but illicit, may I attend? NO! The fact that it’s valid does not mean it’s ok to attend.”

(Audio recording, [here](#))

“Take for instance the Novus Ordo Mass. The New Rite as a whole so diminishes the expression of essential Catholic truths...that it is as a whole so bad that no priest should use it, nor Catholic attend it.”

(Eleison Comments #387)

Now:

“I do not say that every person should stay away from every single Novus Ordo Mass.”

(Mahopac, New York, July 2015)

“I do not say to everybody inside the Novus Ordo, priests and laity, I don’t say: ‘You’ve got to get out!’ ”

(St. Catherine’s Ontario, Canada, Nov. 2014)

“I’m sure you ask yourselves: What kind of world are my children going to have to grow up in? How are they going to keep the Faith? Very good question. By prayer and Charity and by frequenting the sacraments, so long as they are still available, so long as it’s at all still possible to reach the sacraments. And some Novus – I’ve got into quite a lot of controversy for saying this, but it’s true – there is no question that some Novus Ordo Masses are valid. And if they’re valid, if the consecration is valid, then it’s defined by the Council of Trent that grace passes, *ex opere operato* is the strict phrase.”

(Vienna Virginia sermon, 20th May, 2016 - <https://youtu.be/GGcr24n8fJo?t=1325>)

“Bishop Williamson: There are a number of decent priests still operating as decent priests inside the Novus Ordo... if you look somewhere in your area within reach of your car’s petrol tank, your gasoline tank, you will find, somewhere, you will find a decent Novus Ordo priest. ... I believe there are some who do understand it and who still want to practice as good priests. Now, they’re forced to celebrate the New Mass.

...
Interviewer: People who go to those [Novus Ordo] Masses, in the vast majority of cases, are of a liberal mindset, they go into the church and come out and answer a survey saying: abortion is acceptable in some circumstances, homosexuality is acceptable, this is acceptable. You, your excellency, are asking me, in this heresy, in this just absolute cesspool of heresy, to try to maybe find some priest which I don’t even think exists, to hear my confession. But to me it is so obvious that this whole thing is fake! How can I participate in it? It’s fake! This has nothing to do with Vatican I, it has nothing to do with the teachings of Pius X, it’s got nothing to do with Pius IX, it has nothing to do with Thomism. It’s Protestantism and Communism. So how can I even approach this as an honest Catholic?

Bishop Williamson: OK, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, I understand where you’re coming from. I only say, I think there’s a little more white around you and available if you look for it than you believe. ... Now you say that the Novus Ordo is all completely gone and rotten. I understand and you can’t afford to eat a half-poisoned cake. I understand. **But if the cake is half-poisoned then there’s half of it that isn’t poisoned.** ...

I'm obviously not pushing the new religion. What I'm saying is that there is still part valid in the new religion along side all that is fake. I may well admit readily that in many cases there's much more fake than there still is validity. That's not the question. **The question is what you should do where you are. And have you got to stay away from everything that's got anything to do with the Novus Ordo. My answer to that absolute question is: no. You don't have to stay absolutely away.** I'm not saying follow the new religion. I'm saying you're young and you're strong, you can drive around the diocese. That SSPX priest probably knows some conservative priest in the area, probably. Ask him."

(Youtube interview with 'Friends of Aquinas', second hour, 4th August, 2022 – <https://youtu.be/casxXTtQFPs> – emphasis ours)

Does the New Mass fulfil my Sunday Obligation?

"If the Novus Ordo Missae is not truly Catholic, then it cannot oblige for one's Sunday obligation."
(*Most Asked Questions of the Society of St. Pius X*, Angelus Press, 1997)

"Heresy, or whatever clearly favours heresy, cannot be matter for obedience."
(*Sixty-Two Reasons...* by The Priests of Campos)

"These New Masses are not only incapable of fulfilling our Sunday obligation, but are such that we must apply to them the canonical rules which the Church customarily applies to *communicatio in sacris* with Orthodox Churches and Protestant sects. Must one conclude further that all these Masses are invalid? As long as the essential conditions for validity are present (matter, form, intention, and a validly ordained priest), I do not see how one can affirm this."
(Archbishop Lefebvre, 08/11/1979)

"We can exceptionally [attend the New Mass], as it Canon Law says for things like Orthodox ceremonies, for some reasons we can assist passively. For a wedding, funerals of parents or things like that, where we feel obliged to be present and we cannot do otherwise, we assist passively. We don't receive communion, we are not participating in the Mass, but we are doing it more out of politeness towards the people who assist at it, than for assisting at the sacrifice of the Mass. Those are conditions that are already mentioned in Canon Law, the old Canon Law. But attending it as one's Sunday Mass, no! It is better to stay home reading and going once a month. Make the effort to go once a month and do 100 km if necessary, to attend the Catholic Mass! Like in the missions, we were visiting our faithful's three times a year. We could not do more! That was the average. This didn't mean that they were bad Christians. They could not do otherwise. It is not an impossible thing.

People say: 'But am I not committing a grave sin by not going to Mass?' Not at that Mass! It does not oblige under pain of grave sin. We are never forced to do something which would tend to diminish our Faith. It's not possible. God cannot force us to do that. On the other hand, we are seriously obliged to do everything possible to attend the Mass of St. Pius V, the Catholic Mass. There, the obligation remains, **but not for a rite that is almost Protestant. On the contrary, there is an obligation not to go.**

I'm a little surprised, you know. Sometimes, I receive a lot of requests for consultations from our priests who are in the priories and **some are asking me: "What should one reply to a person who says he cannot have the Mass of St. Pius V and who believes that he is under the**

obligation to go to a New Rite Mass, said by a good priest, a serious priest who offers all the guarantees almost of holiness? etc.” But I don’t understand why they can’t answer this themselves! They don’t find the conclusion by themselves and they feel obliged to ask me such a thing. **It’s incredible! So you see, there are still some who hesitate. This is unbelievable!”**

(Archbishop Lefebvre, Conference at Écône, 11th April, 1990 – emphasis ours)

“So, if someone asks me: ‘I only have Mass of St. Pius V once a month. So what should I do on the other Sundays? Should I go to the New Mass if I do not have the Mass of St. Pius V?’ - I reply: ‘...Listen, I cannot advise you to go to something which is evil. Myself, I would not go because I would not want to take in this atmosphere. I cannot. It is stronger than me. I cannot go. I would not go. So I advise you not to go.’”

(Archbishop Lefebvre, Spiritual Conference at Écône, 25th June, 1981)

“We understand quite well what troubles you may experience in the circumstances in which you are living, without a good Mass. In fact, in such cases Monseigneur Lefebvre recommends rather to stay at home and pray the rosary in the family and to read the old Mass in the missal than to go to a New Mass...”

(Response to a letter to Archbishop Lefebvre asking for advice, 27th April, 1982. The “circumstances in which you are living” were that there was not a single traditional Mass in the entire country. See [The Recusant 40](#) p.10.)

“That shows you why the new rite which Paul VI himself called: “Novus Ordo Missae,” the “New Order of Mass,” is not a work of the Church. And it cannot be considered the Latin Roman Rite, because the Latin Roman Rite is bound in the old Roman Missal. So what do you call it? Well I call it a schismatic new rite. What does schism mean? Schisma in Greek means a cut. You cut yourself off from the Church. ... You cut yourself off from the Church, you leave the Church in short. A “schismatic act” is not necessarily a formal schismatic act by declaration, so that you can be considered a schismatic, but it is something that cuts off something with the Church. Now against Church Tradition and against the Council of Trent, against Quo Primum and against the interpretation of 400 years of Papacy, Paul VI wrote up a new rite. Therefore, that has to be considered a schismatic rite.”

(Fr. Gregory Hesse - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcYXC6DCgIA>)

“Paul VI came up with a new Protestant rite that was also written by six Protestant pastors who were present, but the point is that he did it, and the point is that this way he committed a schismatic act because that’s an act against the unity of the Church. Now, publishing a schismatic rite is bad enough in itself. Don’t forget that until Vatican II you were not allowed to satisfy your Sunday duty attending a Russian Orthodox or Greek orthodox Mass. Now, ever since the Great Schism in 1054 the Church has recognised the validity all the seven sacraments in both the Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. So the Church has recognised ever since the Great Schism that every single Russian Orthodox Mass presumably is valid. But you are still not allowed to satisfy your Sunday duty there, for a simple reason. The Russian Orthodox deny the Papal Infallibility, they deny the authority of the Pope, they deny the Immaculate Conception, they deny the Assumption. They deny all the Councils except seven or four; they fight each other [over whether to] accept the first seven or the first four Ecumenical Councils. They are heretics and schismatics, so you can’t go there. **How can you fulfil your Sunday duty by attending an act that’s not pleasing to God? It’s absurd!** Now the new Mass, the so-called “New Mass” of Paul VI, not only is schismatic, as you can see from the Council of Trent and what else I’ve said, it is also doubtful ... So you can’t go there because it’s schismatic. You also can’t go there because it is doubtful. And that’s why, as Archbishop Lefebvre of blessed memory said you’d rather stay home than go to the New Mass.”

(Ibid. - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaGLel1_uXY)

Fr. Carl Pulvermacher, OFM:

Q. "What was wrong with going to the Catholic Church on Sunday and Holy Days - refusing to pray or read Novus Ordo prayers, but reading and praying the true, traditional Mass prayers and not financially supporting them? Could I go to Church, ignore the changes, etc., and do what I have been for the past few years? I am not participating in their Novus Ordo Missae service, but attending church where this is going on."

A. "Many Catholics there are who feel the way you do. Missing church on Sunday is frightening - a real shocker to most good Catholics. Shall we judge them severely - those Catholics who do this? I strongly recommend that people stay away from this new service, which is not our Mass. Going unwillingly only encourages those who go along with it. Also, I believe the Novus Ordo is heretical and leads to apostasy from the Faith."

(*The Angelus*, April 1979 - See: www.angelusonline.org)

Q. "We started going to our parish church (Novus Ordo, of course) on the Sundays there was no traditional Mass here. My question is this. Is it wrong to go to our parish church when the traditional Mass is only available so infrequently? Is it wrong to receive Communion or any other Sacrament in the Novus Ordo church? [...]" S. P., Kasson, Minn.

A. "Here we get down to the bare facts. In all questions like this I always advise people to avoid attending the New Mass, as well as the altered Sacraments. I do not say they are always invalid. However, this alone doesn't make them good. The New Mass is not grace-giving. It is not our Catholic Mass. The only reason it was created was to destroy our true Mass."

(*The Angelus*, March, 1984)

Q. Several people objected to my saying, in last month's column, that the New Mass was not grace-giving. "It is heresy to hold a valid Mass is not grace giving."

A. "First of all, there is a difference between validity and grace-giving. I believe the one may be present without the other. Surely, I do not claim that in every case the New Mass is invalid. I hate to make comparisons but I know you would agree that a valid Satanic mass (Black Mass) would not be grace giving.[...] I have yet to see a single Catholic who has truly benefitted from the New Mass. Never have I seen a novus ordo convent or a monastery where religious life was not in a state of decline. When we had the True Mass, normal progress was seen. When we adopted the Novus Ordo, we have seen normal decline. I dare any person - cleric or lay - to prove the grace-givingness of the New Ordo liturgy!"

(*The Angelus*, April 1984)

Q. "If I were to take your advice I would not attend a Mass from one year to another. If we lived in happier times and the Tridentine Mass was as available as the other, then I would go all the way with you. But, sad to say, this is not the case...I'm afraid if people took your advice they would eventually drift away from the Church and lose their faith...I am sorry to say that I believe your advice to be totally wrong and immeasurably harmful." F. G., Hants, England.

A. "My advice was, and still is, the same. It seems to be insane to say: "Don't go to the Novus Ordo Mass even under the best of circumstances!" I do not deny that in some cases it could be valid. It might be said with some dignity by a validly ordained, sad, old priest. [...] The devil hates our Holy Mass and he will do anything to stop it or slow it down. He can even make us feel sorry for the New Mass and for the good priests who obediently say it with sorrow. I am sure there are many good Catholics who go to it with sorrow because they want to be obedient children of Holy Mother

Church. I will not judge them, or you - God knows all things. However, because of what I know of the New Mass, I shall never advise anyone to go to it, even if it is sometimes valid. I do not want to give advice that is wrong or harmful."

(The Angelus, May 1984)