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Dz: Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma [available from [Angelus Press](#)]

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When can the Prayer to St. Michael against the devil and the bad angels be recited?

This powerful prayer (see below in its original entirety), written by Pope Leo XIII in 1888, was incorporated into the *Roman Ritual* in 1925 (Tit. XI, Cap. 3) with the rubric that it can be recited by bishops or by priests who have received the authority to do so from their Ordinaries. However, this rubric concerns the public prayers of the Church that are contained in the *Roman Ritual*. The same restriction does not apply to the private recitation of this prayer by any individual priest, or any of the faithful for that matter, as many bishops permitted and encouraged before Vatican II.

The Church's traditional teaching concerning the recitation of private exorcism prayers is contained in the *Moral Theology* manual of Dominicus Prümmer (Vol. II, §463):

It is not only clerics who can pronounce an exorcism in a private and secret manner, enjoying a special power over the devils in virtue of the order of the exorcistate, but also the laity themselves. It is in no way forbidden to the laity nor does any inconvenient arise from it. Thus we read in history how several lay persons, such as St. Catherine of Siena and St. Anthony of the Desert, cast out devils.

Consequently, it is in no way inappropriate for the laity to recite the exorcism prayer of Pope Leo XIII, provided that they do so privately. It will certainly be very powerful in overcoming the temptations and evil snares of the devil.

One wonders why it is that post-Vatican II authors have scruples concerning the recitation of this magnificent prayer, stating that since the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* it is no longer permitted. In fact, the same rule of the necessity of permission for public exorcisms is retained (Canon 1172). There is, however, no determination concerning the private recitation of an exorcism prayer, which is consequently perfectly permissible. Of course, we all know why it is that the modern church has changed the rites of exorcism, done away with the traditional powerful prayers, and discouraged all such commands in the name of Christ against the power of evil: it is that the devil is henceforth treated more as a mythical figure than as a reality that we must deal with every day, as St. Peter teaches: "*Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour*" (I Pet. 5:8).

The gravity of sin, the danger of eternal damnation and the personal power of evil that the devil is able to exercise in this corrupt world, the corruption of the

Church, and its infiltration by its enemies, even to the papacy, are so many realities pushed aside by the modernists, but of which we are reminded in this prayer:

On men depraved in mind and corrupt in heart the wicked dragon pours out like a most foul river the poison of his villainy, a spirit of lying, impiety and blasphemy; and the deadly breath of lust and of all iniquities and vices. Her most crafty enemies have engulfed the Church, the Spouse of the Immaculate Lamb, with sorrows, they have drenched her with wormwood; on all Her desirable things they have laid their wicked hands. Where the See of Blessed Peter and the Chair of Truth have been set up for the light of the Gentiles, there they have placed the throne of the abomination of their wickedness, so that, the Pastor having been struck, they may also be able to scatter the flock. Therefore, O thou unconquerable Leader, be present with the people of God against the spiritual wickednesses which are bursting in upon them: and bring them the victory.

Is it any wonder that the modernists consider this prayer "dangerous" for the soul? In fact, to the contrary, it is the refusal to pray in this way that is dangerous for the soul.

Is it true to say that now there is a "conciliar" Church?

The term "conciliar" is an adjective that has long been used to describe those things that relate to the Second Vatican Council, such as the documents, commissions, or novel teachings such as Religious Liberty and Ecumenism. The question raises the objection as to whether this adjective can be used to describe the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council.

In order to respond to the question a clear distinction has to be made. If by the term "church" is understood the visible, hierarchical structure, founded upon the rock of St. Peter, then clearly there can only be one Church, the Catholic Church. If we were to call the Catholic Church after Vatican II "conciliar" in this sense, then we would claim that it is no longer Catholic at all, but instead a separate visible, hierarchical structure. However, this is manifestly false, both because the adepts of Vatican II have hijacked the visible hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, and because they profess publicly to be Catholics.

However, there is another sense in which the term "conciliar" can rightly be applied to the majority of persons who profess to be Catholic, as well as to their ideas and opinions, profoundly influenced as they are by the Second Vatican Council. In this sense "conciliar" refers to the persons who have embraced and who promote the novelties of Vatican II, as well as to the novelties themselves. There are varying degrees of influence of the modern errors, from liberal Catholicism through rash opposition to Tradition to outright apostasy. The term conciliar or post-conciliar can consequently be applied to the modernist church, not as it is a canonical institution, but inasmuch and to the degree that it promotes the revolutionary errors of Vatican II.

Archbishop Lefebvre understood this reality very clearly, and the grave danger brought about by the infiltration of all these modernist principles within the very bosom of the Catholic Church. He had this to say of Rome in 1974, in his famous declaration of November 21:

We hold fast, with all our heart and with all our soul, to Catholic Rome, Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary to preserve this Faith, to Eternal Rome, Mistress of wisdom and truth.

We refuse, on the other hand, and have always refused to follow the Rome of neo-Modernist and neo-Protestant tendencies which were

clearly evident in the Second Vatican Council and, after the Council, in all the reforms which issued from it.

In his book *Spiritual Journey*, Archbishop Lefebvre explained how the end result of this Conciliar Church is to separate its members little by little from the true Catholic Church established by Our Lord. By this he means that its revolutionary principles of freedom at all cost separate the clergy and faithful little by little from Tradition and produce indifferentism for all religions, eventually destroying the Catholic faith in the one true Church, and bringing about a generalized apostasy, even of those persons who outwardly appear to still be members of the Catholic Church.

Certainly, the Church itself guards its sanctity and its sources of sanctification, but the control of its institutions by unfaithful popes and apostate bishops ruins the faith of the faithful and the clergy, sterilizes the instruments of grace, and favors the assault of all the powers of Hell which seem to triumph. This apostasy makes its members adulterers, schismatics opposed to all Tradition, separated from the past of the Church, and thus separated from the Church of today, in the measure that it remains faithful to the Church of Our Lord. [p.54]

[Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Why is it that priests are not assigned to their own countries, or to their own part of the world even, or to their own language?

Although there are a multitude of different factors that superiors have to take into account in assigning priests, and although these include the natural capacities of the priest, his understanding of culture, language, historical background of the people to be administered to, there is another much more profound reason according to which priestly assignments must be seen as the work of divine Providence.

This reason is precisely the maintaining of the profoundly supernatural quality of our work to restore all things in Christ. This is why it is that the assignment of priests is not uniquely, or even primarily, on account of language or natural gifts and talents. There can be no place for personal empires and endeavors in a Society like ours. Each of us must, like St. John the Baptist, "*decrease*" that Christ might "*increase*" (Jn. 3:30). The priest's willingness to accept this is the sure sign that his work is Christ's work, the work of grace.

Likewise the willingness of the faithful to accept the transfer of priests is essential to the success of our work. Frequently, there will be no apparent reason. In fact, often times, it will simply not make sense at all according to any human calculations, on account of the difficulties of dealing with priests who may not be familiar with the language, culture, history, customs of the souls entrusted to them, or on account of the great sacrifices of self-denial required by both priests and faithful.

However, the great treasure is that it is precisely through such reassignments that the work remains profoundly and fundamentally the same, and that is maintained the supernatural unity of our Society, living its motto *Cor unum et anima una*, having "*but one heart and one soul*" (Acts 4:32). Indeed, for the soul who understands the Faith and spiritual things there is one common language that transcends all else, and it is that of the Faith. It is a great consolation to know that regardless of what part of the world we come from, which language we speak, what be our social, educational, economic or cultural background, we share, promote, preach, teach, live the same supernatural inheritance. It is this religious spirit that is essential to the supernatural work of our Society.

[Answered by Fr. Peter Scott]

Are the prayers after Low Mass to be recited for the conversion of Russia, and if so why is this rarely announced?

It was Pope Leo XIII who prescribed the recitation of prayers after private Low Masses, by a decree dated January 6, 1884. This included all the prayers that are customarily said after private Low Masses, with the exception of the prayer *Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us*. The three-fold repetition of this prayer was strongly recommended by St. Pius X on August 19, 1904. Benedict XV requested that these prayers continue to be said, but it was only Pius XI, who in a consistorial allocution of June 30, 1930, requested that these prayers be said for the freedom of the Church in Russia. At the same time, he urged priests and bishops to remind the faithful frequently of this intention.

As is well known, atheism reigns supreme in Russia, despite the apparent fall of Communism. The Church continues to be persecuted, despite the attempts of Cardinal Kasper to promote ecumenism with the Orthodox, and the Catholic Church is not one of the four religions that enjoy freedom of religion in Russia. Furthermore, we are very far from the conversion of Russia, that Our Lady of Fatima asked us to pray for, as a sign of the triumph of her Immaculate Heart. Consequently, it is eminently appropriate for us to often renew this intention given by Pope Pius XI. If priests rarely announce this special intention, it is probably because they presume that the faithful are aware of it. However, it would not be at all out of place to renew this reminder more often. [Answered by Fr. Peter Scott]

Is it a sin for a traditional Catholic family to have a television in the home?

I do not believe that the question is asked in the correct way, which would be: Is it the will of God for a traditional Catholic family to have a television in the home? I think that simply by rephrasing the question, the answer becomes much more obvious. Nevertheless, let us answer the question as posed.

It is manifestly obvious that in itself the television is but an electronic gadget, and the fact of owning such a gadget is neither morally good nor morally evil. It is indifferent. The morality comes from the end for which the television exists in the home, and from the associated circumstances that inseparably accompany the existence of such a gadget in the home.

It is equally obvious, and every traditional Catholic will admit it, that the regular watching of television for children is an occasion of sin, and this not just because of the obvious sins of impurity, but especially of materialism, concupiscence of the eyes, the loss of the Faith and the perversion of the mind by the parading of the false ideals of subjectivism and liberalism continually before the eyes of the young. He who exposes himself deliberately to a proximate occasion of sin commits a sin, and it will be a mortal sin if the proximate occasion to which he exposes himself is of a mortal sin. How much more serious is the culpability of those parents who expose their defenseless children to the perversions presented as ideals by the world of television!

However, there are many traditional Catholics who admit the above principles, but who still feel that they can keep a television in their home. After all, they are intelligent people, and they are perfectly capable of controlling the use of television to only good, approved shows, and it enables them to watch videos which are entirely within their control. Why would this not be licit, they maintain.

Such an abstract consideration of the use of television fails to consider an essential circumstance that substantially modifies the morality of the use of television. It is profoundly addictive, for it panders to our desire for visual self-satisfaction and to our inborn laziness. Any person who claims that he can control its inroads into his own life, let alone his family's life, is sadly deceiving himself.

He denies the ugly reality of the wounds of original sin, that we all have to live with. Furthermore, television, in the practical use to which man puts it, necessarily provokes the capital vice of sloth. For it preoccupies man with transitory, visual, material things, paralyzes his ability to think and to elevate his soul to spiritual things, and prevents him from rejoicing in the things of God, in divine truth, and in heavenly aspirations. This is precisely how St. Thomas Aquinas defines the capital sin of sloth. By promoting sloth, television destroys recollection, the interior life of prayer, and union with God. How rare indeed is that situation in which, in practice, it is not at least an imperfection or venial sin for a traditional Catholic man to allow a television to remain in his home!

Some folks object to this radical conclusion by stating that they only use their television for watching videos, and especially religious videos, and that there is no sin at all in watching such videos. This is all perfectly true, and there may indeed be some families in which there is such strict discipline that there is no temptation to use this means other than for such edifying videos, and in which such audiovisual means are kept so carefully under control that there is no danger of provoking sloth. In such circumstances there is manifestly no sin at all, but we all know how infrequent and fragile such a situation is.

Furthermore, a family that is truly God-centered, a family that strives to maintain an interior life, a family that desires to distance itself from the world, is going to have a horror for this terribly effective instrument for the perversion of modern society. It will realize that the television is a destroyer of all family life, of shared activities of all kinds, as well as of the supernatural life. It will see that the little benefit to be gained by an occasional video is far outweighed by the grave danger of placing such an occasion of worldliness in their midst, and will reject it outright.

It is precisely for this reason that the television is forbidden in religious communities, which furthermore have the discipline that could potentially prevent its abuse. Archbishop Lefebvre was a great example in this regard. After he fought against the introduction of the television into the Holy Ghost Fathers during the 1960's, he had the wisdom to include this very categorical prescription in the Statutes of the Society of St. Pius X:

They shall take care to break with the habits of the world, which has become a slave to radio, television, vacations and costly leisure. Hence, there shall be no television set in our communities.... Our true television is the Tabernacle, where dwells He Who puts us in communication with all spiritual and temporal realities. (VI, 7)

Note that the Archbishop does not just forbid television in our houses, but also gives the reason why. If such a rule is good enough for the spiritual family of the Society, why would it not be good enough for traditional Catholic families, in which there is much greater danger of abuse?

Our holy founder had likewise the same wisdom when it came to writing the rule of the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X. Not only did he list "*to abstain from television*" amongst the personal obligations of Third Order members. He also listed it again under the obligations of the married, when he described how their home should be, and when he lists television as one of two examples of things that can harm the souls of children. Here is the full obligation:

To make of the family home a sanctuary consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary where evening prayers are recited in the family and, if possible, the Rosary. Liturgical life should be paramount on Sundays and feast days. Avoid everything that could harm the souls of children; television, unclean magazines.

Surely this means that televisions should not even be present in the home, in the same way that a Catholic man would detest the thought of having unclean magazines somewhere hidden in his home.

It is this aspect of the rule of the Society's Third Order that has most discouraged the faithful from joining. They consider that it is too difficult, too radical, too different from the ways of the world. They consider that it would be much easier to join one of the other older Third Orders, which do not have this in their rule, such as the Carmelite, Franciscan or Dominican.

[Ed's note in the October 2003 issue of *The Angelus*: It has been brought to our attention that, contrary to a July 2003 answer in this column, it is not only the Third Order of the SSPX which has in its statutes a requirement that its members abstain from television. The Dominican Tertiaries attached to the Convent of la Haye-aux-Bonshommes in Avrillé, France, also have the same rule in their statutes: "*Insofar as they are in authority, they will not have television in their homes*" (Ch. IX, no. 43 under "The Obligation to Avoid Worldly Outings and Amusements"). It should be further noted that the other traditional Third Orders are currently under the direction of Society priests, and not priests of their respective Orders (*i.e.*, Carmelites, Franciscans). As these Orders similarly forbid "*worldly outings and amusements*" in their Third Order constitutions, certainly if their Rules had been updated for modern problems (which the traditional Dominican Fathers of Avrillé did), they too would have forbidden television in the homes of their Tertiaries].

They seriously deceive themselves, for if the exclusion of television is not a part of these Third Order rules, it is not that it is any less important for these Third Orders than it is for the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X, but simply that the television did not exist when the rules were written. Any person who is serious about his own and his family's spiritual life, and who desires to join a Third Order, will have a great desire to rid himself of the television, and will consider that the little gain of being able to watch videos is nothing compared to the grave danger of having such an instrument of perversion in the midst of his family.

This elimination of the television from the homes of Third Order members is in fact an illustration of the great value of the Society's Third Order. Not only is it adapted to the real times in which we are presently living, but in addition it unites the laity to the priests in their daily Masses, spiritual life, and sacrifices, so that they can share in the special grace of the Society to fight for the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and contribute their own merits to this combat. May there be many generous families willing to rid their homes of the television, grave impediment to their spiritual life as it is, in order to live the supernatural life of grace more profoundly. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Protestants say that a tithe of 10% of gross income is obligatory according to Scripture. Are Catholics bound to keep this rule?

The obligation of offering a tenth part of the produce as an offering to God and to His ministers is one of the legal prescriptions of the Mosaic law (*Dt.* 14:22) that Our Lord did away with when He came to fulfill the law in His own person. It is certainly true that under the new law, as under the old, the faithful owe support to the ministers of the altar. However, since the new law is interior, it is left to the generosity of the faithful in the practice of the virtues of justice and charity to determine the quantity.

In fact, the Church has declared that support is strictly owed in justice to the ministers of the Church, and that it is not pure alms that can be withdrawn at will. The contrary opinion was one of the errors of John Wycliffe condemned at the Council of Constance in 1415 (*Dz*, 598). This is indeed a part of the natural law, that requires that those who minister receive a commensurate remuneration.

It is also according to the divine law, as taught by Our Lord, "for the workman is worthy of his meat" (*Mt.* 10:10) and by St. Paul:

Know you not, that they who work in the holy place, eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar, partake with the altar. So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. (*I Cor.* 9:13,14)

Thus it is that the Waldensian heretics had to recant the denial of this when being received back into the Church in 1208 by professing: "*We believe that tithes and first fruits and oblations should be paid to the clergy, according to the Lord's command.*" (*Dz*, 427). Consequently those who refuse to contribute to the support of the Church and the clergy are guilty of two sins: they are guilty of injustice, by refusing the support that they owe, and they are guilty of a sin against religion by not contributing according to their means to the support of the Church.

In many places during the Middle Ages it became custom and particular law for the 10% figure to become obligatory, especially in the East. Bouscaren & Ellis in their *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, have this to say: "(This) *has long since become obsolete except in a few churches which have kept the ancient custom by reason of local statutes*" (p. 747). Consequently, the Church's law gives no precision about the quantity of the donations that are to be given in support of the clergy. The current mind of the Church on the matter is reflected in canon 1502 of the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*: "*Local statutes as well as laudable customs regarding tithes and first fruits are to be respected.*"

When speaking of this issue, St. Thomas Aquinas explains why it is that the Church does not demand the 10% tithe, and why it would be dis-edifying and inappropriate to revive this local custom:

The ministers of the Church ought to be more solicitous for the increase of spiritual goods in the people, than for the amassing of temporal goods: and hence the Apostle was unwilling to make use of the right given him by the Lord of receiving his livelihood from those to whom he preached the Gospel, lest he should occasion a hindrance to the Gospel of Christ....In like manner the ministers of the Church rightly refrain from demanding the Church's tithes, when they could not demand them without scandal, on account of their having fallen into desuetude, or for some other reason. Nevertheless those who do not give tithes in places where the Church does not demand them are not in a state of damnation, unless they be obstinate, and unwilling to pay even if tithes were demanded of them. (*ST*, IIa IIae, Q. 87, A. 1 ad. 5)

This judicious balance of the Angelic Doctor is remarkable. The principle of contributing to the support is maintained, but the Church is not so small-minded as to insist on a certain sum or proportion, although it has the right to do so. It leaves all this in God's hands, knowing that God will provide for all the needs of His true Church, and of the clergy who have consecrated their lives to its service. Protestants who demand a tithe err by acting as if the Mosaic law were still in vigor, by a very materialist conception of the law, centered upon temporal goods, and by failing to give due priority to the Church's true mission —the salvation of souls.

Consequently, no Catholic should feel under any kind of moral obligation to give 10% to the support of the Church, and most importantly if it would mean sacrificing the necessities of food, clothing, shelter and transportation. Yet every Catholic is under the moral obligation to give according to their means, whether their farthing be 1%, or whether, perhaps, if they are comfortably established in life, it be closer to 20% or even more. It is for each person to decide before God

what is a reasonable proportion to contribute to the support of the Church, and the Church's charitable works, concealing his generosity, so that, figuratively at least, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Nevertheless, if he is prudent he will also include this proportion, whatever he decides upon, in his budget for the month. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

CATHOLIC FAQs ARTICLE

[Why is it that we have so relatively few vocations in the traditional movement?](#)

This answer is featured as a separate article due to its lengthy reply: click on the question to go to the article.

[Is Alcoholics Anonymous penetrated by the principles of naturalism, and if so, how can it be justifiable for a traditional Catholic to belong to it?](#)

There can be no doubt about the essential accusation of naturalism, nor that it is penetrated by the principles of syncretism, that theory that regards all religions as different aspects of one world religion. It is certainly true that AA has never pretended to be anything else but this. It openly encourages all to believe in their god or power, as they understand it. As such it is a danger to the Faith of the weak. In this way it is penetrated with the ideas of Freemasonry. However, it cannot be equated with this condemned organization, which truly is a secret society and has a hidden purpose. AA's purpose is not to promote anti-Catholic philosophies, but to help alcoholics, albeit by purely naturalistic means.

I always feel uncomfortable recommending our faithful to attend AA. However, sometimes there is simply no choice. A purely spiritual solution does not work, for these people have a severe personality disorder that requires a natural and psychological help. Anybody who maintains that confession and the spirit of penance suffice to cure alcoholism have absolutely no medical understanding of the condition at all. They are necessary, but not sufficient. The weak character, filled with self-doubt, lack of self-confidence and poor self esteem also needs help. There can be no denying the fact that Alcoholics Anonymous is particularly effective in providing this psychological help. Innumerable are the traditional Catholics who owe their sanity and their ability to live in the state of grace to the psychological support that this organization has given. In actual fact, we have no serious alternative to AA, with the sole exception of regular weekly professional counseling, which can be prohibitively expensive, and often times not nearly as effective.

Consequently, I maintain that it is permissible to use AA, in cases where the alcoholic has a strong faith, and provided that the danger to the faith be avoided by regular reception of the sacraments and spiritual direction. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

CATHOLIC FAQs ARTICLE

[Is it possible to say that the post-Conciliar Church is a new religion, and if so, how can it be considered as Catholic?](#)

This answer is featured as a separate article due to its lengthy reply: click on the question to go to the article.

Why is it that the priests of the Society do not send faithful who have grounds of annulment to the local diocesan tribunal?

Not infrequently the priests of the Society are contacted by faithful who have been previously married, but whose marriage failed. They will sometimes present convincing evidence of the nullity of their previous marriage, such as the refusal of children on the part of one or both parties. They are there placed in a difficult predicament:

- On the one hand the Society does not have jurisdiction to establish tribunals that could give a certain judgment in such a case;
- On the other hand, the diocesan tribunals do not grant certitude either, for even when there are solid potential grounds to truly question the validity of the marriage, they will always resort to the easy grounds of "*lack of due discretion*," provided for in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1095, §2.

Consequently, if a traditional priest were to send his faithful to a diocesan tribunal, he would effectively condemn them to uncertainty, to never knowing for sure their marriage status. However, the whole purpose of an annulment tribunal is to establish moral certitude, on the basis of which a person can act. A tribunal that refuses to do this does not perform its duty and is worthless. The modernist tribunals almost always consider exclusively psychological reasons, such as lack of maturity, that make the marriage imprudent. They call this "lack of due discretion." However, this in no way proves that the marriage did not happen, and that the vows were without any object, as when one of the couple refuses true consent. Consequently, the decision of the modernist tribunals gives no certitude at all, and certainly does not give the person the ability to act as if he or she were not married and to enter into another marriage. This is why the Society of St. Pius X refuses to marry people who have decrees of nullity from modernist tribunals.

The faithful who have an upright intention, who are seeking true certitude, and who would never dream of entering sacrilegiously into a subsequent doubtful marriage, consequently come to the Society asking us to resolve their doubt. Our priests know full well that it is not because there seems to be some good grounds that the marriage can be considered as null and void. It takes a tribunal to make such a declaration, after due consideration, following all the norms of canon law. The salvation of souls requires that the Society have such tribunals, and consequently the Church supplies jurisdiction for such judgments, as it does for marriages themselves.

Sometimes it is objected that the Society should study the case first, and then send it to a diocesan tribunal. The problem is that simply studying the case will not obtain the required moral certitude. It is only a canonical judgment, following the norms of marriage tribunals that can do this. We can only study it by erecting tribunals to treat these cases. Any other way of studying them would be misleading, unjust and would perpetrate the uncertainty.

Another reason why Society priests refuse to refer their faithful to the *Novus Ordo* tribunals is to avoid confusion and scandal for the weak. How can the faithful be expected to accept our firm rulings, protecting the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage, if we were to send our faithful to tribunals who do not at all, in practice, accept them? Human nature is such that they will listen only to the answer they want to hear. It is only years later, after entering into a second, and possibly invalid second marriage, that they will have to grapple with their compromised conscience. It would be a total contradiction of all that we are doing to restore all things in Christ and to save souls, if we were to do this. The continued worsening of the crisis in the Church has made it more necessary than ever before for us to be very firm on this point. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Why does the Society of St. Pius X administer conditionally the sacraments of baptism and confirmation to those who received them in the *Novus Ordo*?

It is forbidden for a priest to administer a sacrament conditionally unless there is some doubt about the validity of the sacrament already received. A mere suspicion does not suffice, but any real doubt does (*i.e.*, when there is a positive reason to think that the sacrament might have been invalidly administered), since the sacraments are so necessary for the salvation and sanctification of our souls.

In general there is no doubt as to the validity of the sacrament of baptism administered in the post-Conciliar Church, since the matter and the form are very simple and have been retained, despite the whole new theology replacing the washing of original sin (and actual sin in adults) from the soul with the nebulous social concept of belonging to a community. In general, there is no reason to doubt that the priest has the intention of doing what the Church does, even though he may have a false notion of what this is. However, it will happen from time to time, that the sacrament is administered in such a sacrilegious way as to place in doubt even the matter or form or even the intention of doing what the Church does. In such rare cases, in which even the rules of the *Novus Ordo* are not followed, it may be necessary to administer the sacrament of baptism conditionally in order to guarantee validity.

The bishops of the Society administer the sacrament of confirmation conditionally when the faithful request it, that is, when they have a reasonable doubt as to the validity of the sacrament that they received, and this doubt cannot be resolved, as is usually the case. This is the case if oil other than the sacred chrism is used, or an oil other than olive oil (highly doubtful, since at variance with the divine institution of using olive oil) as is now permitted in the new rites, or if the signing with the sacred chrism and the imposition of the hand were not done at the same time, or if there is a doubt about the words used. Since there is a great variety in the words used, and since the traditional words "*I sign thee with the sign of the cross and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*" are never used, there is very frequently a doubt about the validity of the administration of this sacrament. This is the reason why the Society's bishops do not hesitate to administer it conditionally when asked to do so. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Is the *Novus Ordo Mass* invalid, or sacrilegious, and should I assist at it when I have no alternative?

The validity of the reformed rite of Mass, as issued in Latin by Paul VI in 1969, must be judged according to the same criteria as the validity of the other sacraments; namely matter, form and intention. The defective theology and meaning of the rites, eliminating as they do every reference to the principal propitiatory end of sacrifice, do not necessarily invalidate the Mass. The intention of doing what the Church does, even if the priest understands it imperfectly, is sufficient for validity. With respect to the matter, pure wheaten bread and true wine from grapes are what is required for validity. The changes in the words of the form in the Latin original, although certainly illicit and unprecedented in the history of the Church, do not alter the substance of its meaning, and consequently do not invalidate the Mass.

However, we all know that such a New Mass celebrated in Latin is an oddity, doomed to extinction by the very fact of the reform. The validity of the New Masses that are actually celebrated in today's parishes more than 30 years later is a quite different question. Additives to the host sometimes invalidate the matter. The change in the translation from the words of Our Lord, "*for many*" to the ecumenically acceptable "*for all*" throws at least some doubt on the validity of the form. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the intention of the Church of offering up a true sacrifice in propitiation for the sins of the living and the dead

has been obliterated for 30 years. In fact, most liturgies present the contrary intention of a celebration by the community of the praise of God. In such circumstances it is very easy for a priest to no longer have the intention of doing what the Church does, and for the New Mass to become invalid for this reason. The problem is that this is hidden and nobody knows. Whereas the traditional Mass expresses the true intention of the Church in a clear and unambiguous manner, so that everyone can be certain of the priest's intention, the New Mass does no such thing. Consequently, the doubt of invalidity for lack of intention, especially in the case of manifestly modernist priests, cannot be easily lifted or removed.

Clearly, an invalid Mass is not a Mass at all, and does not satisfy the Sunday obligation. Furthermore, when it comes to the sacraments, Catholics are obliged to follow the "*pars tutior*," the safer path. It is not permissible to knowingly receive doubtful sacraments. Consequently nobody has the obligation to satisfy his Sunday obligation by attending the New Mass, even if there is no other alternative.

However, even if we could be certain of the validity of the *Novus Ordo* Masses celebrated in today's Conciliar churches, it does not follow that they are pleasing to God. Much to the contrary, they are objectively sacrilegious, even if those who assist at them are not aware of it. By such a statement, I do not mean that all those who celebrate or assist at the New Mass are necessarily in mortal sin, having done something directly insulting to Almighty God and to our Divine Savior.

Sacrilege is a sin against the virtue of religion, and is defined as "*the unbecoming treatment of a sacred person, place or thing as far as these are consecrated to God*" (Jone, *Moral Theology*, p.108). The moral theologians explain that sacrilege is in itself and generally a mortal sin (*ex genere suo*), but that it is not always a mortal sin, because it can concern a relatively small or unimportant thing. Here we are speaking of a real sacrilege, the dishonoring of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by the elimination of the prayers and ceremonies that protect its holiness, by the absence of respect, piety and adoration, and by the failure to express the Catholic doctrine of the Mass as a true propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Here there are varying degrees. Just as it is a grave sacrilege and objective mortal sin for a lay person to touch the sacred host without reason, so it is, for example, a venial sin to do the same thing to the chalice or the blessed linens, such as the purificator or pall.

Likewise with the New Mass. It can be an objectively mortal sin of sacrilege if Holy Communion is distributed in the hand or by lay ministers, if there is no respect, if there is talking or dancing in church, or if it includes some kind of ecumenical celebration, etc. It can also be an objectively venial sin of sacrilege if it is celebrated with unusual respect and devotion, so that it appears becoming and reverential to Almighty God. This in virtue of the omissions in the rites and ceremonies, which constitute a true disrespect to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Trinity, and of the failure to express the true nature of what the Mass really is. In each case, the subjective culpability is an altogether other question that God only can judge.

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. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Can Ss. Catherine of Siena and Therese of the Child Jesus be considered Doctors of the Church?

The term "Doctor of the Church" is a title of honor that was first attributed to those of the Fathers who were most eminent in the wisdom of their writings and the holiness of their lives. They were consequently extraordinary teachers of the Faith. The original or great Doctors were the four Western doctors, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory the Great, and the four eastern doctors, St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. John Chrysostom.

Additional Doctors have been declared over the centuries, and it was Pope Benedict XIV who laid down the three conditions for such a proclamation: *eminens doctrina, insignis vitae sanctitas, Ecclesiae declaratio*, that is eminent learning, a high degree of sanctity and the express declaration of the Church, as Pope Pius XI reiterated at the time of the proclamation of St. John of the Cross as Doctor of the Universal Church in 1926 (*Die Vicesima Septima*). The theologians add that there is a fourth and presumed condition, namely the orthodoxy of faith (Cf. Zubizarreta, Vol. I, No. 692).

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* has this to say about the conferring of the title Doctor of the Church before Vatican II:

In practice the procedure consists in extending to the Universal Church the use of the Office and Mass of a saint in which the title of Doctor is applied to him. The decree is issued by the Congregation of Sacred Rites and approved by the pope, after a careful examination, if necessary, of the saint's writings. It is not in any way an *ex cathedra* decision, nor does it even amount to a declaration that no error is to be found in the teaching of the Doctor. It is, indeed, well known that the very greatest of them are not wholly immune from error. No martyr has ever been included in the list, since the Office and Mass are for Confessors (Vol. V, p. 75).

It is not surprising that most of the early Doctors were bishops, since the bishops make up the *Ecclesia docens*, the teaching Church, whereas the rest of us make up the *Ecclesia discens*, the Church inasmuch as it is taught or instructed. The reason for this distinction is that the bishops alone have the official function to teach the deposit of the Faith, whereas the rest of us have the duty to learn and keep it. It is certainly understandable that the concept of Doctor would be enlarged to also include priests who were saints, for priests participate in the bishops' teaching role. Thus St. Jerome, a Father of the Church is included, and also other priests such as St. John of the Cross, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernard, and St. Anthony of Padua. It is also reasonable that St. Ephraem, who was a deacon, would also be included. All are Confessors, and the liturgical privileges of Doctors can be applied even to those who are not Pontiffs.

However, the post-Vatican II idea of including these very great women saints in the list of Doctors is a novelty. Liturgically they are not Confessors but Virgins, nor can they be treated as Confessors, for the public teaching of the Faith is not something that can be delegated to women, according to St. Paul:

Let women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as also the law saith. But if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church (*I Cor. 14:34, 35*).

This being said, it is nevertheless manifestly obvious that the lives of these three great women fulfill all four conditions laid down for the proclamation of a Doctor of the Church, and that they played no less of a leadership role for the Universal Church than St. Joan of Arc did for France. No Catholic can doubt their orthodoxy nor their sanctity. Moreover if they did not have the eminent book learning of Sacred Theology that is generally associated with a Doctor of the Church, they most assuredly did have infused knowledge from God, allowing their words and writings to make a profound impact on the history and development of the Church.

Moreover, it must be remembered that there was nothing feminist about these great saints, whose every action defending the Church's magisterial teaching authority, whether it be St. Catherine of Siena, encouraging Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome, St. Teresa of Avila laying down the principles of the mystical life and the Carmelite reform for both men and women, or St. Therese of the Child Jesus, opening up to all souls the little way of childlike abandonment by the incredible story of her soul, thus becoming the patron of the missions.

We could legitimately ask the question why clergymen would feel the need to expand the notion of a Doctor to include women, and whether there is in this desire a deep-seated influence from the feminist egalitarianism that is one aspect of the post-Conciliar revolution in the Church. It certainly seems that this is the real motivation. However, the right of the Church to extend the concept of "Doctor" in an analogical sense, to those who share the necessary qualities, but who are not actually Confessors, that is public teachers, but Virgins, cannot be denied. The term "Doctor" still retains a very real meaning, even if the differences, as in every analogy, are greater than the similarity.

This is what is meant by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter of October 19, 1997, *Divini Amoris Scientia*, which admits that *"in the writings of Therese of Lisieux we do not find, perhaps, as in other Doctors, a scholarly presentation of the things of God"* (§7), but nevertheless declares that the eminence of her teaching concerning the spiritual life is the basis for this honor:

From careful study of the writings of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and from the resonance they have had in the Church, salient aspects can be noted of her 'eminent doctrine', which is the fundamental element for conferring the title of Doctor of the Church (*Ibid.*).

He makes a comparison with the proclamation of St. Catherine of Siena as Doctor of the Church by Paul VI in 1970:

We can apply to Therese of Lisieux what my Predecessor, Paul VI, said of another young saint and Doctor of the Church, Catherine of Siena: *"What strikes us most about the saint is her infused wisdom, that is to say, her lucid, profound and inebriating absorption of the divine truths and mysteries of faith..."* (*Ibid.*).

In conclusion, we can certainly accept the proclamation of these great saints as Doctors, for as John Paul II says of St. Therese, she *"appears as an authentic teacher of faith and the Christian life"* (*op. cit.* §8). However, we must be aware that we are not using this term in the same way as it is used to indicate Doctors who are Confessors, whether Pontiffs or not. When applied to a Doctor who is a Virgin it takes on an analogical and quite different sense to that which it has for a Doctor who is a Confessor. These holy Virgins taught despite themselves, moved by divine inspiration, without having any pretense of having the public function of doing so. Furthermore, these Doctor Virgins can clearly not be assimilated to Doctor Confessors in the texts of the Liturgy. However, it is in the liturgical offices that the practical consequences of the title of "Doctor" are most felt, hence the bizarreness of Doctor Virgins, for whom there is no place in the traditional Mass.
[Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Can a traditional Catholic go to confession to a *Novus Ordo* priest?

It would certainly be valid to go to confession to a priest who still celebrates the *Novus Ordo* Mass, provided that the penitent were assured of the doctrinal orthodoxy of the priest, his intention of doing what the Church does, and his use of the correct formula of absolution. It would furthermore be permissible in a state of necessity, such as when a person is dying and no traditional priest can be found.

However, it is not easy to have the assurance of a valid absolution, given the fact that the post-Conciliar Church consistently downgrades the reality and gravity of mortal sin, the benefits of confessing venial sins, the graces to be obtained from frequent confession, and the necessity of doing penance. Very often souls who have felt the urgent need to go to a *Novus Ordo* priest have come to me afterwards in confession, doubting the validity of their confession to this priest, on account of his trivializing of their sins.

Furthermore, I do not hesitate to strongly recommend against going to confession to such a priest, even when there is an assurance of a valid absolution. A penitent does not go to confession simply to receive the absolution of his sins. He has the desire to receive all the effects of the sacrament, including the direction, and if need be reprimand of the confessor, growth in the love of God and in sanctifying grace, a firmer purpose of amendment and the satisfaction of the temporal punishment due to his sins. All this is only possible if he sees in the confessor a judge, a teacher, and a physician. It is to guarantee these full effects of the sacrament of Penance that the Church supplies jurisdiction so that the faithful can ask any priest to hear their confessions, for any just reason (canon 2261, §2, 1917 *Code* and canon 1335 of the 1983 *Code*).

Manifestly it is not possible to have confidence in the guidance of a priest who compromises with modernism by celebrating the New Mass, even if he otherwise appears orthodox. Neither his judgment as to the reality of our contrition, nor his instruction as to the gravity of our sins, nor his remedies for the ills of our sins can be depended upon. The supernatural vision of Faith will necessarily have been undermined by the humanism and naturalism of the New Mass and the spirit of Vatican II. Our souls are much too precious to place in the hands of those who lack conviction.

Consequently, outside case of danger of death, it is preferable to make an act of perfect contrition, and to wait until one can open one's soul to a traditional priest that can be trusted. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

How can I get my four-year-old to participate in our daily Rosary?

The prayer of little children is a very delicate thing. Not unlike the disciples, who rebuked those who brought little children to be blessed by Our Lord, we find it difficult to understand that children can do what we find so difficult ourselves, namely prayer. Yet Our Lord was clear: "*Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such*" (Mt. 19:14).

Children can indeed pray, but only within the limits of their capacities, namely their understanding, concentration, and attention span. Moreover, their prayer must retain childlike simplicity to be genuine, that is spontaneity in asking for what they need, in praying for Mommy and Daddy, in telling Jesus they are sorry for their faults, etc. Mary Reed Newland's article, "*Teaching Children to Pray*" in *Raising Your Children* [[available from Angelus Press](#)] has some practical suggestions:

Children have such simple faith in the efficacy of prayer that it is easy for them to form the habit of praying on all sorts of occasions ...

occasions of minor crises during the day ...They will voice their prayer aloud, matter of factly, and with the simplicity of the faith that is as a grain of mustard, they wait for the mountain to be moved.... It is very easy to plant the habit, and their world is so much more secure, because of this faith that God is ready and willing to help them on every hand, that calling on Him is second nature to them (pp.137-138).

If the family Rosary is not to become an interminable chore for little children, these principles must be applied. It must first be recognized that every family and every child is different. There are some families and some children, used to a more strict discipline, who will kneel or sit quietly during the recitation of the Rosary. There are others who find it impossible to stay still. The discipline required for the Rosary must be in proportion to the discipline required for the rest of their lives. If family life as a whole is disciplined, little Johnny will know how to sit still and be quiet during the sacred time of prayer. However, flexibility needs to be shown on the exterior details, depending upon the individual circumstances for each child (e.g., age, temperament and maturity) and each family.

Furthermore, unless they be malicious disruptions, distractions and lack of concentration should not be punished, lest prayer become onerous and painful. The emphasis should rather be given to positive rewards for good efforts, such as a fun activity or a treat after the recitation of the Rosary. The active involvement of the children, according to their age level, is crucial. This does not just mean saying the *Our Father's* and *Hail Mary's*, when they are able to do so. Each decade could be preceded by a very brief discussion of the mystery, and the children could be asked their intentions for each particular decade. A special virtue can be asked for, as well as sorrow for a fault. In this way the spontaneity can be renewed at the beginning of every decade.

Another key help to profiting from the daily Rosary is to take advantage of children's ease in praying always, as Our Lord suggested. Their trust in Providence can be so profound, their sense of right and wrong so acute, that it can bring on a spontaneous prayer for God's help or forgiveness. Very short but fervent prayers can punctuate the day. A parent can do well to take advantage of this and spread out the mysteries of the Rosary during the day.

However, above all else in importance is the example of the parents themselves. If the parents are bored and distracted during the recitation of the Rosary, irritable and picky towards their children, and if they recite the Rosary in a mechanical and routine manner, without unctio or fervor, then the same will be found in their children. However, if they are recollected and fervent, able to verbalize the object of their meditation and the graces to be obtained, and if the parents find this an enjoyable time in God's presence, rising above the million and one interruptions of fidgety children, then their children will strive to follow their example. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Is it permissible to attend a concert where music is performed in a Catholic church?

The answer to this question is immediately obvious to the Catholic who understands why a church is blessed or consecrated: *"By the term church is understood a sacred structure devoted to divine worship for the principal purpose of being used by all the faithful for public divine worship"* (canon 1161 of the 1917 Code). This is precisely what Our Lord meant when he declared *"My house shall be called the house of prayer (Mt. 21:13)"*. It is sacred, and must consequently be separated from all secular use, as from personal profit or advantage, under pain of becoming *"a den of thieves"*. The consequence of this is drawn in the canon 1178 of the 1917 Code, which states that: *"Business and*

trafficking, and in general whatever is out of harmony with the holiness of the place, should be excluded". Canon 1220,§1 of the 1983 Code says the same.

The question is, then, whether the performance of music in a church, which is not for the liturgy, takes away from its sacredness. The answer is given by canon 1264, §1 of the 1917 *Code*, which simply reproduces a decision of the Council of Trent, but which is, alas, not maintained in the 1983 *Code*. "*Music, whether instrumental, from the organ or other instruments, or vocal, in which there is any tinge of the lascivious or impure, must be entirely excluded from churches*".

In order to understand this, a clear distinction has to be made between the different kinds of music. There is first of all sacred music, which is that used in the Sacred Liturgy, and which is primarily Gregorian Chant, but also on occasion polyphonic music in the tradition of such composers as Palaestrina. Secondly, there is religious music, which is not composed or performed for the liturgy, but which has as its purpose to elevate the soul to the contemplation of divine truths. Finally, there is secular music, that has no rapport with religion at all.

Clearly, the performance of sacred music is possible within Catholic churches, even outside the liturgy. An instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of September 3, 1958 also indicated that it is permissible to perform religious music in churches outside the liturgy, under certain conditions:

Religious music ...that seeks to express and stir up pious and religious emotions ...is to be greatly esteemed and opportunely promoted, because of its obvious benefits to religion. [this type of] Religious music cannot be used in liturgical or other sacred functions, since it belongs properly to the music hall or theater, and not to the church dedicated to divine worship. Where no auditorium or hall is available, a concert of religious music may be given in a church, if such a concert can be expected to benefit the faithful spiritually. (Quoted in *Matters Liturgical*, p. 49).

Such religious music would include the singing of hymns, or the great Masses, and Oratorios of the Baroque period.

Clearly, this presumes that precautions are taken to avoid disrespect, such as the removal of the Blessed Sacrament, and the forbidding of applause. However, rarely will it be the case that a concert is of purely religious music, with such a spiritual objective in mind, and more rarely yet is it the case that no suitable auditorium is available.

Moreover, it is clearly not permitted to perform or attend a concert of secular music in a Catholic church, for secular music is appeals primarily to the senses. This would include all music written in the style from the romantic period down to the present time, and all popular and modern music, such as folk music or spirituals. To use a blessed or consecrated church as a concert hall for such music, without regard for its sacredness, would certainly be to steal the honor and glory owed to Almighty God. This is, alas, what is currently happening, and Catholics must refuse to perform at such concerts or attend them. It is no justification to say that *Novus Ordo* churches are desecrated by secular music in the liturgy itself, as if one person's desecration of a church would justify another to do likewise. Clearly these prohibitions do not apply to protestant churches, which are in no way sacred, provided that in attending a concert there one does not, at the same time, partake in any religious ceremony (*cf.* canon 1258 of the 1917 *Code*). [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Has the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart requested by Our Lady been accomplished?

Our Lady of Fatima asked that the Holy Father consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, together with all the world's bishops (June 13, 1929). Pope Pius XII twice consecrated Russia to Her Immaculate Heart himself, in 1942 and again in 1952, but alone. The consecration made by Paul VI in 1964 and those made by John Paul II on May 13, 1982 and March 25, 1984 did not mention Russia specifically. Furthermore, although the world's bishops were invited to join in, many did not participate. This was the point made by Sister Lucy in 1985 when she explained that the consecration requested by Our Lady at Fatima had not been accomplished. (*cf. Fatima Priest* by Francis Alban, pp.84-85). That is why Russia has not ceased to spread its error of atheism. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

I do not believe that it is right for the Society of St. Pius X to say "we are not the Church," for are not the other bishops all apostates?

The statement that "we are not the Church" is made in answer to the accusation that we in the Society of St. Pius X believe that outside the Society there is no salvation. Now this is a manifestly preposterous statement. Society priests do not have a monopoly of the Catholic Faith. There are many other Catholics, in all the rites, who accept all that the Church teaches.

The problem with many of the modern-day Catholics and bishops who have effectively apostatized, since they deny one or more doctrines of Faith, (a recent study showed that only 17% of Catholics between 20 and 39 years of age agree with the pope that only men can be priests) is that they are still members of the visible Church. They perform functions in the Church, and they hold authority in the Church (which they abuse by spreading their modernist errors), although they are dead and corrupt members (separated from the principle of union, Christ, by their lack of faith and supernatural charity). However, since they have not been publicly condemned as having separated themselves from the Church, they remain within the visible structure of the Church.

Furthermore, there are many faithful and priests in the post-Conciliar Church who do not understand the gravity of the modern errors, but who are yet in good faith and have supernatural faith and charity. Due to ignorance, they fail to understand the contradiction of the new humanistic ideas with the Catholic Faith. The motive of their faith is still intact, that is the authority of God who reveals. They are not only visible members, but also living members, of the mystical body, and some of them have a sanctity which puts to shame some traditional Catholics who have regular access to the traditional sacraments and true Mass. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Why is there so little unity among traditional groups?

I can understand why you are scandalized by the division in the traditional movement. Many others have also been scandalized, until they realize that unity is impossible without a strong hierarchy to enforce it and insist upon it. There will only be true unity when we have once more a strong pope, backed up by docile bishops.

It is a part of the diversity of the Church that there be different groups, organizations, religious orders and activities to defend different aspects of Catholic Tradition. They complement one another, and should retain their specific differences in order to do their best for Holy Mother Church. This is in no way opposed to the unity of the Faith, which binds us all together. Thus in Tradition there are diverse orders of teaching sisters; there are active orders such as the Society of St. Pius X; and there are contemplatives, such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Capuchins and Redemptorists. They all have a different role to play in the Church. There is also a place for lay organizations, and specific apostolates such as Fr. Gruner's to promote devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. Despite their

different methods and emphasis, all these organizations share a profound unity. However, there are some groups that cannot be considered a part of this unity. These are the *sedevacantists* and the communities (e.g., St. Peter's, St. John's, Institute of Christ the King, etc.) which accept the orthodoxy of the New Mass and Vatican II and which celebrate the Indult. Such are outside the moral unity of the traditional movement.

Clearly it is imperative that all these truly Catholic orders, organizations and apostolates work together. It seems clear that this profound unity can be found in all of those which are officially affiliated with the work of the Society of St. Pius X. It is when a group or activity refuses such an affiliation that it becomes forced either into a compromise with liberalism or into the excesses of rigorism. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Does the Society of St. Pius X promote Nocturnal Adoration in the home?

The Society of St. Pius X does indeed promote Nocturnal Adoration in the home. This apostolate is a part of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the Home, as promoted by Fr. Mateo Boevey-Crawley and by all of our priests. However, it is not obligatory, but is an additional practice that very generous families will choose to offer to Our Lord. It consists of taking a nocturnal hour once a month, sometime between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., in order to make reparation to the Sacred Heart. Many mothers are involved in this apostolate of prayer and sacrifice, and that is why the Nocturnal Adoration is organized by the *Catholic Mothers Exchange*. However, not only mothers, but any Catholic can watch for an hour with Our Lord once a month. Contact information can be obtained from the [District Office](#). [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

Should the mother or the father be responsible for teaching children their catechism?

The very formulation of the question presupposes a false dichotomy, since both are responsible. Yet both are not responsible equally and in the same way.

Since the father is the head of the family, he has the responsibility for planning, and foresight is his prerogative and duty. His is the responsibility to look to the future, and to plan out the religious formation of his children, just as it is his duty to lead the family in prayer and other religious activities. He has no right to opt out of all involvement, on the grounds that he is not home long enough, but must act towards his family as Christ, who is the invisible head of the mystical body, the Catholic Church. His paternal prudence requires that he determine how and when his children's religious education is to take place, even if he is not able to do it himself.

Ed Willock had this to say a half century ago:

Few fathers realize their own dignity as fathers, and few see the unique role that the Church insists that they play in this work of revolutionary change (i.e., the formation of character in children). He should recognize that the American tradition of the last quarter century, which assigns to him the role of eternal adolescence, is a belittlement of his vocation. He is the bridge between Church and State. He is the bridge between state and family. He is the bridge between family and Church (*Fatherhood and Family*, Angelus Press, p. 81 [[available from Angelus Press](#)]).

However, the mother is the one who is responsible for the daily implementation of her husband's foresight. She is the one who will teach them the holy names of Jesus and Mary at her knees, and who will repeatedly go over their catechism questions with them by heart.

Nevertheless, as the children grow older the father's role in the actual teaching of the Faith ought to increase, inasmuch as it is possible. It is he who ought to lead family discussions defending the great teachings on the Faith, and who must instruct his children on how to defend their Faith out in the world, and how also to defend the Church. By so doing, his authority and leadership will make the learning and expression of the Faith a profound reality in the lives of his children, instead of a superficial veneer. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]

In what way is feminism a harmful movement? Surely it is time women began to assert themselves as equal to men?

It was Rousseau who claimed that man is born free, that all men are by nature equal and that man is naturally good. This triple dogma of the sage of Geneva is mingled with truths and errors which must clearly be distinguished for one of the currents underpinning the Feminist Movement as Rousseauistic in origin. It is true in the psychological order that is when each acts in accordance with his nature, that every activity and every tendency is directed toward the good as towards its proper end, but in the moral order a necessary distinction imposes itself; the higher faculties reason and will have a morally good natural tendency; by definition they are conformable to reason, but the lower appetites, the inferior faculties can oppose and frustrate reason.

Liberty is natural to man, *i.e.*, the basic power or faculty itself but regarding the exercise of his freedom man enjoys only a partial and not an absolute independence of action for he must indeed submit to laws not only for his own good but also for the good of society. That all men are equal as regards the constitutional elements of man's specific nature, in an abstract way, agree; with reference to men's individual nature, all men are not equal neither in fact nor as a matter of right; the variety of talents which each possesses ensures that human nature does not make us equal.

Furthermore in questions of merit and demerit, each man cannot receive the same reward or punishment. Equality is for the most part an illusion.

It is this lamentable lack of reason which underlies feminist thinking if it can be called that. Men and women are different physically and psychologically. Their respective human natures are not in opposition nor do they seek to usurp each other's function and role but are complementary.

The Church has always been, historically, a great defender of woman. In ancient civilizations women were frequently subject to male tyranny and despotism. Christianity raised woman from this degrading servitude by sanctifying marriage and making it inviolable. The Church sanctioned the supernatural equality of man and woman by praising both marriage and virginity.

The recognition of the unique role of woman and its defense must not be confused with radical aberrant fanatical feminism; the latter fails to appreciate and value the true purpose and aim of womanhood. Feminism is a vain and foolish imitation of masculinity at the expense of a tragic loss in femininity. Feminism is not the exaltation of woman but her obliteration, the reduction of the feminine character to that of the masculine. It is a self-imposed slavery and loss of identity. It is a travesty of nature in so far as it refuses the nature of woman in the divine plan; it is a perversion also in the natural sphere. Feminists have not understood true freedom, human nature, nor the essential distinctions involved in a proper evaluation of the notion of equality.

The natural order differentiates the two sexes by subordinating the one to the other. In the order of creation the woman comes after man. She is subject to man though not his final end. The final end of both is absolutely equal.

St. Paul makes it clear: *"There is neither male nor female just as there is neither Jew nor Gentile nor freeman nor slave"* (Gal. 3:28). There are specific differences between male and female but all the baptized are clothed in the same dignity before God. As Sacred Scripture points out, the subjection of the female to the male does not have its principle in the male but in the Lord.

"Wives be subject to your husbands in the Lord." Furthermore, this matter is more fully explained when St. Paul addressing married couples in his letter to the Ephesians says: *"Be subject to one another."*

There is a subordination which many choose to ignore, a subordination given us by Divine revelation: *"The head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God."*

Feminism refuses the true nature of woman, confuses the natural and supernatural relations between the sexes and embarks upon a deviant path at the end of which the suicide of thought and the death of womanhood is inevitable. [Answered by Fr. Leo Boyle]

Can it still be affirmed that a wife should be submissive to her husband, given the changes in modern society?

The due submission of a wife to her husband can be considered on two different planes:

- firstly that of the natural law, man and woman having each a profoundly different function in the building block of society which is the family;
- and secondly on the supernatural plane.

This second perspective is by far the most important, and illuminates all of married life. For if the submission of a wife to her husband is totally clear in the natural law to any woman who has not been tainted by the rebellious principles of liberalism, it was explicitly confirmed in the New Testament. St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians, lays down the principles. A husband has, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, always to imitate Christ in His love for the Church, and a wife has always, in virtue of the same sacrament, to imitate the Church in her love for Christ. Thus a man is really the head of his wife, and has the duty to take leadership, whereas the wife must strive to be the heart responding to and dependent upon the head.

Pope Leo XIII treats of this question explicitly in his Encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* of Feb. 10, 1880:

The husband is the chief of the family, and the head of the wife. The woman, because she is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, must be subject to her husband and obey him: not, indeed as a servant, but as a companion, so that her obedience shall be wanting in neither honor nor dignity. Since the husband represents Christ, and since the wife represents the Church, let there always be, both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heaven-born love guiding both in their respective duties. For *"the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church... Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things"* (Eph. 5:23-24) (*Matrimony, Papal Teachings*, by the monks of Solesmes, p. 141).

Since man's nature cannot change, neither can the natural law, and since divine revelation was completed with the death of the last of the apostles, neither can this supernatural plan change either. In order to resist the corruption of nature and God's supernatural gifts, husbands and wives need to remember that they do

not belong to this world, otherwise modern-day liberalism will succeed in destroying the family. Husbands will consequently take responsibility and leadership, even when they feel inadequate, and wives will take delight in denying their own will and obeying their husbands.

These questions have been treated often in *The Angelus*, and I would like to take the opportunity of recommending the following articles, which treat explicitly of this subject:

- *The Angelus*, June 1997: The two articles: *When Mothers Need Mothering* and *Flesh of My Flesh*.
- *The Angelus*, October 1995: The two articles: *The Leadership of Fathers* and *What Is a Mother?*

It is this authority of a man over his wife (not of men over women) which the liberals detest, and which, alas, Pope John Paul II has fought against on the basis of the false rights of man. In his analysis of this change of teaching, author Luigi Accattoli does not hesitate to affirm (approvingly) that the pope "*corrects the teaching of St. Paul*" (*When a Pope Asks Forgiveness*, Alba House, pp.105-108, 1998).

In regard to the radically feminist nature of the assertion of the equality in marriage of husband and wife, it suffices to quote some passages from the above author, based as they are on the pope's September 1988 Encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem*:

The boldest stroke is also found in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, which contains a summation of the biblical references to individual women and even corrects two thousand years of interpretation of the passages in St. Paul which describe man as the "head" of the woman. He even corrects St. Paul —or what is based on antiquity in his writings —when he states: "*All the reasons in favor of the subjection of woman to man in marriage must be understood in the sense of a mutual subjection of both out of reverence for Christ*" (*Ibid.*, citing *Mulieris Dignitatem* 9;24).

Accattoli is certainly accurate in pointing out that this is a radical transformation in the Church's teaching. Nobody could possibly doubt that the letter and sense of St. Paul is of a one-sided submission, and that the pope, by reinterpreting it as a "*mutual subjection*" is both emptying the text of all sense and going directly against divine revelation for the sake of his humanistic and false principles on the equality and dignity of man.

Truly feminine wives will consequently abhor this feminine perversion of Catholic Truth, and practice the submission and obedience which both nature and grace incline them to. [Answered by Fr. Peter R. Scott]