



si si no no

"But let your speech be: 'Yes, yes'; 'No, no'; and whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)"

April 2005 Reprint #63

A New Book by Fr. George May: “The Ecumenism Trap”

Conclusion

In acts of unparalleled blindness and mindlessness, the standards of conduct regarding contact with those who have separated themselves from the Catholic Church have been discarded to the great harm of the Church's life. Declaring it a matter of survival for the Catholic Church, Fr. George May desperately sounds the alarm in ***The Ecumenism Trap*** to return to sound practices of dealing with non-Catholics. This is the second part of the review which was begun in the February 2005 issue of *The Angelus* English-Language Edition.

Doctrines of Heretics and Schismatics Illustrated

The Pseudo-Categories of the Ecumenists

The search for ecumenical "unity" obviously finds a difficult obstacle in the doctrinal differences between Protestants and Catholics. To get around them elaborate figures of speech, such as the so-called "differentiated consensus," have been contrived *ad hoc* in order to reach doctrinal accords based on respect for mutual differences. Fr. May shows that these locations are untenable. He writes:

Consensus is agreement resulting from the sense of the will (its content) and the express intention of two contracting parties. To *distinguish* means to divide and separate. A *differentiated* consensus is the cohabitation of agreement and discord on one and the same thing, in this case on points of doctrine." [This expression signifies] agreement on the fundamental elements of a contested doctrine, joined to contextual explanation of the reasons why doctrinal differences that still remain are permissible in light of everything that is established in common.¹

Such a conception, however, "presupposes that it is possible to distinguish in revealed truth between doctrines that must be recognized for salvation and doctrines that need not be recognized without prejudice to our salvation" (*ibid.*). This distinction is *false*; it is a Lutheran approach, and has already been condemned by the Church on the grounds that revealed truth comes entirely from God, and therefore is necessary for our salvation in its entirety and in the same manner (pp.25-26). Furthermore, on a purely logical level, matters of disagreement negate the validity of matters of agreement, rendering "differentiated consensus" an internal contradictory concept (p.26).

Equally contradictory is the notion of "conciliated difference," another way of expressing the idea of "unity in difference." This term is dear to Cardinal Kasper, who uses it often (*ibid.*), echoing the Lutherans, who hold that ecumenism should look to the realization of "an ecclesial community in conciliated difference" (pp.26-27). But conciliation, Fr. May notes, is an anthropological category: it concerns human relationships, not ideas. This means that

human beings can be reconciled, but doctrinal positions cannot. Well-developed opposing positions cannot be leveled down.... Differences of faith that express radical contradictions can never be reconciled because truth and error cannot be conciliated. "Conciliated difference" is nothing more than the addition of opposites.... [p.27]

Distinguished Protestant theologians likewise reject this conceptual category (*ibid.*). It is futile to found one's position on illusions. As Pius XI recalled in *Mortalium Animos*, the Catholic Faith is an indivisible whole, to be accepted or rejected as a whole (p.28).

"Conciliated difference" does not and cannot exist, just as no such unity can exist between Catholics and Protestants, between faiths that profess opposing truths. Furthermore, the positions that Protestants so proudly oppose to Catholics are actually errors, negations of revealed truth, heresies (pp.28-29).

Differences With Protestants and Orthodox

In order to give the most complete possible image of the *insurmountable* differences that divide us Catholics from the heretics and schismatics, we offer the reader a brief summary-an anthology, as it were-of the detailed picture Fr. May sets forth in this regard. It amounts to an analysis "of the grave deficiencies of Protestantism as a religious system," an analysis that re-establishes fundamental truths which these days are too often obscured. It goes without saying that this analysis reflects no hostility towards individual Protestants, who may be pious and devout, perhaps more so than some contemporary Catholics (p.66). The same applies for the Orthodox taken as individual persons.

Protestants

Luther

From the outset Fr. May rejects the ongoing attempt of the ecumenists to reappraise Luther, as though he had heretofore not been well understood or interpreted: "There are pious and exemplary men in Lutheranism, although the same cannot be said of its founder." His moral and intellectual deficiencies are well known: a monk who broke his vows, and gave in to sensuality, pride, anger, and hatred. Luther idolized himself. [An astute and aggressive personality, he was a violent and supremely skillful polemicist and, at the same time, subtle and impudent in his hermeneutical sophisms-*Ed.*] He incited the masses to hatred of the pope and Catholics with his rabble-rousing libels. Luther cannot justly be considered a "reformer." He was a *destroyer* of the Faith, of the Church, a sower of discord: a true Attila. He made use of the evils which in his time afflicted the Church militant as an alibi to reject sound doctrine, substituting his personal interpretation of Scripture [an interpretation that tried to square the circle, or to conciliate salvation with the liberty of a subject wanting to continue following the impulses of the flesh and of pride-*Ed.*] (pp. 66-69).

Protestantism Imposed Its False Doctrine by Force

Protestantism has not placed its own, equally legitimate tradition next to the legitimate tradition of the Church; on the contrary, it has rejected the legitimate tradition of the Church as illegitimate, in order to substitute for it another, taken as legitimate. The Protestants did not try to purify the institutions of the Church of their time, but merely put them aside.... They preached a changed doctrine, adapted to the weaknesses of the flesh. [p. 69]

This is the true reason for their success. It represented not the rediscovery of the true Gospel, of authentic Christianity, on which the masses eager for truth eagerly threw themselves, but rather the success of an elite in the corrupt climate of their time (p. 70). The "reformers" preached the spirit of the world, as national prejudices or politically or culturally dominant classes would have it [absolute freedom of conscience, construction of a personal credo, the push towards a national religion. -Ed.] (p.71). Decisive for the effective dominance of Lutheranism was the intervention of civil authorities in its favor (territorial lords, free cities of the empire), all eager to appropriate the lands and possessions of the Catholic Church. In their territories these authorities persecuted Catholics with oppression and terror, annihilating them or driving them off (pp.71-73). [The same happened in England, where the Catholic majority was dissipated by the monarchy, which sought at all costs to impose first schism, then heresies. -Ed.] ²

Another legend is that Protestantism brought with it "freedom of religion" (p.73). On the contrary, it constantly repressed Catholicism. It relied constantly on state powers [as Orthodoxy also did -*Ed.*] to strike at Catholics for its own profit. Protestantism has often invoked freedom of conscience and religion, but only for itself (*ibid.*). Even today Protestantism relies on the powerful of this world, whether

the media, political parties, or the dominant trends of the time, the State. In various nations with a Protestant majority still today freedom of religion is not guaranteed. The constitution of Norway declares Lutheranism the state religion. Its adherents are obliged to educate their children in this religion; the king must be a Lutheran; more than half of the members of parliament must be Lutheran. [p.74]

Similar prerogatives exist in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Great Britain (where neither the king nor the prime minister can be Catholics, nor can Catholic clergy be elected to the lower chamber) (*ibid.*). Fr. May concludes: "The proclamation of religious liberty on the part of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council evidently found no echo in Protestantism" (*ibid.*).

Doctrinal Differences Have Remained Unchanged and Irreconcilable

The ecumenists "hide them and minimize them," but they are still there. Nothing has changed. While Pope John Paul II may assert that, since the Council, "dividing barriers" between Catholics and Lutherans have been knocked down (L'Osservatore Romano, Dec. 7, 1999, p.7), he can offer no proof for what he says. Protestant theologians continue to attack Catholic dogmas as before. The Catholic side makes no response (p. 75). Let us examine these differences in a broad summary.

The Word of God

This is for Protestants

the decisive instrument of grace. Its personal acceptance is paramount. By comparison with the Word, sacraments are secondary. The Word is always free and new every time it is proclaimed. It does not solidify into a norm. Thus the very concept of dogma is untenable for Protestants. Dogma is constituted by the contents of Revelation as set forth by the Church: thus arose the articles of Faith. For Protestantism, by contrast, only free and momentary proclamations of the Word have importance. Their consolidation in professions of confessional faith is nothing more than a human deed and can be revised. [p. 76]

Protestants reject Tradition as constitutive for dogma, present from the beginning of the Church, accepting only Scripture. All the same they cultivate their own *traditionalism*, which consists in applying the principles of Protestant tradition to the interpretation of the Bible: "The Catholic who reads Protestant commentaries on the Bible is not infrequently surprised to find references to the works of Luther" (p.77), used in fact as an interpretative canon. This not withstanding the Lutheran belief in free individual interpretation of texts without notes of explanation, with only the assistance of the Holy Ghost! Furthermore, Catholics and Protestants do not have the same Bible (how many Catholics are aware of this?). Luther eliminated the so-called deuterio-canonical works of the Old Testament. In the New Testament he considered uncanonical the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letter of James (which teaches the necessary relation of works to salvation), the Second Letter of Peter and the Book of Revelation (*ibid.*!).

Since for the Catholic Church all sacred texts have God as their author, there is a unity amongst them and one text cannot be set against another. Their inerrancy is absolute and contains neither contradictions nor truths of primary or secondary importance-they all enjoy the same authority. In Protestantism, by contrast,

a series of qualitative distinctions amongst the sacred texts is at work. There is in effect a canon within the canon, different levels of authority within the Bible. In this way passages of Sacred Scripture can be set one against the other, and the interpreter acts as judge of Revelation. Luther recognized in Sacred Scripture only "what Christ revealed," as he put it. He gave pride of place to the Letters to the Romans and the Galatians, since he thought he found in them confirmation of his doctrine of justification. [p. 78]

The Catholic Church possesses a higher court that authoritatively interprets Sacred Scripture: the Magisterium of the Church. Protestantism lacks any such authority. It affirms that "Scripture interprets itself." The falsehood of this claim is shown by the great accumulation of contradictory interpretations characteristic of the sectarians. It should be noted that the different criteria for interpreting the Bible are actually contained in the professions of faith of the different sects. Over the last two centuries Protestant theologians, with a methodology that rejects the principle of authority and looks for contradictions, have practically destroyed the authority of the sacred text (pp.78-79).

Justification and Grace

For Catholics and Protestants, the conceptions of justification and grace irremediably opposed:

Grace is for Catholicism every supernatural gift God grants to man so that he might attain eternal life. The two essential types of grace are actual and sanctifying grace. The latter is a supernatural reality, infused by God in the soul, inhering in the soul as a quality of its very essence. The Protestant conception is altogether different: Grace is nothing other than benevolence, the merciful disposition of God. It is not a supernatural principle of our life which sanctifies it by an interior transformation.

[For Protestants,] man is corrupted by original sin in such a way that on his own he is capable only of evil. Therefore there can be no preparation for or collaboration in justification on the part of man through the mediation of grace. God does everything on His own, man can do nothing. Against these errors the Catholic Church, anchored in Tradition and Sacred Scripture, teaches that human nature has indeed been wounded by original sin, but nevertheless remains capable of cooperating with divine grace for justification. The subjective principle of justification is the faith. [p.80]

The faith, however, is understood by Protestantism as merely the individual's confident trust in divine mercy. [Luther maintains that one must believe that the sacrifice of Christ, an act of divine mercy, is like a cloak that covers all our sins; this belief alone is necessary for salvation, since man is incapable of change. It is not possible to sanctify oneself in the daily struggle of the spiritual life by seeking the help of grace. Luther's is a dark faith, based on the anxious sense of one's own misery, while it is also poisoned with pride because in expecting everything of God it demands nothing of man, who pretends to be saved while remaining unchanged, burdened with passions and vices. -*Ed.*]

For Catholicism, however, "faith is personal submission to God and at the same time free adhesion of the intellect to Truth as revealed by God" (*ibid.*). For the Church faith is inseparable from free will. Thus the manner in which justification is accomplished through grace is profoundly different:

The mercy of Christ, which adopts the sinner through faith [thus making him a son of God by adoption -*Ed.*], is for the Protestants limited to covering over the sinfulness of man (in effect a diminution of the mercy or "justice" of Christ). His inner sinfulness remains unchanged even in the justified man (*simul iustus et peccator*). For Catholic doctrine, by contrast, justification involves a true inner sanctification. [pp.80-81]

The Concept of the "Church"

(See *SiSi/NoNo* [The *Angelus* English-Language edition], February 2005, pp.21-23.)

The Sacraments

The Protestants have preserved only "baptism" and the "Eucharist." What do they make of the other five sacraments? With the possible exception of the Anglicans, confirmation is an "empty and superstitious ceremony." Confession "is not a sacrament but only a recommended practice, as also extreme unction. Holy orders is considered a manifestation of pride, an error dangerous for souls. Marriage is only a contract, always subject to dissolution. Recently, as is well known, various Protestant circles have signaled openness to "homosexual marriage" (p.82). Protestantism thus denies that the sacraments can be effective *ex opere operato*. The only means of salvation is the Word: it follows that the sacraments procure grace not through their action, but only through the faith of the recipient (*ibid.*, p.83).

Baptism

What then to say of baptism, the sacrament so often paraded by the ecumenists as a secure common possession of Catholics and Protestants? Also on this point most Catholic faithful have not been well informed. In fact,

for many Protestants baptism is merely a symbol, which does not act upon the soul of the baptized. In any case, it is not understood as a cause of grace produced by God in the soul, but rather as a simple sign. The Protestant understanding of faith and its belief in the unique salvific power of the Word do not afford baptism any specific sacramental efficacy. Those Protestants who admit that grace is conferred in baptism also maintain that it derives from faith alone. Few Protestants believe that baptism procures grace. More and more Protestants now deny the necessity of baptism for salvation. Only faith (understood as trust) is necessary. Salvation is connected to faith, not to baptism, which is not even required for admission into what they call the Church. The synod of the Reformed Church of France (May 25-27, 2001) pronounced itself in favor of the general attainment of the non-baptized to the Eucharist." [p.83]

The Eucharist

Protestantism violently rejects the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Mass, as dogmatically defined by the Council of Trent (p.84):

It denies the essential connection between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass. The cult of the Eucharist of the Lord is merely a memorial of the sacrifice of the Cross, and involves no offering of immolation. The role of the Eucharist in the rituals of Protestant sects cannot be compared with the high honor reserved for holy Mass in the Catholic Church. Most Sundays Protestants do not celebrate the Eucharist, contenting themselves with a liturgy of the Word. As religious observances, sermons and the Eucharist have the same value for Protestants: the individual can freely choose between them. There is no obligation to attend services. Nor is there any obligation to prepare oneself for the Eucharist by confession if mortal sin has been committed. For Protestants the administration of the Eucharist produces the pardon of sins; this means that, in certain respects, it takes the place of the sacrament of penance, which they have abolished. This is their current practice. The Eucharist is celebrated without being preceded by any confession, and the non-baptized can also partake. All Protestant confessions decisively reject the dogma of transubstantiation. They recognize no priestly consecration of the bread and wine. Regarding the Real Presence they manifest striking insecurity and contradictions. At the least they deny it.... [and thus] the species are not venerated, [pp.84-85]

In conclusion, "the Eucharist does not unite Catholics and Protestants, on the contrary it shows their insuperable divisions" (p.85).

Sacrament of Orders

Protestantism does not recognize the figure of the priest, who speaks and acts in *persona Christi*. They combat this belief as erroneous and reprehend it because, in their opinion, a hierarchical priesthood would introduce into the Church a division into two classes, which would contradict the will of Christ.... [F] or them, every baptized person can do that which, for the Catholic Church, belongs specifically to priests, bishops, and the pope. The office of preaching belongs to all the faithful. If only some are chosen as "servants of the Word" it is only for reasons of order and administration. The German Protestant churches recently confirmed in the starkest terms that ordination "is not a consecration.... that would confer a particular faculty in relation to the Eucharist and its elements. Every Christian can preside at the liturgy and pronounce the words of consecration." This means that "the priestly office is merely a function of the Church, not a sacrament." [In this regard one should remember that Vatican II introduced the notion of the ministerial priesthood as a *function of the people of God* and seems to have placed priestly ministry and the priesthood of the believers on the same level: cf. *Lumen Gentium* §§10, 13; deer. *Priestly Ordinis* §§2, 4.-*Ed.*]

Nevertheless, for reasons of competition and prestige, Protestantism maneuvers to hide from the eyes of the public the ontological difference between the Catholic priesthood and the Protestant ministry. It is enough to recall the use of the stole by Protestant clergy, giving the impression that the holders of priestly office in the two religions are on the same plane and exert the same functions.

The Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of apostolic succession. This means that there is no validly consecrated bishop whose ecclesiastical genealogical tree cannot be traced, directly or indirectly, to an apostle. This secure connection places the existence of an uninterrupted transmission of episcopal power beyond discussion. For Protestants, however, the point is eminently discussable. For them it is enough to stay firm in the apostolic Faith, which they claim as their own. The succession of the Gospel prevails over that of the episcopacy. For some time Catholic ecumenists have been aligned with the Protestant position, ready to renounce the succession of the imposition of hands for an indemonstrable "continuity in Faith and doctrine with the Church of the Apostles" [most striking here is the desire to exclude from this "continuity" its expression by the episcopate over centuries; this real continuity is replaced by the "doctrine" of the Apostles or the "primitive Church," as recomposed by heretics beginning with Luther, the same Luther who discarded Scripture (e.g. the Epistle of James) and patristic interpretations, when he could not by some artifice make them agree with his own interpretation -*Ed.*].

One Catholic dogma entails the impossibility of ordaining women to the priesthood. This dogma does not exist for Protestantism: the different sects have no difficulty in naming women ministers. The number of women bishops in their ranks continues to increase.... Sex is of no importance for being a minister. Even transsexuals have been put in charge of Protestant churches, [pp.85-87]

The Most Blessed Virgin

Protestants reject the cult of Our Lady. The dogma of the Assumption (1950) provoked furious protests in its time. Virtually all Protestants deny the virginity of our Lady after the birth of our Lord. To believe that they honor the Madonna is a pious illusion. This may be true of individuals or groups, but it in no way applies to Protestantism as a whole. Prayer to Mary and above all her mediation of all graces is categorically rejected (pp.87-88).

Protestant Ethics

Here a profound abyss separates Catholics from Protestants:

Kantian formalism dominates large parts of Protestant ethics. According to the principle of Kantian autonomy, the individual can act in accordance with his personal experience of the faith. The result is that morality is placed at the interior disposition of the individual, and the objective value of exterior commitment is lost along the way. It suffices to recall two canons of Protestant ethics. 1) There is no law that applies without exceptions, but only rules of moral comportment, which admit of exception according to the circumstances. With a just motive, anyone can excuse himself from observing any given commandment. For example: Protestantism condemns lies, but permits them in cases of necessity. 2) It does not recognize some actions as intrinsically wicked, and thus always and in all circumstances forbidden. Such actions may be perpetrated if a good motive exists [and thus the individual conscience, unshackled by the law, decides in each case-*Ed.*]. On the moral plane, Protestantism is the religion of concessions. This applies especially to sexual morality. The voluntary prevention of conception through chemical and mechanical means is not a moral problem for Protestants. Sexual relations outside of marriage can be practiced, if justified by valid motives. In the presence of just cause divorce is not only permitted, but may even be prescribed as necessary. There is no moral obstacle to the remarriage of the divorced.

Two thousand years after the appearance of the Logos, Lutherans are still not sure whether homosexuality should be considered a sin. This vice finds adhesion and recognition in Protestantism. In many Protestant "churches" homosexuality are officially celebrated. Protestant ethics shows its true face in the matter of abortion. Naturally, it declares that abortion as such is inadmissible. But in certain circumstances it is permitted. The synod of German Protestant churches has declared that in some cases it may be morally blameworthy to impede an abortion, [pp.88-89]

The Last Things

The Catholic Church has always firmly maintained the doctrine whereby at death the soul is separated from the body to be judged by God, deciding its salvation or perdition. Souls insufficiently pure to appear before God must pass through the fires of purgatory. In many sectors of Protestantism the hypothesis of total death is maintained, holding that the whole man disappears at death, and there is no further life of the soul. Those who do admit the existence of the soul are convinced that it goes right away to beatitude in heaven. Purgatory is left out of account. Thus there is no need for prayer, intercessions, Masses for the dead, indulgences. [pp.89-90]

Is not this troubled understanding of the Last Things widely diffused among Catholics today? And has not ecumenism played a role in this trend?

We could continue at length but this brief survey seems sufficient for our purpose. Faced with the concealment of the true nature of Protestantism by the dominant false ecumenism, Fr. May very opportunely brings the attention of Catholics to the true nature of Protestantism (p. 109).

The Orthodox

Let us now consider doctrinal differences with the Orthodox.

Paul VI and John Paul II have repeatedly emphasized our supposed commonality of faith with the Oriental Churches. It is striking that these declarations have found no resonance from the Orthodox. In fact this commonality does not exist. Walter Kasper is mistaken to claim that "the only true theological controversy with Orthodoxy" concerns papal primacy. The idyllic image he proposes of relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox is a deceptive one. There is no truth of the Faith that the Orthodox do not understand in a different way from the Catholic Church, even in the details. For them fidelity to tradition has become a rigid traditionalism. At the same time, many aspects of their doctrine are not clearly established or clarified, are matters of controversy or considered out of date. It should not be forgotten that Orthodoxy has drunk deeply from the well of Protestantism. Here are some examples of the differences.

It is apparent that their understanding of the Church does not coincide with the Catholic one [see *Si Si No No*, Feb. 2005, p.21]. The Orthodox communities are national churches, strictly linked to state power.3 Local churches, from the Orthodox perspective, are not particular churches: every local church is a Catholic Church, complete in itself. The universal Church is merely the collection of the local churches.

The Holy Trinity of jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome is unanimously rejected by the Orthodox. Furthermore, the Orthodox maintain that the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity proceeds only from the Father, not from the Father and the Son as the dogma of the Catholic Church holds. On the problem of original sin, they approach the Protestants in inferring from it the total corruption of man. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin finds powerful opposition in Orthodoxy. Many Orthodox consider baptism administered by heretics to be invalid. Catholics and Protestants who convert to Orthodoxy are rebaptized [unconditionally -*Ed.*]. The same holds for confirmation in some circumstances. Transubstantiation (when it is accepted) is ascribed not to the words of consecration but to the subsequent invocation of the Holy Ghost (*epiclesis*). Eucharistic adoration does not exist. The doctrine of indulgences has no place. The sacred oil is administered not only to the sick but also to the healthy. There is notable uncertainty about the possibility of women becoming deaconesses or priests.

The minister of the sacrament of marriage is the priest, not the spouses. Divorce is permitted for just cause. The divorced can remarry up to a third time in a sacramental marriage [!]. Orthodoxy has no objection to impediments to conception. In relation to homosexuality an "opening" is apparent. Some uncertainties are apparent in the doctrine of the last things. Purgatory is denied by most of their theologians.

From these few indications it can be understood that there are grave doctrinal contradictions between Catholics and Orthodox. John Paul II's hope that dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox might clarify all points of controversy is unfounded in reality. The Council's affirmation that the spiritual and theological patrimony of the Orthodox belongs to the full catholicity and apostolicity of the Church" (*Unitatis Redintegratio* §17) is at the very least misleading.4 If the statement means that this patrimony, insofar as it is authentic, belongs in reality to the Catholic Church, it is correct. If however it means that this patrimony is absent from the Catholic Church, it is mistaken. It must be reaffirmed, against the express opinion of the Council (UR §15), that *communicatio in sacris* with the Orthodox is neither "possible" nor "advisable." Furthermore, the Orthodox themselves do not entertain the possibility of shared communion with Catholics, whom they consider heretics. [pp. 120-122]

Their participation in the ecumenical initiatives promoted by Rome is merely a matter of convenience.

Speculator

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *SiSi/NoNo*, Vol.30, No.21, (Dec. 15, 2004) with editing by Fr. Kenneth Novak. Fr. George May was born in 1926 and developed philosophy and theology at the Universities of Breslau, Fulda, Munich, and Neuzelle. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1951, from which time he was engaged with pastoral duties and teaching at the Erlurt Seminary. At the University of Munich he received a doctorate in theology in 1955 and a licentiate in canon law in 1956. From 1960 to 1994 he was Professor of Canon Law, the Law of Church-State Relations, and the History of Canon Law at the University of Mainz. In addition to publications in his fields of specialization, Dr. May has written prolifically on developments in the Church since the Second Vatican Council.

1. George May, *Die Ökumenismusfalle* (Stuttgart: Sarto Verlag, 2004), p.25. [Subsequent page references in the text are to this book.]

2. On Pentecost Sunday of 1549, three years after the death of Henry VIII, the introduction by law of a new Mass in the vernacular (a rite in which Catholic and Protestant elements were cleverly mixed) provoked the quick revolt of all western England (the Western Rebellion.) The rebels sought the restoration of the old religion, beginning with the holy Mass. They were rapidly banished by German and Italian mercenaries, which at the time constituted the only sound basis of the English crown.

3. Recall that the return of the Oriental schismatics to the bosom of the Catholic Church, on whose terms the respective religious authorities had already formally agreed, was on two occasions broken off, especially through the fatal intervention of political powers that did not want to lose control over the church. The Russian case is one example. From the tenth century Russia belonged to the patriarchate of Constantinople (it later became autocephalous). Patriarch Isidore, a Greek, attended the ecumenical councils of Ferrara and Florence. After the latter was concluded a celebrated agreement for the return of the Orthodox to Catholicism. In 1441 Isidore returned to Russia as a cardinal and apostolic legate for Russia, where he prayed for the pope at holy mass and read the decree of union with Rome. Prince Vasily II, who was governing the principate of Moscow (still at that time a Russian state of the Mongols), interrupted the celebration by violence and expelled the patriarch from the church, arresting him and confining him to a monastery. Afterwards a synod of the Russian bishops declared the patriarch deposed and "rejected the proposed union with Rome in the name of the Russian people" (N. Brian-Chaninov, *Storia di Russia*, Ital. ed. [Milan: Garzanti, 1940], pp.92-96). It was an unprecedented scandal.

4. Recall that the Orthodox, after more than six centuries of accord with the Roman Church on the ecclesiastical celibacy, implicitly recommended by Sacred Scripture, arrested the development of celibate discipline at the Council of Trullo (692), which marked the first skirmishes of antagonism that would later break out into schism. This council recognized the obligation of celibacy only for bishops and priests who were not married at the time of ordination, finding fault with the different and more austere usage of the Roman Church which, by contrast, has fully developed the apostolic thinking with regard to priestly celibacy as apparent in Sacred Scripture.