



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)"

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Dominus Jesus And The Protestants

The NEGATION of one of the most important and clearest dogmas

A Quasi-Rediscovery

The Declaration *Dominus Jesus* operates with an entirely new concept of ecclesial "communion." It is a concept without center or principle, and it lacks a foundation in the Papacy, and hence it lacks unity of faith and government. Applying this new concept, *Dominus Jesus* defines the status, *i.e.*, the relationship *vis-à-vis* the Church, of the Protestant sects:

On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery [*Unitatis Redintegratio*, §22], are not Churches in the proper sense; however, those who are baptized in these communities are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ and thus are in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church [*ibid.*, §3]. Baptism in fact tends *per se* toward the full development of life in Christ, through the integral profession of faith, the Eucharist, and full communion in the Church [*ibid.*, §22] (§17).

We should note that the expression here is simply "Church," not "Catholic Church" which the document used two sentences earlier in the same paragraph section (§17). This gives rise to the same grave doubts we mentioned earlier: Is this "Church," to which the Declaration refers, the Catholic Church? At all events, something has been rediscovered, namely, the distinction (obscured by ecumenism) between sects and individuals, a distinction which applies not only to Protestants, as the Declaration intends, but also the "Orthodox." The Church, in fact, has always taught that the communities separated from the unity of faith and/or government are not the Church, nor are they parts of the Church. Individuals, by contrast, are incorporated into the Church by baptism (which properly belongs to the Catholic Church), provided it is administered validly. It is appropriate to note here that, as far as *Dominus Jesus* is concerned, all the Protestant sects without exception baptize validly. These individuals, however, separate themselves from the Catholic Church when they personally adhere to the heresy and/or schism of the sect in which they were baptized. When, as a result of doctrinal, historical and practical incoherences of their sect, such individuals discover a doubt in their hearts as to whether they are in the true Church, they are bound to take steps to inform themselves correctly. It is only those who, through *invincible* ignorance (which is not the same thing as culpable ignorance or negligence in a matter of such importance for salvation) remain *in good faith* in a heretical and/or schismatic sect, who remain part of Christ's flock in virtue of their valid baptism. Nonetheless they are "sheep scattered abroad by disunion," as Pope St. Pius X called them, speaking-be it noted-of Eastern schismatics (*Ex quo, non labente*); "wandering sheep, whom the Shepherd knows not," as Pope Pius XII called them, of whom we can only say that there are "other sheep which are not of this fold... and that they need to be brought to the divine Shepherd so that there may be one flock and one Shepherd" (*Sommamente Gradita*, Sept. 20, 1942).

Dominus Jesus, however, draws no distinctions. It does "rediscover" the distinction between communities and individuals, but it tells us that all the baptized in the "ecclesial communities" which "are not Churches in the proper sense" (only because they lack valid episcopate and Eucharist) are "in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church" solely in virtue of baptism which is assumed to be always valid.

"One of the Most Important and Clearest Dogmas" of the Faith

As we have seen, *Dominus Jesus* thus manages to deny "one of the most important and clearest dogmas" of the Faith, as Pope Gregory XVI lamented in opposing the Modernists who, even in his time, were daring to attack this dogma "with unprecedented audacity" in their attempts to promote "mixed marriages":

You know as well as We do how constantly our Fathers made every effort to inculcate that article of faith which the Modernists dare to deny, namely, the necessity of the faith and Catholic unity for salvation (*Summo Jugiter Studio*).

Contrary to what *Dominus Jesus* would have us believe, it is not simply the lack of a "valid episcopate" and a "valid Eucharist" which causes the sheep living outside the one fold to be "wandering astray." In fact, even those who have a valid episcopate and a valid Eucharist are astray. It is the lack of "the faith and Catholic unity," which are indispensable "for salvation." That is why Pope Pius X, speaking not to Protestants, but to Eastern schismatics, looked forward to a time when "the sheep that are scattered by dissension will come together in the one profession of the Catholic faith, under a single supreme Pastor" (Letter *Ex quo*, Dec. 26, 1910).

The "Vain Hope" of Baptism Alone

Baptism alone does not profit for salvation, no more than the valid episcopate alone or the valid Eucharist alone. As the Athanasian Creed says:

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly....

Pope Gregory XVI repeated it in *Mirari Vos*:

The Apostle warns us: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Let them tremble then who imagine that every creed leads by an easy path to the port of felicity; and reflect seriously...that consequently they will perish eternally without any doubt, if they do not hold to the Catholic Faith, and preserve it entire and without alteration.

And since this is impossible outside Catholic unity, "those who are not united to the Chair of Peter are in error in flattering themselves that they too are regenerated in the water of salvation." St. Augustine would reply to them in the same terms: "The branch lopped off has the shape of the vine; but what avails the form if it have not the root?" (Pope Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos*; cf. also Pope Leo XIII, *Eximia Laetitia*).

Today the baptized who are not united to the Chair of Peter are confirmed in their vain hope by "ecumenical" Catholics. The latter, whose love is not so much for souls, as for the fantasy of a "union" made by man and not by God, find the transparent language of truth too hard; by the same token they also find the Holy See's language of charity too hard (up to and including Pope Pius XII): "The one fold of Christ is the Church founded on Peter, Prince of the Apostles"; outside this one fold there can only be "wandering sheep, unknown to the Shepherd, limbs who are not part of a life-giving body, but separated, arid and deprived of spiritual nourishment" (Pope Pius XII, *Sommamente Gradita*, Sept. 20, 1942).

Hirpinus

(Both articles translated by Mr. Graham Harrison from *Courrier de Rome*, Feb., 2001, exclusively for Angelus Press)

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