When ecclesiastical authority appears to depart from what it is entrusted to safeguard, a difficult question arises: how far does a Catholic's obedience extend? Can a Catholic defend the Traditional Mass, denounce the effects of Modernism, and question certain decisions made by bishops or even the Pope without breaking communion with the Church? The answer requires us to recover a fundamental truth: authority was instituted to serve Christ, not to replace Him.

1. An Uncomfortable Question in Times of Confusion: Does Obedience Mean Remaining Silent?

There are moments in the history of the Church when fidelity requires something more than repeating certain formulas or passively accepting the decisions of those who hold positions of authority.

It requires knowing the faith, understanding Tradition, and having the courage to defend what we have received.

Many Catholics today view with concern certain decisions, pastoral approaches, and theological positions that they consider difficult to reconcile with the doctrinal and liturgical richness handed down through the centuries.

The situation of the Traditional Latin Mass is one of the most significant examples. There is also concern about the loss of reverence in certain liturgical celebrations, the trivialisation of what is sacred, confusion in moral matters, and the tendency to adapt the Christian message to the sensibilities of a society increasingly distant from God.

Faced with this reality, an inevitable question arises: if a bishop, a priest, or even the Pope adopts a decision that appears to undermine the preservation of Tradition, what should a member of the faithful do?

Should he obey without asking questions? Should he accept every pastoral directive? Should he consider that every decision made by an ecclesiastical authority necessarily represents God's will?

The Catholic answer requires us to distinguish between **the obedience owed to legitimate authority and unconditional fidelity to revealed truth**.

For the Church does not belong to its human authorities. It does not belong to a particular generation, a theological current, or a specific pastoral outlook.

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ.

And those entrusted with the responsibility of governing it have a mission they cannot alter at will: to safeguard, teach, and faithfully transmit the faith received from the Apostles.

2. Tradition: A Deposit the Church Must Safeguard, Not Reinvent

To understand obedience correctly, we must begin with Tradition.

In everyday language, tradition usually means a custom, a habit inherited from the past, or a way of doing things that is preserved because it has formed part of a particular culture.

But Apostolic Tradition has a much deeper meaning.

It is the living transmission of divine Revelation entrusted by Jesus Christ to the Apostles and handed down through their successors.

Saint Paul exhorts the Christians of Thessalonica:

> *"So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."*
>
> *(2 Thessalonians 2:15).*

This exhortation shows that the Christian faith cannot be reduced to an individual interpretation of Scripture or to the religious preferences of each generation.

The Church has received a deposit that it must preserve.

The Second Vatican Council, in its Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, no. 9, teaches that Sacred Scripture and Tradition are closely united and that together they constitute one sacred deposit of the Word of God, entrusted to the Church.

No. 10 adds a fundamental teaching: the office of authentically interpreting the Word of God has been entrusted to the living Magisterium of the Church.

But this does not mean that the Magisterium owns Revelation.

Its authority consists in safeguarding it, authentically interpreting it, and faithfully transmitting it.

The Magisterium is at the service of the Word of God, not above it.

This distinction has important consequences.

The Church can develop its understanding of revealed truths, deepen its knowledge of them, and formulate them with greater precision. But it cannot transform Revelation into something different from what it has received.

Doctrinal development does not mean rupture.

Pastoral adaptation does not mean changing the truth.

And ecclesial renewal cannot become a justification for abandoning what belongs to the Apostolic faith.

For this reason, defending Tradition is not necessarily nostalgia or irrational resistance to change. On the contrary, it can be an expression of fidelity to the mission Christ entrusted to His Church.

3. The Traditional Mass in Latin: Why Is Its Preservation Important?

One of the issues that has caused the greatest concern among traditional Catholics is the situation of the Roman liturgy celebrated according to the 1962 Roman Missal, that is, the liturgical form preceding the 1970 reform.

For many members of the faithful, the Traditional Mass represents a privileged way of expressing the centrality of God, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, reverence before the mystery, and the spiritual continuity of generations of Catholics.

It is not simply a preference for Latin, Gregorian chant, silence, or particular vestments.

It is a way of living and expressing the faith that has profoundly shaped Catholic spirituality.

3.1. The Liturgy Does Not Belong to Any Particular Generation

The liturgy belongs to the Church and is directed towards the worship of God and the sanctification of the faithful.

It cannot be treated as a cultural product that each generation is free to design according to its own preferences.

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* contains important principles for understanding this question.

In no. 22, it establishes that the regulation of the liturgy belongs exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority and that no one, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything on his own initiative.

No. 23 establishes that innovations should be introduced only when the good of the Church truly requires them, after careful theological, historical, and pastoral investigation, and in such a way that new forms grow organically from those already existing.

Furthermore, no. 36 establishes that the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites, subject to particular rights, while also providing for the possibility of extending the use of vernacular languages.

No. 116 recommends that Gregorian chant be considered proper to the Roman liturgy and that it should hold the principal place, other things being equal.

These principles are important because they show that the Council itself did not conceive liturgical renewal as an arbitrary rupture with the inherited patrimony.

Reform was meant to respect the nature of the liturgy and its historical continuity.

3.2. What Has Happened to the Traditional Mass?

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, through which he broadened the possibilities for celebrating Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal.

His letter to the bishops explained that what had been sacred for previous generations could not suddenly be considered harmful or forbidden.

In 2021, Pope Francis promulgated *Traditionis custodes*, which established new restrictions

on the use of the 1962 Missal.

The document assigned specific responsibilities to diocesan bishops and made certain permissions subject to the intervention of the Holy See.

Subsequently, the 2023 rescript reserved to the Apostolic See certain dispensations concerning the use of parish churches and the authorisation of priests ordained after the publication of the motu proprio.

The situation has continued to be a subject of debate during the pontificate of Leo XIV. In July 2026, Cardinal Arthur Roche publicly stated that there were no plans to modify *Traditionis custodes*.

Therefore, there is a reality we must not conceal: **the celebration of the Traditional Mass is subject to restrictions that make access to it more difficult in numerous places**.

This raises a legitimate question: how can a liturgical form that has nourished generations of Catholics spiritually become a cause of division or suspicion for other members of the same Church?

It is necessary to acknowledge that there are differing assessments of the liturgical reform and of the pastoral circumstances that motivated these restrictions.

It is also necessary to recognise that ecclesiastical authority has the competence to regulate the liturgy.

But recognising that authority does not require us to consider every disciplinary decision necessarily the best possible pastoral solution.

A member of the faithful can respect the regulations currently in force while at the same time expressing concern about their consequences.

He can ask that access to the Traditional Liturgy be facilitated, defend its spiritual value, and request that those who find in it a path to sanctification not be treated unjustly.

Fidelity to the Church does not require renouncing the liturgical patrimony that the Church itself has handed down.

3.3. Is It Legitimate to Prefer the Traditional Mass?

Of course.

Preferring a legitimately recognised liturgical form does not in itself constitute disobedience or a rejection of the Second Vatican Council.

Nor does it automatically turn a member of the faithful into an enemy of ecclesial unity.

The Traditional Liturgy possesses a spiritual, theological, and cultural richness that deserves to be studied and appreciated.

Its Latin language, prayers, gestures, orientation towards God, silences, and profound symbolism constitute a patrimony that should not be despised.

However, we must also avoid another error: turning the Traditional Liturgy into a banner of personal superiority or considering those who participate in the ordinary form of the Roman Rite necessarily less Catholic.

This question should not be presented as a war between Catholics.

Both forms must be considered in the light of the Church's faith, the nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the pursuit of a truly worthy and reverent celebration.

The problem is not that some Catholics love one liturgical form and others prefer another.

The problem arises when inherited patrimony is despised, abuses are introduced, or the liturgy is used as an instrument of confrontation.

4. Modernism: When the World Begins to Judge the Faith

The crisis of obedience must also be analysed in the light of another historical and doctrinal phenomenon: Modernism.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Church had to confront an intellectual movement that questioned fundamental aspects of the Catholic faith and its understanding of Revelation.

Pope Saint Pius X addressed this issue particularly in two documents:

- The encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907).
- The decree *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (1907).

In *Pascendi*, Saint Pius X analysed the theses of Modernism and warned of their consequences for the faith, doctrine, biblical interpretation, and understanding of ecclesiastical authority.

The fundamental problem consisted in subjecting religion to certain modern philosophical assumptions, particularly forms of agnosticism, immanentism, and the relativisation of revealed truth.

It was not simply a matter of using new research methods or engaging in dialogue with contemporary culture.

The danger arose when Revelation ceased to be understood as a truth received from God and came to be interpreted primarily as a religious experience arising from human consciousness and subject to historical evolution.

Saint Pius X identified in this movement a profound danger to the integrity of the faith.

4.1. Modernism Does Not Mean Every Form of Renewal

An important clarification is necessary.

Not every pastoral adaptation, historical investigation, use of scientific methods, or contemporary theological reflection constitutes Modernism in the doctrinal sense condemned by Saint Pius X.

The Church has always developed its thought, engaged in dialogue with cultures, and deepened its understanding of Revelation.

The problem arises when such development ceases to be subject to the truth received.

For example:

- When doctrine is presented as something each era may modify according to its own preferences.
- When moral truth is relativised to avoid conflicts with the prevailing mentality.
- When Revelation is interpreted as a human construction rather than recognised as having a divine origin.

- When it is considered that the faith must adapt to the world, even at the cost of losing its content.
- When subjective experience ends up taking precedence over objective truth.
- When man's conversion is replaced by an adaptation of the Gospel to his desires.

These tendencies must be examined seriously.

It would not be correct to attribute these positions automatically to every theologian, bishop, or ecclesiastical leader who supports certain reforms.

But it would also be incorrect to deny that doctrinal relativism and secularisation can enter ecclesiastical environments.

4.2. The Pastoral Consequence: A Church at Risk of Losing Its Prophetic Voice

When the Church ceases to proclaim clearly those truths that are uncomfortable for the world, it loses part of its evangelising capacity.

The Gospel was not given to confirm every human aspiration.

It was proclaimed to call man to conversion, reconcile him with God, and lead him to eternal life.

Christ did not conceal the demands of His teaching to gain more followers.

When many of His disciples walked away after hearing His words about the Eucharist, He did not change the truth in order to retain them (John 6:60-69).

This attitude contains a permanent lesson.

The mission of the Church is not to ensure that the world approves of everything it teaches, but to proclaim Jesus Christ faithfully.

If this conviction is lost, serious consequences may follow:

- Catechesis that avoids explaining sin, judgement, conversion, and the need for grace.
- Preaching that emphasises human acceptance but forgets the call to holiness.
- Religious formation that transmits feelings without providing doctrinal foundations.
- Pastoral practice that confuses mercy with the absence of moral demands.
- A liturgy that progressively loses its sacred character and becomes an event centred on

the human community.

Christian mercy is never separated from truth.

Christ forgives the adulterous woman, but He also tells her: “Go, and do not sin again” (John 8:11).

He does not eliminate moral demands in order to demonstrate His love.

He unites them with mercy.

5. The Authority of the Pope: Absolute Obedience or Fidelity to Christ?

We now arrive at the heart of the matter.

The Church is hierarchical by the will of Christ. The Pope is the successor of Saint Peter and possesses primacy over the universal Church.

This authority is not merely an honorary distinction.

In Matthew 16:18-19, Christ entrusts the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter. In John 21:15-17, He commissions him to tend His sheep.

Obedience to the Roman Pontiff is therefore an important dimension of Catholic communion.

But there is a fundamental distinction we must never forget:

The Pope has authority to govern the Church, but he does not have authority to change divine Revelation.

The First Vatican Council defined papal infallibility in the constitution *Pastor Aeternus*.

This prerogative concerns certain doctrinal definitions on faith or morals made under precise conditions.

It does not mean that the Pope is incapable of making mistakes in every opinion, statement, administrative decision, or pastoral assessment.

The Second Vatican Council, in *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25, also explains that the faithful must

give the corresponding religious assent to the teachings of the authentic Magisterium, even when they are not infallible definitions.

Therefore, we must distinguish between:

- Dogmatic definitions, which require the assent of faith.
- Definitive teachings, which require firm adherence.
- Non-definitive authentic teachings, which require religious assent.
- Disciplinary decisions, which must be respected within their legitimate sphere.
- Personal opinions and occasional statements, which do not automatically constitute Magisterium.

This distinction allows us to understand that a Catholic can raise reasoned objections to a pastoral or disciplinary decision without thereby rejecting the primacy of the Pope.

5.1. What If a Teaching Appears to Contradict Tradition?

In such a case, the Catholic must act prudently.

He cannot turn his personal interpretation into a definitive judgement on the Magisterium.

But neither should he automatically accept that an apparent contradiction has been resolved simply because the statement comes from a higher authority.

He must study the context, identify the degree of authority of the teaching, and compare it with the truths of faith previously transmitted.

If a genuine difficulty remains, he may request clarification and respectfully express his concern.

Authority should not fear questions asked in good faith.

Ecclesial communion is not strengthened by concealing problems, but by confronting them through truth and charity.

6. What Happens When a Bishop or Priest Teaches Something

Contrary to the Faith?

Bishops are successors of the Apostles, and priests are their collaborators in ministry.

Their authority deserves respect and obedience within their respective spheres of responsibility.

But neither of them is infallible simply because they have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

A priest can make a mistake in a homily. A bishop can make an incorrect theological interpretation. A pastoral directive can be imprudent or produce harmful consequences.

The faithful must know how to distinguish between the sacred ministry and the particular actions of the person exercising it.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in nos. 871-896, explains the hierarchical constitution of the Church and the responsibilities of her ministers.

Ecclesiastical authority is not a privilege for imposing personal opinions.

It is a responsibility before God.

For this reason, when a member of the faithful encounters a problematic teaching, he may request clarification, consult doctrinal sources and, if necessary, present his concern to the competent authority.

Canon 212 §3 of the Code of Canon Law expressly recognises the right and, at times, the duty of the faithful to make known to their pastors and to other members of the faithful their views on matters concerning the good of the Church, while respecting the integrity of faith and morals, due reverence towards pastors, the common good, and the dignity of persons.

This is not an extraordinary concession.

It is a right recognised by the Church’s own legal system.

The Example of Saint Paul

In Galatians 2:11-14, Saint Paul recounts how he publicly corrected Saint Peter in Antioch because he considered his conduct contrary to the truth of the Gospel.

This episode is particularly important.

Saint Paul did not deny Peter's mission or seek to replace him in his authority.

He pointed out that a particular action of the Apostle was causing confusion and needed correction.

Saint Thomas Aquinas studies this episode in the *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Question 33, Article 4, when discussing fraternal correction towards those who exercise authority.

The lesson is clear: **respect for a superior does not eliminate the possibility of correcting him when there is a proportionate reason and a genuine spiritual good to protect**.

Of course, correction must be carried out with prudence, knowledge, and charity.

This is not about turning social media into permanent tribunals against pastors.

It is about remembering that the responsibility to safeguard the faith does not disappear when a Christian finds himself before an ecclesiastical authority.

7. When Must a Catholic Disobey?

The answer is found in one of the most forceful statements in Sacred Scripture.

When the authorities forbade the Apostles to preach in the name of Jesus Christ, Saint Peter replied:

> *"We must obey God rather than men."*
>
> *(Acts 5:29).*

These words are not an invitation to personal independence.

They are a declaration of God's absolute primacy over every human authority.

Saint Thomas Aquinas develops this question in the *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Question 104,

Article 5.

He explains that obedience has limits: no one is obliged to obey a superior in matters beyond that superior's competence, nor when a command contradicts a higher authority.

Therefore:

- One must not obey an order that requires committing a sin.
- One must not cooperate in an injustice out of fear of displeasing a superior.
- One must not deny a truth of faith to demonstrate loyalty to a person.
- One must not conceal abuse by invoking respect for the hierarchy.
- One must not accept that a particular opinion be presented as a universal doctrinal obligation without sufficient grounds.

But the opposite must also be stated.

Not every decision we dislike constitutes an injustice. Not every disciplinary restriction is a denial of Tradition. Not every theological disagreement represents heresy.

The faithful must avoid turning personal preferences into a supposed obligation to disobey.

Disobedience can only be justified when there is a genuine moral or doctrinal reason, not simply when authority makes a decision that does not coincide with our wishes.

8. How Can a Catholic Defend the Traditional Mass and the Faith Without Breaking Communion with Rome?

This question deserves special attention because it is one of the great challenges facing Catholics attached to the Traditional Liturgy.

Defending the Traditional Mass must not be confused with automatically rejecting papal authority.

Likewise, obedience to the Pope must not be used to discredit those who wish to preserve and live a liturgical form that has been part of the Church's life for centuries.

It is entirely possible to legitimately defend:

- The preservation of the Roman liturgical patrimony.
- The use of Latin in the liturgy.
- Gregorian chant and sacred music.
- Reverence before the Eucharist.
- The centrality of the Sacrifice of the Mass.
- Traditional doctrinal formation.
- The complete transmission of Catholic moral teaching.
- The continuity of the teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

All of this can be done while remaining in communion with the Church.

Defending these realities does not require adopting an attitude of hostility towards the Pope or bishops.

Nor does it require accepting that every criticism of an ecclesiastical decision is an attack on unity.

We must also remember that Catholic unity does not mean absolute uniformity of sensibilities, spiritualities, or liturgical preferences.

True unity is founded on the same faith, the same sacraments, and hierarchical communion.

Therefore, a Catholic who loves the Traditional Liturgy must avoid two dangers:

The first is indiscriminate obedience, which ends up considering any defence of Tradition suspicious whenever it conflicts with certain pastoral approaches.

The second is doctrinal self-sufficiency, which leads one to believe that only one's own group, movement, or interpretation preserves the true Church.

Both extremes can damage communion.

Fidelity must be firm, but also humble.

9. The Duty of the Laity: We Are Not Spectators in the Life of the Church

There is a mistaken understanding according to which the defence of the faith belongs exclusively to the clergy.

The laity would simply be recipients of their superiors' decisions, without any particular responsibility for preserving doctrine.

But this view does not correspond to Catholic teaching.

Lumen Gentium, especially in nos. 30-38, explains the particular mission of the laity within the People of God.

Through Baptism, the faithful participate, according to their condition and vocation, in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission.

This does not mean that everyone has the authority to teach officially in the name of the Church.

But it does mean that they have real responsibilities in evangelisation, the sanctification of the world, and the defence of the faith.

A father must pass on Catholic doctrine to his children.

A catechist must faithfully teach the content of the Catechism.

A Catholic writer must ensure that his publications do not spread errors.

A member of the faithful should seek to ensure that his parish preserves reverence and respect for the liturgy.

A well-formed layperson can help others understand Tradition and defend it against mistaken interpretations.

And when he observes a situation that harms the good of the Church, he can and should express his concern through the appropriate channels.

This is not about usurping the bishops' function.

It is about responsibly fulfilling the vocation received in Baptism.

10. Seven Commitments for the Catholic Who Wishes to

Remain Faithful to Tradition

In the face of present difficulties, it is not enough to complain.

The response must be translated into a deeper Christian life.

1. Know the faith. Read Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, conciliar and papal documents, and the works of the great Doctors of the Church.

2. Defend the liturgy. Participate worthily in Holy Mass, respect liturgical norms, and promote knowledge of the Church's traditional patrimony.

3. Reject relativism. Do not adapt moral truths to cultural fashions or confuse mercy with indifference towards sin.

4. Respect the hierarchy. Pray for the Pope, bishops, and priests, recognise their legitimate authority, and avoid personal attacks.

5. Correct with charity. When errors arise, present sound arguments, consult authoritative sources, and use the appropriate ecclesiastical channels.

6. Do not fall into schism or self-sufficiency. The defence of Tradition must be carried out in pursuit of full ecclesial communion, without claiming an authority one does not possess.

7. Live a holy life. It would make little sense to defend the Traditional Mass while neglecting prayer, confession, charity, family life, and one's own conversion.

Tradition is not preserved through arguments alone.

It is also preserved through lives that reflect the holiness the Church has taught for centuries.

11. The Greatest Fidelity Does Not Consist in Pleasing Men, but in Remaining Faithful to Christ

At times, a Catholic may find himself in a painful situation: he deeply loves the Church, respects the ministry of the Pope and bishops, but believes that certain decisions or actions do not favour the preservation of the faith he has received.

This tension should not necessarily lead to bitterness or abandonment.

It can become a call to deepen one's own Christian vocation.

The history of the Church is full of saints who had to defend the truth under difficult circumstances.

Saint Athanasius defended the divinity of Christ against the Arian crisis of the fourth century, which affected important sectors of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

His example reminds us that the truth of the faith does not depend on the number of those who defend it or on the popularity of a particular position.

But his figure must also be understood within its historical and doctrinal context, without using it as an automatic justification for any contemporary opposition to authority.

Saint Paul corrected Peter when he considered that his conduct did not conform to the truth of the Gospel.

Saint Thomas taught that obedience has limits.

Saint Pius X warned against currents that sought to subject Revelation to philosophical assumptions incompatible with the faith.

Benedict XVI insisted on the importance of understanding the Second Vatican Council through a hermeneutic of continuity, as opposed to an interpretation of rupture between the Church before and after the Council.

All these examples remind us of one and the same reality: **fidelity to Christ requires safeguarding what we have received, even when defending it is uncomfortable**.

But it also requires humility, because none of us owns the Church, nor does anyone have the right to make his particular interpretation the absolute measure of Catholic communion.

Conclusion: The Church Needs Faithful Pastors and Laypeople

Who Will Not Renounce the Truth

Obedience is an indispensable Christian virtue. Without it, the Church would become a fragmented community in which every person followed exclusively his own judgement.

The Pope, bishops, and priests possess legitimate authority that must be respected and obeyed.

But that authority is not absolute.

It cannot place itself above Jesus Christ, modify Revelation, or turn error into truth.

The Traditional Mass, the doctrine received from the Apostles, the spiritual patrimony of the saints, and the moral teaching of the Church are not merely preferences belonging to an earlier generation.

They constitute a patrimony that deserves to be known, loved, and transmitted.

For this reason, a Catholic should not be ashamed to defend Tradition, to ask that the traditional Roman liturgy be respected, or to express concern when he observes doctrinal confusion and pastoral abuses.

Nor should he fall into systematic disobedience, contempt for his pastors, or the pretension of becoming the supreme judge of the Church.

The path is more demanding: **obey where there is an obligation to obey, resist what requires acting against God, defend the truth without arrogance, and remain in communion with the Church**.

Pastors have the responsibility to safeguard the flock. The faithful have the responsibility to remain in the faith they have received.

Neither can replace Christ.

And neither is exempt from giving an account before Him.

Saint Paul left us an exhortation that retains all its force:

> *“Test everything; hold fast what is good.”*

> *(1 Thessalonians 5:21).*

We are not asked to naively accept every statement, but neither are we asked to reject everything out of distrust.

We are asked to discern, preserve what is true, and remain steadfast in Christ.

May we Catholics never confuse obedience with silence in the face of error, nor the defence of Tradition with rebellion.

May our priests be holy, our bishops faithful, and our pastors true guardians of the deposit of faith.

And may we, as laypeople, never abandon the responsibility of passing on to our children what we ourselves have received.

For the Church does not need to accommodate the Gospel to every age in order to survive.

It needs to proclaim it in its entirety, live it with holiness, and transmit it without mutilation.

Tradition does not belong to us: we have received it in order to preserve it and hand it on.

Stat Crux dum volvitur orbis.

The Cross stands firm while the world turns.

Long live Christ the King!

Doctrinal Sources and Documents for Further Study

- **Sacred Scripture:** Matthew 16:18-19; Matthew 28:19-20; John 6:60-69; John 21:15-17; Acts 5:29; Galatians 1:8; Galatians 2:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:15.
- **Second Vatican Council:** *Dei Verbum*, nos. 9-10; *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 18-27 and 30-38; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 22-23, 36, and 116.
- **First Vatican Council:** *Pastor Aeternus* (1870).

- **Saint Pius X:** *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) and *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (1907).
- **Benedict XVI:** *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) and the letter to the bishops accompanying the motu proprio.
- **Francis:** *Traditionis Custodes* (2021) and the rescript of 20 February 2023.
- **Code of Canon Law:** Canons 212, 221, and 751.
- **Catechism of the Catholic Church:** nos. 74-100, 871-896, 1776-1802, and 2037.
- **Saint Thomas Aquinas:** *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Question 33, Article 4; Question 104, Article 5.