

PAIX LITURGIQUE

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IS SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM IN JEOPARDY?

DANGER COMES FOR BENEDICT XVI'S GREAT CONTRIBUTION

Warning signs have been multiplying of late when it comes to Summorum Pontificum: the majority of the Italian episcopate and of Curial heavyweights—particularly the Secretariat of State—have convinced the Pope that the traditionalization of young clergy is “preoccupying” and that the “right to the traditional Mass” as instituted through Benedict XVI’s motu proprio is an attack on Vatican II.

Last Pentecost Monday, the first day of the meeting of the Italian Bishops’ Conference (the CEI), the pope starting out by giving the Italian bishops a talking-to for dragging their feet in implementing a generalized state of synod in the Italian church. Indeed, they consider it to be too expensive and utterly useless. An old man’s hobbyhorse, some say.

And then, once the reporters were out of the assembly hall, the pope broached a topic that is a matter of consensus among many Italian bishops: detestation of Summorum Pontificum. Francis confirmed the upcoming release of a document he had been urged to put together to “reinterpret” Benedict XVI’s motu proprio. Indeed, its publication was long in coming, because the document in question seems to have met with objections and delays, particularly from Cardinal Ladaria and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. They pointed out that it would cause troubles and an unmanageable opposition throughout the world. Nevertheless, the Secretariat of State has apparently been pushing for the release of this text. Its basic terms appear to be the following:

- those communities that celebrate according to the older form would be able to continue to do so;
- on the other hand, from now on diocesan priests would have to obtain a specific permission.

Clearly this document, which is inapplicable in many countries including France, will first of all be symbolic: **to turn the celebration of the traditional Mass from a right into a tolerated exception.**

Anti-traditional-Mass pressure groups at the University San Anselmo, at the Curia, and within the Italian Conference of Bishops are thus dragging the pope into a major political mistake: the latent discontent of an entire segment of Catholics with fuzzy doctrine, with weak responses to German abuses, and with ever more disconcerting declarations (to say the least), is now threatening to turn into a veritable outbreak of “Enough already!” Instead of trying to understand what an entire living part of the Christian people feels and aspires to, they’re pushing it to despair and exasperation.

Peace in the Church, especially the liturgical peace to which Benedict XVI had contributed so much with his liberating and wise text, is now being deliberately torn down: a return to the worst years of the post-conciliar age is brewing.

