

Tridentine Community News

July 12, 2009

Ecclēsia Dei Commission Restructured

In a widely anticipated move, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI this week issued a Motu Proprio (papal order) entitled *Ecclēsia Unitātem*, which changes the Vatican's organizational chart for the department that oversees matters pertaining to the Extraordinary Form of Holy Mass. Formerly an independent body directly under the supervision of the Holy Father, the Pontifical Commission Ecclēsia Dei has been made a subsidiary of the department that handles doctrinal questions, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

This change was prompted by two developments: First, PCED President Dario Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos reached the mandatory retirement age of 80 on July 4. In May, PCED Secretary Monsignor Mario Marini passed away. New leaders had to be chosen.

Second, the pending reconciliation with the Society of St. Pius X is largely now concerned with doctrinal matters. Liturgical concerns have effectively been addressed via the 2007 Motu Proprio *Summōrum Pontificum*, which permits any priest to celebrate the Extraordinary Form of Mass and the Sacraments without requiring the permission of his bishop.



As part of this restructuring, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith becomes the President of the PCED. The prelate currently heading the CDF is William Cardinal Levada, formerly Archbishop of San Francisco. In San Francisco, Cardinal Levada was one of the last North American Archbishops not to permit a Tridentine Mass in his Archdiocese prior to *Summōrum Pontificum*. There is no small irony in a man with this record now having the task of promoting what he once would not permit. On the surface, it appears comparable to a vegan becoming president of a steak house chain. Let us pray that Cardinal Levada accepts his duties even if they are not his personal preference. He has giant shoes to fill, as Cardinal Castrillón has been an enthusiastic promoter of the Classical Latin Rite. Indeed, even in retirement Cardinal Castrillón plans to write a book about the Extraordinary Form.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr. Guido Pozzo, a longtime staffer at the CDF, as Secretary of the PCED. Little is known about his record with the Extraordinary Form.

It appears that longtime PCED Vice President Msgr. Camille Perl will be leaving the Commission. No word yet on whether PCED

English Corresponding Secretary Msgr. Arthur Calkins will keep his position.

Liturgical Oversight Possibly in Flux

Ecclēsia Unitātem is exclusively concerned with restructuring the PCED to facilitate ongoing dialogue with the SSPX. It says nothing about liturgical matters, which don't seem to be best handled under the umbrella of the CDF. It is reasonable to speculate that liturgical responsibilities for the Extraordinary Form will migrate to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the PCED's counterpart that oversees the Novus Ordo.

The recently appointed Prefect of the CDWDS, Antonio Cardinal Cañizares Llovera,

celebrated a Pontifical Solemn Mass in the Extraordinary Form on April 21, shortly after taking office. This was quite a statement for the man in charge of the Ordinary Form to make, and is perhaps a sign of changes to come. The risk of unifying liturgical oversight for the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms under one rule-making body is that unsympathetic staffers in the CDWDS, under this or future administrations, might try to impose unwelcome

changes in the Tridentine Mass. The CDWDS would need a clearly-identified advocate for the Extraordinary Form.

A Friend Among the Advisors

With such strategic events happening at the Vatican, it is only natural that the Holy Father would gather a cadre of advisors to assist him. In early June, SSPX Bishop Bernard Fellay, Fraternity of St. Peter co-founder Fr. Josef Bisig, and Institute of Christ the King North American District Superior Msgr. Michael Schmitz were all in Rome. While we are not privy to the details, it would not be illogical to presume that they were present to participate in discussions concerning the PCED restructuring, dialogue with the SSPX, or both.

Supporting this view, this past Monday, July 6, Pope Benedict met with leaders of the FSSP, just before *Ecclēsia Unitātem* was made public. Standing at our Holy Father's right in the adjacent photo is Fr. Bisig, familiar to our readers as a regular guest celebrant at the Windsor and Flint Tridentine Masses. Fr. Bisig worked with then-Cardinal Ratzinger to draft the founding documents of the FSSP in 1988; it is no surprise that he continues to be consulted on matters Tridentine.