

Benedict's Ecumenism – III

April 21, 2012

In these “Comments” two weeks ago was the promise to look at three quotes from Vatican II which have done much to dissolve the Church of Jesus Christ, which is the Catholic Church. And one week ago was the warning that the texts of Vatican II are ambiguous, so that they can always be made to look as though there is nothing wrong with them. But only one of their two possible meanings is innocent. The other meaning is deadly for the Catholic Church, as the last forty years have proved.

The first quote comes from *Lumen Gentium* #8. Here it is: “The one Church of Christ . . . constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by Peter and the bishops in communion with him.” Now what does that word “subsists” mean here? The ambiguity is that it can mean either that Christ’s Church exists mainly and only in the Roman Catholic Church, which is what the Church always taught up to Vatican II, or it can mean that Christ’s Church exists mainly but not only in the Catholic Church, in which case Christ’s Church also exists partly outside the Catholic Church. This opens the door to the Conciliar ecumenism which breaks down the Catholic Church’s dogmatic claim to be the exclusive ark of salvation: “Extra ecclesiam nulla salus.”

The problem here is that it is also a dogma that the Church is one. At every Sunday Mass we hear or sing that we believe in the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” Then how can Christ’s Church be divided amongst several more or less churchlike communities? If the Church is one, it cannot be several. If it is several, it cannot be one. In his book on *Benedict XVI and How the Church Views Itself*, Dr. Wolfgang Schüler gives a series of quotes of Joseph Ratzinger to show how as a theologian he enthusiastically promoted the breaking down of the Catholic Church’s exclusivity, but as a Cardinal

and Pope he has struggled to maintain also the Church's oneness.

The second quote comes from *Unitatis Redintegratio* #3: "Very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church." Now the obvious meaning of these words is that as gold coins build up a heap but can also be found as gold coins outside the heap, so Church elements listed by the Council such as "faith, hope, charity and other gifts of the Holy Spirit" can be recognized existing as such outside the Catholic Church. But Our Lord said that branches cut off his vine wither and die (Jn. XV, 6). What is his vine if not his Church?

The third quote draws the logical conclusion, just a little further in the same document (U.R.#3): "The churches and communities separated (from the Catholic Church) have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation . . ." But as Archbishop Lefebvre said: "No community insofar as it is separated from the Catholic Church can enjoy the support of the Holy Ghost since its separation means resistance to the Holy Ghost. He can work directly only on souls, he can use directly only means, that show no sign of separation."

Vatican II essentially misunderstood the Church. Let us next see with the help of Dr Schüller how Benedict XVI has applied both brake and accelerator to that misunderstanding.

Kyrie eleison.