

The 1968 Rite of Episcopal Consecration: Still Null and Still Void

Replies to objections from Br. Ansgar Santogrossi,
Fr. Pierre-Marie de Kergorlay and Fr. Alvaro Calderon

— Rev. Anthony Cekada —
www.traditionalmass.org

IN MARCH 2006, I published* “Absolutely Null and Utterly Void,”¹ a 14,000-word study that examined the validity of the new Rite of Episcopal Consecration promulgated in 1968 by Paul VI. As should be evident from the title of the article, I concluded that the new rite was invalid.

A number of things led me to write the article: A considerable number of “approved” traditional Latin Masses are now offered under the auspices of dioceses or organizations such as Fraternity of St. Peter or the Institute of Christ the King, and the priests involved trace their ordinations to bishops consecrated in the new rite. If these bishops were not true bishops, the priests they ordained are not priests, and the faithful who assist at their Masses adore and receive only bread.

Moreover, since the election of Benedict XVI in the April 2005 conclave, the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) has been negotiating with the Vatican for its reintegration into the Conciliar Church. Because many traditionalists doubt the validity of the post-Vatican II sacramental rites, and indeed because Benedict XVI had been consecrated a bishop in the new rite, the SSPX superiors invited Dominican cleric in their orbit, Fr. Pierre-Marie de Kergorlay OP, to produce an article demonstrating that the new rite of episcopal consecration was valid.

Fr. Pierre-Marie’s study first appeared in Fall 2005 in the traditionalist Dominicans’ quarterly *Sel de la Terre*. SSPX promptly had it translated and printed in the SSPX’s English-language publication, *The Angelus*, under the title of “Why the New Rite of Episcopal Consecration is Valid.”²

My own article addressed Fr. Pierre-Marie’s main arguments. It was in turn translated into French and widely circulated in France, thanks to the efforts of

Rore Sanctifica, a group of European traditionalists who have published a vast amount of documentation demonstrating the invalidity of the new rite.³

I subsequently produced a two-page résumé intended for popular circulation (also translated and circulated in France) entitled “Why the New Bishops are Not True Bishops.”⁴ I also managed (somehow) to give two interviews about the subject on French radio, and I personally sent copies of the article to the French-speaking members of SSPX slated to participate in the July 2006 General Chapter.

Several critical responses to the article have appeared. However, as of this writing (December 2006), only three writers have raised substantive issues that I believe need to be addressed:

- *Br. Ansgar Santogrossi OSB.* Br. Ansgar, a Benedictine brother from Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon and a graduate of the Institut Catholique (Paris), teaches philosophy and theology at diocesan seminary of Cuernavaca, Mexico. His commentary first appeared in *Objections*,⁵ a French publication edited by the Rev. Guillaume de Tanoüarn, a former member of SSPX who now serves an Indult group in France. Another version subsequently appeared in the U.S. traditionalist publication *The Remnant*.⁶

- *Fr. Pierre-Marie.* Fr. Pierre-Marie’s own response appeared in the form of a short “Note,” printed in *Sel de la Terre*.⁷ It was subsequently appended (together with two other brief “Notes”) to a reprint of his original article.⁸

- *Rev. Alvaro Calderon.* Fr. Calderon teaches theology at the SSPX seminary in Argentina. His response

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1. www.traditionalmass.org. Those who do not have Internet access can obtain a free copy of the article by contacting St. Gertrude the Great Church, 4900 Rialto Road, West Chester OH 45069, 513.645.4212.

2. December 2005–January 2006.

3. www.rore-sanctifica.org. The group’s name is Latin for “sanctify with dew,” a phrase from the essential sacramental form for episcopal consecration prescribed by Pope Pius XII in 1947. Fr. Pierre-Marie’s article was written in response to the first dossier Rore had published on the invalidity of the new rite.

4. *St. Gertrude the Great Newsletter*, October 2006; see also www.traditionalmass.org.

5. “Réponse à l’abbé Cekada sur la validité du nouveau rite d’ordination épiscopale,” *Objections* 6 (June 2006), 36–41.

6. “A Refutation of the Sedevacantist ‘Proof’ of the Invalidity of the New Ordination Rites,” *Remnant*, 15 September 2006, 11–12.

7. 57 (Summer 2006).

8. *Sont-ils évêques? Le nouveau rituel de consécration épiscopale est-il valide?* (Avrillé, France: Editions du Sel 2006), 75–6.

also appeared in *Sel de la Terre*,⁹ and then in *The Angelus*.¹⁰

The debate over the validity of the new rite of episcopal consecration centers on its **essential sacramental form** — the words in a sacramental rite necessary and sufficient to produce the effect of the sacrament.

Before I turn to the objections of Br. Ansgar, Fr. Pierre-Marie and Fr. Calderon, I will outline some key points in my original argument.

I. Résumé of My Argument

A. Principles regarding Validity.

Unlike many other areas in theology, the principles moral theology applies to determine the validity of sacramental forms are very simple and very easy to understand. These are the ones that concern us here:

(1) In each sacramental rite, there is an essential sacramental form that produces the sacramental effect. When a **substantial change of meaning** is introduced into the essential sacramental form through the corruption or omission of essential words, the **sacrament becomes invalid** (=does not “work,” or produce the sacramental effect).

(2) Sacramental forms approved for use in the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church are sometimes different in wording from the Latin Rite forms. Nevertheless, they are the same in *substance*, and are valid.

(3) In 1947 Pius XII declared that the form for Holy Orders (i.e., for diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy) must univocally (=unambiguously) signify the sacramental effects — the power of Order and the grace of the Holy Ghost.

(4) For conferring the episcopacy, Pius XII designated as the essential sacramental form a sentence in the traditional Rite of Episcopal Consecration that univocally expresses (a) the **power of the Order** that a bishop receives and (b) **the grace of the Holy Ghost**.

B. Application to the New Rite

In 1968 Paul VI replaced in their entirety both the consecratory Preface and the essential sacramental form designated by Pius XII. In the new Preface (now called a “Consecratory Prayer”) Paul VI designated the following words as the essential sacramental form,¹¹ and hence required for validity:

“So now pour out upon this chosen one that **power** which is from you, the **governing Spirit** whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit

given by him to the holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.”

Now, in “Absolutely Null and Utterly Void,” I applied the principles from section A to the foregoing by posing and responding to five simple questions. Here I will mention the two that figure most directly in the responses from Br. Ansgar, Fr. Pierre-Marie and Fr. Calderon:

1. Eastern Rite? *Was the new form employed in a Catholic Eastern Rite as a sacramental form for conferring the episcopacy?*

I posed this question because throughout his article Fr. Pierre-Marie appealed *repeatedly* — I counted at least a dozen times — to Eastern Rite prayers as iron-clad proof for the validity of the Paul VI form.

And referring in particular to the Coptic and Maronite Rites, Fr. Pierre-Marie wrote: “The utilization of the form that is in use in two certainly valid Eastern rites assures its validity.”¹²

It was relatively simple to disprove this claim. All I had to do was consult works that identify the Eastern Rite sacramental forms (e.g., Cappello’s *de Sacramentis* and the first volume of Denzinger’s *Ritus Orientalium*), look up the texts the authors gave as the Coptic and Maronite forms for episcopal consecration, and compare these with the Paul VI form.

Here is what I discovered:

(a) **Length.** The Coptic and Maronite forms consist of long Prefaces (about 340 and 370 words respectively); unlike the Roman Rite, no one sentence in either is designated as the essential sacramental form.

The new Paul VI Consecratory Prayer is 212 words long in its entirety; the passage that Paul VI designated as the essential sacramental form is 42 words long.

So, merely comparing the *length* of these Eastern texts with the Paul VI text, demonstrated that even on the face of it, Fr. Pierre-Marie’s claim was false.

(b) **Coptic Form.** The Paul VI Consecratory Prayer contains many phrases found in the Coptic form. It omits, however, three phrases in the Coptic form that enumerate three specific sacramental powers considered *proper to the order of bishop alone*: “to provide clergy according to His commandment for the priesthood... to make new houses of prayer, and to consecrate altars.”¹³

This omission is significant, because the dispute over the validity of the essential sacramental form of Paul VI revolves around whether it adequately expresses the power of the Order being conferred — i.e., episcopacy.

9. “La Validité du rite de consécration épiscopal,” 58 (Fall 2006) 213-6.

10. “The Validity of the Rite of Episcopal Consecration: Replies to the Objections,” *Angelus* (November 2006), 42-4.

11. *Pontificalis Romani Recognitio*, 18 June 1968, AAS 60 (1968), 372, 373: “declarare quoniam in ritu ad naturam rei pertinere dicenda sunt,” “quorum haec ad naturam rei pertinent, atque adeo ut actus valeat exiguntur.”

12. “Why the New Rite...” (Jan 2005), 10.

13. Translation in O.H.E. KHS-Burmester, *Ordination Rites of the Coptic Church* (Cairo: 1985), 110-1.

(c) **Maronite Form.** The Paul VI Consecratory Prayer has *nothing* in common with the prayer Denzinger gives as the Maronite form for episcopal consecration.¹⁴ It has a *few* phrases in common with a prayer that *follows* — but is not part of — the Maronite form.¹⁵

The Paul VI Consecratory Prayer *does*, however, closely resemble another Maronite prayer — one found in the Rite for the Consecration of a Maronite Patriarch.¹⁶ Indeed, Fr. Pierre-Marie reproduces much of this text to support arguments for the validity of the new rite.

However, this *prayer is not a sacramental form for conferring the episcopacy*. It is merely an installation prayer, because the Maronite Patriarch is *already* a bishop when he is appointed.

(d) **Summary.** Having disproved Fr. Pierre-Marie's principal factual claim and the conclusion — "The utilization of the form that is in use in two certainly valid Eastern rites assures its validity" — I then examined the new rite using other principles that moral theology applies to ascertain the validity of sacramental forms.

2. The Sacramental Effects. *Does the new sacramental form univocally signify the sacramental effects — the power of Order (the episcopacy) and the grace of the Holy Ghost?*

The two elements mentioned are those specified by Pius XII (see I.A.3, above), and the form must signify *both*.

Here, the discussion turns on the meaning of *governing Spirit* (*Spiritus principalis* in Latin, or its Greek equivalent, *hegemonicon pneuma*) in the new essential sacramental form. What does it signify?

(a) **The Holy Ghost?** From the context, *governing Spirit* appears to mean, simply, the Holy Ghost. *Spiritus* is capitalized in the Latin original, indicating the Third Person of the Trinity, and the relative pronoun *quem* (here meaning "whom") is used, rather than *quam* (which would refer to another antecedent in the form, *virtus*, i.e., power).

However, the grace of the Holy Ghost is only *one* of the required elements.

(b) **The Power of Orders?** To be valid, the essential form must also univocally (unambiguously) signify the power of Order (*potestas Ordinis*) — in this case, the episcopacy.

The only possible term in the form that might signify this is likewise *governing Spirit*. Does it univocally

signify the power of Order conferred upon a bishop at his consecration?

- Latin and Greek dictionaries render the adjective *governing* as, respectively, "Originally existing, basic, primary... first in importance or esteem, chief... befitting leading men or princes,"¹⁷ and "of a leader, leading, governing" or "guiding."¹⁸

- There is a related noun, *hegemonia*, which in general means "authority, command," and in a secondary sense means "rule, office of a superior: episcopal... of a superior of a convent... hence of sphere of bishop's rule, diocese."¹⁹

But even in this sense, it does not connote the power of Order (*potestas Ordinis*, i.e. "sacramental" power) a bishop possesses, but merely jurisdiction (*potestas jurisdictionis*, i.e. "ruling" power), especially since one definition mentions a monastic superior.

- I undertook a brief survey of other sources, and uncovered a dozen possible meanings for *governing Spirit*: originally existing spirit, leading/guiding spirit, a perfect spirit like King David, generous or noble spirit, God the Father, God the Holy Ghost, an external divine effect, supernatural spirit of rectitude/self-control, good disposition, qualities possessed by a Coptic abbot (gentleness, love, patience, graciousness), virtues proper to a Coptic Metropolitan (divine knowledge received through the Church).

- The term *governing Spirit*, then, is not *univocal*, a term that signifies only *one* thing, as Pius XII required. Rather, it is *ambiguous* — capable of signifying *many different things, qualities and persons*.

- Among these meanings, moreover, we do not find the power of Order (*potestas Ordinis*). The expression *governing Spirit* does not even *ambiguously* connote the Sacrament of Holy Orders in *any* sense, still less in the sense of the fullness of the priesthood that constitutes the episcopal Order.

(c) **Which Is it?** So, although the sacramental form for conferring Holy Orders is supposed to signify *two* sacramental effects, *governing Spirit* signifies only *one* — from the context in the new rite, probably the Holy Ghost.

But *governing Spirit* does not even *ambiguously* signify the *other* effect, the power of Order.

If one were to argue that *governing Spirit* did signify this, however, then the *other* required element, the Holy Ghost, would be absent from the form.

14. H. Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium, Coptorum, Syrorum et Armenorum* (Würzburg: Stahel 1863), hereafter "RO," identifies the texts at RO 1:141. See RO 2:23–24 for the texts themselves. It is divided into two sections. According to the rubric in the footnote, the consecrating bishop continues to hold his hand imposed during the part following the interjection of the Archdeacon.

15. RO 2:198. "Spiritus...Sanctum, illum principalem." "expellat omnia ligamina."

16. RO 2:220.

17. P. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon 1994). Similarly: A. Forcellini, *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis* (Padua: 1940); A. Souter, *Glossary of Later Latin to 600 AD* (Oxford: Clarendon 1949); C. Lewis & C. Short, *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York: 1907).

18. G. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon 2000). F. Gingrich & F. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University Press 1957).

19. Lampe, 599.

In either case, the consequences are the same: the form does not signify one of the things it is supposed to signify.

(d) **Conclusions.** The foregoing analysis of *governing Spirit* led me to the following conclusions:

- Because one of the required elements is not present, the Paul VI form constituted a *substantial* change in the essential sacramental form for conferring the Order of the episcopacy.

- According to the general principles enunciated (I.a), a substantial change in an essential sacramental form renders a sacrament invalid.

- An episcopal consecration conferred with the essential sacramental form promulgated by Paul VI is invalid.

Thus my main arguments and conclusions. We now turn to the objections.

II. Br. Ansgar Santogrossi OSB

BROTHER ANSGAR provides readers with a short summary of my arguments and says he will bring together “in a somewhat shotgun fashion a number of aspects of the issue which are neglected by Fr. Cekada.” After this, “Fr. Cekada’s fundamental error — and the *validity* of Paul VI’s episcopal ordination formula — will become evident.”²⁰

Br. Ansgar’s argument consists of two parts:

First, he attempts to neutralize the general principle (see I.A.3 above) that the essential form for conferring a Sacred Order must *univocally* express the power of the Order conferred.

Second, having reduced the standard for validity to what he calls “a field of implicit significations,”²¹ Br. Ansgar argues that *governing Spirit* in the new Rite of Episcopal Consecration “implicitly, but *really* and *unequivocally* signifies the episcopal power of order.”²²

A. Pius XII’s “Ambiguous” Formulas

Br. Ansgar sets out to demonstrate that the essential sacramental forms prescribed in *Sacramentum Ordinis* by Pius XII — yes, Pius XII — were ambiguous and thus invalid by the standard I applied to the Paul VI form.

1. Trent. For openers, Br. Ansgar attempts to enlist the Council of Trent in support of episcopacy as *governing Spirit* — *Spiritus principalis* in Latin,

“The first thing the Council of Trent teaches about bishops (Decree on the Sacrament of Order, chapter 4),” says Br. Ansgar, “is that they are *principally* mem-

bers of the hierarchy, established by the Holy Spirit to *rule* the Church.”²³

From this, one would naturally expect to turn to the Decree and find the Latin word *principalis*, as in *Spiritus principalis*.

But no, Br. Ansgar has used an English translation; where his translation says “principally,” the Latin original uses the term *praecipue* — similar in some of its meanings²⁴ to *principalis*, but *not* the term we are arguing about.

Nor is “the first thing” that the Decree teaches about bishops that they are “established by the Holy Spirit to *rule*.” The Decree begins by teaching in Chapter I that they are successors to the Apostles in the *priesthood* with the power to confer *sacraments*.²⁵

2. Diaconate. The word “ministry,” Br. Ansgar argues, is used in the Pius XII forms for both diaconate and episcopacy. How, Br. Ansgar asks, does Fr. Cekada know that the formula for episcopal consecration “makes a bishop and not an archdeacon”?

Well, Fr. Cekada knows it because Rev. Francis Hürth SJ, one of the theologians who wrote *Sacramentum Ordinis* for Pius XII, explained *exactly* what the word “ministry” meant in the form for diaconal ordination:

“No one can doubt that the word ‘ministry’ in this sentence is used in the full and technical sense corresponding to the Greek term *diaconia* (‘diaconii’), from which this whole Order derives its name ‘diaconate’.”²⁶

3. Priesthood. Turning to the traditional formula for priestly ordination, Br. Ansgar argues: “The Greek word ‘presbyter’, found in its derivative *presbyteratus* in the essential form of ordination, signifies ‘elder’ and not ‘one who sacrifices’ (*sacerdos*).” This, too, according to Fr. Cekada’s standards, would be ambiguous.²⁷

There are two problems with this:

(a) The Greek word origins are irrelevant. The sacramental form is in ecclesiastical Latin, where the term *presbyter* refers exclusively to one who possesses the sacerdotal order below that of a bishop.

(b) And in any case, Br. Ansgar has overlooked *another* expression in the Pius XII form — one that Fr. Hürth says univocally (unambiguously) expresses the order received:

“By these words the power of the Order of the priesthood is univocally [*univoce*] expressed, together with the corresponding grace of the Holy Ghost. For what is being conferred by name is the sacerdotal dig-

20. “Refutation,” 11.

21. The theory being, presumably: “If we build it, they will come...”

22. “Refutation,” 12.

23. “Refutation,” 11.

24. E.g., in a manner special to the particular case, peculiarly, more than any other instance, to a greater degree than others.

25. *De Sacramento Ordinis* 1, DZ 957: “atque apostolis eorumque successoribus in sacerdotio potestatem traditam consecrandi, offerendi et ministrandi corpus et sanguinem ejus, necnon et peccata dimittendi et retinendi.”

26. F. Hürth, “Commentarius ad Cons. Apostolicam *Sacramentum Ordinis*,” *Periodica* 37 (1948), 26.

27. “Refutation,” 11.

nity, the ‘office of the *second* rank’ (as opposed to the office of the *first* rank, which is the episcopacy).²⁸

4. Episcopacy. And finally, applying the same method to the form that Pius XII prescribed for episcopal consecration, Br. Ansgar claims: “But still, ‘fullness of your ministry’ does not in itself indicate that this ministerial fullness is *specifically* different from the *non-priestly* ministry the ordained had once received when he was ordained a deacon.”²⁹

And Fr. Hürth provides an explanation of these terms from the theologians who proposed as the essential form the passage that Pius XII finally adopted:

“The words which fully suffice for the power and the grace to be signified are found in the consecratory Preface, whose essential words are those in which the ‘fullness or totality’ of the sacerdotal ministry and the ‘raiment of *all* glory’ are expressed.”³⁰

So, unless you follow the tenets of the weird modern theory in which an author has no “privileged” insights into what his own writings mean, Fr. Hürth’s explanations of how and why the terms in the Pius XII forms *are* univocal will suffice to defeat Br. Ansgar’s “field of implicit significations” theory, which holds in effect that they are *not*.

B. “Implicit, Unequivocal Significations”

In the second section of his article, Br. Ansgar attempts to demonstrate that *governing Spirit* in the new Rite of Episcopal Consecration “implicitly, but *really* and *unequivocally* signifies the episcopal power of order.”³¹

Here are some of the proofs that Br. Ansgar offers for the foregoing:³²

- Whoever received “a spiritual and Holy Spirit-derived character of the first order, or the character which is *principalis*, becomes the principal source of the Spirit in the Church. In other words, he is *episkopos*.”
- The term *governing Spirit* is sufficient because it is “proper to the episcopate.”
- There should be “no grounds for doubt about validity when a prelate manifestly intends ‘to ordain a bishop’ — he is using a book which says ‘ordination of a bishop’ about the rite — utilizes the expressions [...] *Spiritum principalem*.”
- *Spiritus principalis* is sufficient because “the episcopal power of sanctification does not need to be signified separately” because it is “principal.”
- “The bishop is the primary analogate of the signification in the usage of ‘*Spiritum principalem*,” since all other duties in the Church “are under the oversight of the bishop.”

In response:

(1) If you carefully re-read the foregoing, you will notice that Br. Ansgar has done nothing more than restate the same circular argument in several different ways: *governing Spirit/Spiritus principalis* sufficiently signifies the episcopacy because it sufficiently signifies the episcopacy.

(2) Specifically, Br. Ansgar cites no authority for the notion that a sacramental form that signifies “implicitly” is sufficient to confer a sacrament validly.

Indeed, traditional sacramental theology teaches the opposite. If someone who administers baptism says “I baptize you in the name of God,” his words *imply* the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, but the form is considered invalid.

(3) Br. Ansgar’s arguments are a classic example of post-Vatican II modernist “theologizing.” He does not define terms or clearly state his principles, and his language is fuzzy and elusive.

His claim that *governing Spirit* unequivocally and implicitly signifies the power of Order conferred upon a bishop is easily disproved, however, merely by defining his terms for him.

(a) “Univocal” means “that which has but one meaning.”³³ In my original article, I demonstrated that the expression *governing Spirit* did not have just *one* meaning, but at least a *dozen*. It cannot therefore be called “unequivocal.”

(b) “Implicit” means “all that which is contained in something else,”³⁴ so, if Br. Ansgar’s claim were true, one would find something like “the power of Order of the episcopacy” among the meanings for *governing Spirit*. But as I also demonstrated in “Absolutely Null,” this was *not* contained among these meanings, so neither can it be called “implicit.”

(4) Dogmatic theology, moral theology and canon law consider the power of *Order* (to confer sacraments) and the power of *jurisdiction* (to rule) to be separate and distinct. One is not automatically accompanied by, nor does it imply, the other.

Br. Ansgar’s arguments obliterate this distinction by implying that the sacramental power a bishop receives is somehow contained in “ruling” power.

It should therefore be evident that Br. Ansgar has been unable to offer a defense of *governing Spirit* that is based on any discernible principles of traditional Catholic theology.

28. “Commentarius,” 20. His emphasis.

29. Refutation, 12.

30. “Commentarius, 30: ‘summa seu totalitas’ ministerii sacerdotalis.”

31. “Refutation,” 12.

32. They are all found in “Refutation,” 12.

33. Lewis & Short, *univocus*.

34. A. Michel, “Explicite et Implicite,” DTC 5:1868. “Est explicite tout ce qui est admis ou proposé expressément; est implicite tout ce qui est contenu dans autre chose.”

III.Fr. Pierre-Marie OP

FR. PIERRE-MARIE'S objections to "Absolutely Null" cover two short pages. With one exception, these do not address the substance of my argument against the validity of the new rite. I will begin by replying to his less important objections.

A. Peripheral Objections

1. Textual Dispute. Fr. Pierre-Marie claims I misrepresented Dom Emmanuel Lanne's critique of a text that Fr. Pierre-Marie had relied upon.³⁵

Rather than argue over this (the quote appeared in an appendix) I simply point out that in the same sentence I cited *another* scholar who *also* warned that the text in question "should be treated with caution."³⁶

2. The Power to Ordain. Fr. Pierre-Marie leaves the impression that I contend that the form for episcopal consecration must explicitly mention the power to ordain priests for it to be valid.

False. I do not, and I said that nowhere in my article.

3. Found Churches = Ordain? Fr. Pierre-Marie claims that the phrase in the Paul VI form that mentions the "power given to the Apostles to establish churches... necessarily implies that of ordaining priests."³⁷

False, for at least two reasons:

(a) The Apostles founded churches only because they enjoyed an extraordinary *jurisdiction* to do so.³⁸ The theologian Dorsch says specifically that this power is *not* communicated to bishops: "not all those functions proper to the apostles are also proper to bishops — for example, to establish new churches."³⁹

(b) To establish "churches" (dioceses, in modern terminology) is an exercise of the power of *jurisdiction*, not one of *orders*, such as ordaining priests. This jurisdictional power is proper to the Roman Pontiff alone.⁴⁰

4. Number of Words. Fr. Pierre-Marie also implies that I regarded the number of words in a sacramental form as some sort of indicator of validity.

False. I compared the word counts for the Eastern Rite forms with the Paul VI form because Fr. Pierre-Marie had claimed the latter is "in use in two certainly

valid Eastern Rites." How could his claim be true if not even the *number* of words is the same?

5. Unfair to Dom Botte? Fr. Pierre-Marie maintains that I did not fairly represent a statement by Dom Bernard Botte (author of the new Consecratory Prayer for Episcopal Consecration) that one could omit *governing Spirit* without affecting the validity of the new rite.

False. The issue under discussion at that point in my article was what *governing Spirit* meant in the essential sacramental form. That Dom Botte dismissed its significance in 1969 (*before* there was a dispute over it) proves that his later defense and "explanation" of it in 1974⁴¹ (*after* there was a dispute over it) was a cynical pack of lies.

6. Indefectibility of the Church. Fr. Pierre-Marie maintains that I ignore this question.

False. I deal with it in section X.B of the article.⁴²

7. Ottaviani's Approval. Fr. Pierre-Marie says I have "avoided" the question of Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani supposedly approving the Paul VI form.

Well, it never occurred to me, because by 1968 Cardinal Ottaviani had let a *lot* of things slide by.

But since Fr. Pierre-Marie thinks this is important: Ottaviani was blind at the time, his secretary was suspected of having misrepresented the contents of at least *one* document that the cardinal signed,⁴³ and in any case, Ottaviani later went on Italian television to praise the liturgical reforms, which approval (I presume) Fr. Pierre-Marie would repudiate.

B. The Consecration of the Maronite Patriarch.

Fr. Pierre-Marie attempts to refute only one substantive point in my argument. In his original article, he had adduced the prayer for the Consecration of the Maronite Patriarch as evidence for the validity of the new rite. I had pointed out that this was merely an *investiture* prayer, not a *sacramental* prayer for consecrating a bishop.

Responding to this, Fr. Pierre-Marie refers readers to an earlier "Note" with the following comment: "Father Cekada asserts without proof the non-sacramentality of the Prayer of Ordination of the Maronite Patriarch. In our previous 'Note,' we have explained our position on this point."⁴⁴

35. The text being the Latin translation in RO for the Coptic Rite of Episcopal Consecration.

36. Paul Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* (New York: Pueblo 1990), 8.

37. *Sont-ils évêques?* 75. "En effet il est affirmée que le pouvoir reçu est celui du souverain sacerdoce, qu'il est le pouvoir donné aux Apôtres pour fonder les églises (ce qui implique nécessairement celui d'ordonner des prêtres), etc.

38. See J. Abbo & J. Hannon, *The Sacred Canons* 2nd ed. rev., (St. Louis: Herder 1960) 1:354-5.

39. A. Dorsch, *De Ecclesia Christi* (Innsbruck: Rauch 1928), 290. "Non omnes ii actus conveniunt episcopis, qui apostolis, e.g., fundare novas ecclesias etc."

40. See Canon 215.1. "Unius supremæ ecclesiasticæ potestatis est... dioceses... erigere."

41. B. Botte, "'Spiritus Principalis' Formule de l'Ordination Épiscopale," *Notitiae* 10 (1974), 410-1.

42. If according to the standards laid down by Pius XII, the new rite is invalid, the conclusion to be drawn is not that *the Church* has defected but rather that *Paul VI* somehow defected from the faith and lost his authority. While faith tells us it is impossible for the *Church* to defect, dogmatic theology, canon law and at least two papal pronouncements (Innocent III and Paul IV) tell us it is indeed possible for a *pope* to defect from the faith and lose his authority. For the quotations, see A. Cekada, *Traditionalists, Infallibility and the Pope* (West Chester OH: 1995-2006).

43. His secretary, Mgr. Gilberto Agustoni, was a liturgical modernist and a collaborator of Bugnini. For an account, see A. Cekada, "Background to the Intervention," *The Ottaviani Intervention*, (Rockford IL: TAN 1992), 8-10

44. *Sont-ils évêques?* 75.

The attentive reader will pause to note the hidden assumption here: Though Fr. Pierre-Marie has put forward the prayer of the Consecration of the Maronite Patriarch as Exhibit A for the validity of the new rite, *he* is not obliged to prove it is indeed a sacramental prayer for conferring episcopal consecration. Rather, Fr. Cekada and others are obliged to prove it is *not* a sacramental prayer.

In any event, we turn to the prior Note, where Fr. Pierre-Marie argues his position as follows:⁴⁵

- Choosing a Patriarch from among clerics who were *already* bishops is “relatively recent,” because “it was held that one should avoid moving a bishop from a see, even to create a patriarch.” Before that, a cleric of the patriarchal city who was *not* a bishop was chosen.

- A special ceremony was created “to consecrate the Patriarch ... as the bishop of his patriarchal city and to institute him into his office.” Later, when only clergy who were already bishops were chosen to be patriarchs, “the ceremony was lost, or it at least lost its consecratory power.”

- The prayer for the Consecration of a Maronite Patriarch is “practically the same” as the one for consecrating a bishop. The principal difference lies in the consecratory prayer. In the case of the Patriarch, the ordinary prayer for episcopal consecration is replaced with “the prayer of Clement.”

- This prayer “today no longer has consecratory power when recited over a candidate who is already a bishop.” But the prayer “formerly possessed [this power], when it was recited over a candidate who was not a bishop.”

At first this argument may sound plausible. But it collapses instantly when you examine the details.

1. Vague Speculations. Each factual link in the foregoing argument is no more than a wooly generalization. Fr. Pierre-Marie does not (and indeed, probably *could* not) furnish us with *specific* information about his factual claims — the timeline, the identity of the clerics involved, which texts “lost their consecratory power,” who determined that this occurred, where one finds evidence that a “ceremony was lost,” etc.

2. No Citations. Fr. Pierre-Marie cites no sources whatsoever — theologians, historians, liturgists, etc. — to support these broad and sweeping claims. We may therefore assume that he makes them on no authority but his own, and therefore dismiss them as gratuitous.

3. Problems with Manuscripts. It is highly unlikely in any case that Fr. Pierre-Marie could ever identify with certitude the exact text that he maintains “lost its consecratory power.” An expert on the history of the Maronite Pontifical pointed out:

“Unfortunately, we lack documents that could provide information about the Maronite Pontifical in more ancient times. Only in the 13th century do we begin to find some that are reliable and authentic.”⁴⁶

Subsequent sources are dated 1296, 1311, 1495, and 1683 (a reconstruction), and their history and interrelationship is extremely complex.

4. Contrary Testimony. The testimony of Irmia Al-Amchiti, the 13th-century Maronite Patriarch associated with the first known edition of the Maronite Pontifical (1215), moreover, seems to demolish Fr. Pierre-Marie’s claim that the practice of choosing a Patriarch from among clerics who were *already* bishops is “relatively recent.”

The Patriarch wrote in his own hand that he had been consecrated a bishop and served as a metropolitan for four years *before* he became Patriarch in 1209.⁴⁷ Or are we to understand that 1209 is still “relatively recent”?

5. Syrian Rite. The Syrian Rite, which is related to the Maronite Rite and stems from the same source, also employs the Prayer of Clement that Fr. Pierre-Marie mentions. But once again, the prayer is not used to consecrate bishops but exclusively for the installation of the Patriarch.

The original language (Syriac) even uses two separate terms to distinguish the *sacramental* rite for the consecration of a bishop from the *non-sacramental* rite for the consecration of a patriarch. The first rite is called an “imposition of hands,” while the second is referred to with a term meaning “to confide or invest someone with a duty.”⁴⁸

A Syrian liturgist explains: “In the first case [episcopal consecration], the ordinand receives a charism different from the one he already possesses... In the second, the Patriarch does not receive a charism different from the one he received at the time he was made a bishop.”⁴⁹

6. A Self-Extinguishing Argument. In the last point of his argument, Fr. Pierre-Marie implies that the same Maronite text can serve *two* purposes today — either as a *non-sacramental* prayer in the Maronite Rite to install a bishop as a Patriarch, or as a *sacramental* prayer in the Latin Rite to consecrate a priest as a bishop.

46. Michael Rajji, quoted in Joseph Merhej, *Jalons pour l’Histoire du Pontificale Maronite*, doctoral thesis, (Paris: Institut Catholique 1975). 13.

47. Quoted in Merhej. “Mar Boutros, patriarche de Maronites... m’ordonné de ses mains sacrées et m’a érige Métropolitaine.... Les quatre années passées... ils ont fait un tirage au sort où j’ai été choisi.”

48. G. Khouris-Sarkis, “Le Sacre des Evêques dans l’Église Syrienne: Introduction,” *L’Orient Syrien* 8 (1963), 140-1, 156-7. “Mais le pontificale... fait une distinction entre la consécration conférée aux évêques et celle qui est conférée au patriarche... et c’est pour cela que le pontificale appelle cette consécration ‘syom’ido d-Épiscopé,’ imposition des mains aux évêques. The word used in the title of the ceremony for the patriarch, ‘‘Mettas’rhone’to,’ est l’action de confier une charge à quelqu’un, de l’en investir.”

49. Khouris-Sarkis, 140-1. “Dans la première, l’élu reçoit un charisme différent de celui qu’il possédait déjà... Dans le second, le patriarche ne reçoit un charisme différent de celui qu’il a reçu au moment où il a été créé évêque.”

45. *Sont-ils évêques?* 70–1.

It did not perhaps occur to Fr. Pierre-Marie that such a prayer can *not* be considered *univocal* (unambiguous); as a sacramental form for conferring Holy Orders, it must therefore be considered invalid. (See above: I.A.3, 4)

In sum, Fr. Pierre-Marie has presented *no* evidence to demonstrate that the Maronite prayer for the consecration of a patriarch was sacramental. He cannot therefore appeal to it as proof for the validity of the new rite of episcopal consecration.

IV. Fr. Alvaro Calderon SSPX

IN HIS ORIGINAL article, Fr. Pierre-Marie had adduced another Eastern Rite text, the Coptic Rite Preface for Episcopal Consecration, as proof for the validity of the post-Vatican II rite. In “Absolutely Null,” I pointed out that the sentence that Paul VI had designated as the essential sacramental form was *not* identical to the actual Coptic form. Fr. Calderon’s objections to my article address this issue in particular.

A. Coptic Form vs. Paul VI Form.

1. A Fallacious Comparison? Fr. Calderon maintains that my comparison between the entire Coptic Preface and what he calls the “formal-effective” sentence in the Paul VI rite is fallacious and unfair.

For a comparison to be fair, he says, it would be necessary either to (a) identify the “formal-effective” sentence in the Coptic Preface and compare it with the “formal-effective” sentence designated by Paul VI, or (b) compare the whole Coptic Preface with the *whole* Paul VI Consecratory Prayer that surrounds the “formal-effective” sentence.⁵⁰

In response:

- As regards the Coptic Rite: The Coptic Synod of 1898 identified the form for episcopal consecration: “The form is the actual prayer which the ordaining bishop recites while imposing hands on the ordinand,”⁵¹ and Pope Leo XIII approved the acts of the Synod.⁵²

One need hardly look beyond what Leo XIII approved for a “formal-effective” sentence.

- As regards the new rite: Paul VI himself identified the “formal-effective” words which “pertain to the essence of the rite.”⁵³

Because such words must necessarily contain *everything* required — by definition they are both necessary and sufficient — here, too, there is no need to look

at the *whole* Paul VI Consecratory Prayer before making a comparison.⁵⁴

2. An Omitted Statistic? Fr. Calderon says I do not point out that the majority of the 340 words in the Coptic preface occur in the rest of the new Consecratory Prayer.⁵⁵

Fr. Calderon is simply mistaken. I stated explicitly that, “the Paul VI Preface surrounding the new form contains many phrases found in the Coptic form.”⁵⁶

3. An Admission and Error. Fr. Calderon makes the following claim: “The likely ‘formal-effective’ phrase of the Coptic rite (which corresponds to the phrase considered to be such in the new rite) is shorter than that of the new rite; and consequently, is equally, if not more, ambiguous.”⁵⁷

Later in the article, Fr. Calderon asserts that the “formal words of the prefaces are, in general, rather ambiguous and general, even in the traditional Roman rite,” and that the “Romans” were “aware of the ambiguity of the formulas.”⁵⁸

Two things are startling about these statements:

- Fr. Calderon explicitly states that the new essential sacramental form is “ambiguous.” This concedes that the new form is not *univocal* — *unambiguous* — as Pius XII required.

- But by so doing, Fr. Calderon thus has posited the theological equivalent of a square circle. No sacramental form, by definition, can be “ambiguous,” because then it would not *signify*.

B. Context of the New Form

Fr. Calderon would have us look to the *context* of the new form for assurance of its validity. He says:

“This context is very ample because it cannot be reduced to the Preface alone; the complete rite must be taken into consideration.”

From a quote by Leo XIII that speaks of the removal of *all* idea of consecration and sacrifice from Anglican ordination rites, Fr. Calderon extrapolates the following principle: if in the rest of the rite “consecration and sacrifice were involved,” the rite would have “consistency.”⁵⁹

In response:

- Fr. Calderon cites *no* authorities to support his principle about “involvement” producing “consistency” — whatever those nebulous terms may mean.

50. “Validité,” 213–4; “Validity...Replies,” 42–3.

51. Quoted F. Cappello, *De Sacramentis* (Rome: Marietti 1951) 4:732. “In collatione trium ordinum majorum... forma est ipsa oratio quam ordinans recitat, dum manus ordinando imponit.”

52. *Epistola Synodales Vestrae Litterae*, 25 April 1899, *Leonis XIII P.M. Acta* 18 (1899), 43–4.

53. *Pontificalis Romani Recognitio*, 372, 373: “quaenam in ritu ad naturam rei pertinere dicenda sunt,” “ad naturam rei pertinent, atque adeo ut actus valeat exiguntur.”

54. The rubrics of the new rite, moreover, prescribe that bishops who “consecrate” — and thus in theory likewise confer the sacrament — merely recite the *essential* formula, rather the *whole* Consecratory Prayer. See Paul VI, *De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum*, ed. typ. alt. (Rome: Polyglot 1990), nos. 16, 25.

55. “Validité,” 214; “Validity...Replies,” 43.

56. “Absolutely Null,” 5.

57. “Validité,” 214; “Validity...Replies,” 43.

58. “Validité,” 215; “Validity...Replies,” 44.

59. “Validité,” 215: “si dans le reste du rite il était question de consécration et sacrifice...”; “Validity...Replies,” 44.

• Fr. Calderon, however, has not even gotten to the point where he could *make* an argument from context. He has not demonstrated that the new form — even *equivocally* — contains both elements that Pius XII required in the sacramental form for Holy Orders: the power of the Order and the grace of the Holy Ghost.

THE INABILITY of Fr. Pierre-Marie and Fr. Calderon to establish that the new form “is in use in two certainly valid Eastern rites” leads us straight back to the term *governing Spirit* (*Spiritus principalis*). What does it really mean?

Br. Ansgar was unable to frame an answer that was based on any recognizable principle of traditional Catholic theology. Fr. Pierre-Marie and Fr. Calderon did not even attempt to do so.

But the answer to the question, as I demonstrated in “Absolutely Null,” is that *governing Spirit* really has no exact meaning. It can mean one of at least a dozen different things.

Among these is the Holy Ghost, and this is probably what it means in the context of the new form. Indeed, before the controversy over it arose, the principal author of the new rite, Dom Botte, simply referred to the passage containing *governing Spirit* as “the invocation of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁰

But among the many meanings for the expression, we do not find the power of Order (*potestas Ordinis*). The *governing Spirit* does not even *ambiguously* connote the Sacrament of Holy Orders in *any* sense, still less in the sense of the fullness of the priesthood that constitutes the episcopal Order.

Without this, the essential sacramental form in the rite of Paul VI is invalid on the face of it because one of the two necessary elements prescribed by Pius XII is missing. “Context,” no matter how “ample,” cannot “specify” a term that is not present at all.

To sum up the problem once again: The debate over the validity of the new rite of episcopal consecration centers on its **essential sacramental form** — the words in a sacramental rite necessary and sufficient to produce the effect of the sacrament.

In the new rite of episcopal consecration, this form does not univocally express the *power of Order*. According to the general principles of sacramental moral theology, it thus lacks one of the essential elements required in a form for Holy Orders, and is therefore invalid — cannot confer the episcopacy.

Accordingly, bishops consecrated with this new rite lack the sacramental powers of true bishops, priests ordained by such bishops lack the sacramental powers of true priests, the sacraments they confer which depend upon the sacerdotal character are inva-

lid, and the faithful who assist at their Masses adore and receive only bread.

Only...bread...

January 9, 2007

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Home Alone? The article that coined

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Letter to Ten-Year-Olds Who Just Want to Be Confirmed. An SSPX District Superior requires that confirmands from sign a lengthy oath against Fr. Cekada et al. (Pamphlet, March 1990)

Light on the OSJ. The Order of St. John claims it is the 'true' Knights of Malta, and operates chapels where the traditional Mass is offered. An examination of its dubious historical claims and ecumenical connections. (*Roman Catholic*, December 1981)

Bishop Mendez and the 1990 SSPV Ordinations. Conflicting accounts by participants lead to an unsettling conclusion. (Internet, September 2006)

Mt. St. Michael & CMRI: Brief Overview. Whatever this group's past difficulties may have been, it is wrong to claim that its members were "schismatic" or "Old Catholic." (Pamphlet, October 1993)

(January 2007)

Free Information Packet: For a free information on the traditional Latin Mass, please contact: St. Gertrude the Great Roman Catholic Church, 4900 Rialto Road, West Chester OH 45069, 513.645.4212, www.sgg.org