

Sedevacantist Watch...

HYPOCRISY ALERT: FR. CEKADA RECOGNIZES AND RESISTS POPE PIUS XII

In our book *True or False Pope?*, we devote an entire chapter to explaining the Church's theology behind the "Recognize and Resist" position, that is, the necessity to recognize a Pope or bishop's authority to rule while, at the same time, resisting any erroneous teachings or evil commands. In the chapter, we provide many quotations from saints, Popes and Doctors of the Church who explicitly advocated the position as part of Catholic teaching, and provide real life, historical examples of saints putting this teaching into practice. These teachings and practical examples of the saints will help to guide confused Catholics through today's crisis.

Because Fr. Cekada has an erroneous understanding of papal infallibility (which we also expose in great detail in our book), he believes the teachings and disciplines of a true Pope can never be "resisted" because a true Pope, according to Cekada, "cannot give error or evil." In fact, Fr. Cekada actually calls those who resist the novelties of the conciliar Popes (that is, Traditional Catholics) heretics. In addressing their resistance to the New Mass, he writes:

"While many traditional Catholics adhere to the position that the New Mass was illegally promulgated, advocates are especially numerous among the members and supporters of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's Society of St. Pius X (SSPX). The theory fits neatly into what one can only term the Society's Jansenist/Gallican [*Nota Bene*: heretical] concept of the papacy: The pope is 'recognized,' but his laws and teachings must be 'sifted.' You get all the sentimental benefits of theoretically having a pope, but none of the practical inconveniences of actually obeying him."¹

In his typical bitter spirit (which is so unbecoming for a priest), Fr. Cekada engages in name-calling and ridicule - even calling his opponents heretics - for acknowledging that Paul VI was a true Pope, while resisting the New Mass (which they do on the grounds of the enduring validity of *Quo Primum*, and the fact that Paul VI himself never promulgated, much less imposed, the new rite on the Church). But, in labeling heretics those who acknowledge that Paul VI was a true

¹ Ibid.

Pope, while resisting the non-binding liturgical reforms issued during his pontificate, Fr. Cekada indicts *himself* of the crime by his own standards, since he himself does precisely what he claims to be forbidden. As Scripture says: "Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, ... For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest." (Rom. 2:1).

What is the act for which Fr. Cekada "judgest another," while he himself "dost the same things"? He rejects the liturgical reforms of Pope Pius XII, whom he recognizes as a true Pope! That's right, Cekada does exactly what he ridicules others for doing - namely, "recognizing" Pius XII as a valid Pope, while he "sifts" and even rejects his liturgical legislation.² He even claims that the 1955 liturgical reforms of Pius XII are "harmful," while simultaneously claiming that it is *impossible* for a true Pope to give harmful liturgical laws.

How, you may be wondering, does Fr. Cekada justify such a blatant contradiction between his teaching and his *praxis*? He does so by claiming that the liturgical laws of Pius XII only *became* harmful *after* they were promulgated (based, of course, on his own private judgment). In explaining his position, he wrote:

"A human ecclesiastical law that was obligatory when promulgated can become harmful (*nociva*) through a change of circumstances after the passage of time...this principle...applies equally to the 1955 reforms."³

You see, Fr. Cekada cannot accuse Pius XII of *promulgating* a harmful universal discipline, since this is exactly what he accuses Paul VI of doing, and what he cites as "proof" that Paul VI was not a true Pope. Hence, to get around the obvious contradiction, Fr. Cekada argues that Pius XII did not actually promulgate harmful laws. Rather, argues Fr. Cekada, Pius XII promulgated good laws that only *became harmful at a later date* (the next decade!), due to "a change of circumstances." That is the argument Fr. Cekada is forced to use to justify doing precisely what he mocks and ridicules others for doing.

Specifically, Cekada conveniently argues that Pius XII's changes to the Holy Week rites in 1955, while not harmful in themselves, transformed into harmful reforms with the benefit of "hindsight" - at which time, he claims (based, of course, on his own private judgment),

² See Fr. Cekada's articles: "Is Rejecting the Pius XII Liturgical Reforms 'Illegal'?" (April 27, 2006); and "The Pius XII Reforms: More on the 'Legal Issue,'" (July 11, 2006).

³ "Is Rejecting the Pius XII Liturgical Reforms 'Illegal'?" <http://www.traditionalmass.org/articles/article.php?id=78&catname=6>.

that they “*ceased*” to be law. He claims they *became* harmful in the Traditional rite when they were incorporated into the *Novus Ordo Missae* a decade later. This is how he justifies his refusal to obey the liturgical laws promulgated by Pius XII.

This argument is as laughable as it is fallacious, since the 1955 reforms (which were legally promulgated by Pius XII) were made to the *Traditional rite itself* (not the *Novus Ordo*). Hence, the Pius XII’s reforms must be judged in the context of the Traditional rite, on their own merits (or demerits). But based on his own authority (rooted in private judgment) Fr. Cekada claims that the laws “*became*” harmful, and consequently he refuses to obey these liturgical laws when he celebrates Holy Week. The question is: Are the 1955 reforms of Pius XII harmful to the Traditional rite or not? Whether some of these changes were *also* incorporated into the *Novus Ordo* later is irrelevant to that question. If the 1955 reforms are considered harmful in the Traditional Roman Rite (which Cekada effectively concedes because he eliminates them from the rite he celebrates) then they would have to be considered harmful in and of themselves, and therefore harmful when promulgated by Pius XII.

We answer this question in *True or False Pope?* by going into much detail about Pius XII’s reforms, and thus won’t repeat it here. For now, it suffices to note that Pius XII introduced some of the most drastic changes to the Roman liturgy in the Church’s history, especially with respect to the rites for Holy Week. For the *most solemn celebration* in the Church’s liturgical year, Pius XII abolished ancient prayers, eliminated parts of the Mass, created new rites, introduced the priest facing the people and desired a greater *physical* participation of the laity, even including their recitation of vocal prayers *in the vernacular* during the Mass! And Pius XII did so under the same rationale of the conciliar revolutionaries – for better “*conformity*” to “*ancient liturgical traditions.*” However, the truth is that many of these changes under Pius XII *were completely without precedent in the history of the Roman Rite.* Such reforms certainly did not develop organically from the traditional Roman Rite, and many of them can even be traced to Protestant (Luther/Cramner) influences. Can you guess, dear reader, what Sedevacantists would have said about these reforms had they originated with Paul VI or John Paul II? Would they not have declared them evil in themselves, violative of the Church’s disciplinary infallibility, and further “*proof*” that they were not true Popes?

For Fr. Cekada to argue that these changes were not harmful *under Pius XII*, but only became harmful *during the reign of Paul VI* (which is how he justifies not using the revised missal of Pius XII) only reveals

how barren his “harmful in hindsight” theory is. It is the proverbial case of “having your cake and eating it too.” In Cekada’s own words, Pius XII’s papacy is “recognized,” but his liturgical laws must be “sifted.” Cekada gets “all the sentimental benefits of theoretically having a Pope (Pius XII), but none of the practical inconveniences of actually obeying” his liturgical legislation. Thus, Fr. Cekada continues to recognize Pius XII as a true Pope, but rejects his laws and says Mass at his Sedevacantist chapels according to pre-1950 rubrics.⁴ If Fr. Cekada were consistent, he would simply declare, on his own authority, that Pius XII was a false Pope, and cite the harmful liturgical laws he promulgated as “proof” (just like he does with Paul VI). But consistency is not something we have come to expect from Fr. Cekada.

To further justify his novel “harmful in hindsight” theory, Fr. Cekada conveniently claims that Pius XII’s liturgical reforms were “mere human ecclesiastical laws, subject to the general principles of interpretation for all church laws,” and thus “they no long [sic] bind on two grounds.”⁵ He goes on to argue that Pius XII’s legislation “lacked one of the essential qualities of a law – stability or perpetuity – and are therefore no longer binding.”⁶

Such nonsensical arguments only backfire for Cekada, since if the legislation of Pius XII, which radically transformed the Roman Rite, can be disregarded as “mere human ecclesiastical laws,” which lack “stability and perpetuity,” then certainly the liturgical legislation of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship under Paul VI (which was *not* promulgated by Paul VI), can be disregarded for the same reason, since they are also “human ecclesiastical laws” which have been in a state of continuous *aggiornamento* ever since they were introduced. Furthermore, it is not correct to say Pius XII’s legislation “lacked stability” since most of the legal changes *were made a permanent part of the Traditional rites*, irrespective of their incorporation into the *Novus Ordo* years later.

Perhaps recognizing the weakness of his own novel arguments, Cekada is ultimately forced to make excuses for Pope Pius XII. For example, in his book *Work of Human Hands*, he claims that Pius XII

⁴ We have confirmed that when Fr. Cekada celebrates Mass at St. Hugh of Lincoln (a Sedevacantist parish in Salza’s hometown of Milwaukee), he uses pre-1950 rubrics. And, in another example of hypocrisy, Sedevacantist bishop Dan Dolan celebrates on occasion *Missae cantatae*, a concession to bishops allowed by Paul VI in *Inter oecumenici* (1964). Thus, according to his own standards, Dolan acknowledges and follows a law of a “false Pope.”

⁵ “Is Rejecting the Pius XII Liturgical Reforms ‘Illegal’?” <http://www.traditionalmass.org/articles/article.php?id=78&catname=6>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

“seemed to lack the common sense necessary for making sound practical judgments.”⁷ He goes on to say: “This lack of practical judgment, I think, blinded Pius XII to the disconnect between the teaching of *Mediator Dei* and the liturgical changes he permitted to be introduced during his reign.”⁸ But didn’t Cekada say the liturgical changes were just fine when promulgated by Pius XII, and only *became* harmful years later, in 1969? Isn’t this how Fr. Cekada justifies not obeying them? And if the laws were just fine when promulgated by Pius XII, why claim that Pius XII possessed a poor practical judgment for implementing them? Cekada also claims that Pius XII was tricked into the reforms by alleged Freemason, Annibale Bugnini, and consequently the reforms can be “ignored.” But again, why argue that he was “tricked” when the laws were supposedly good when they were promulgated?

This is more convenient and fluid argumentation from Fr. Anthony Cekada, which further backfires on him. If Pius XII can be excused for lacking “practical sense” and “practical judgment” in liturgical matters, then why can’t Paul VI be excused for the same reasons? If Bugnini could have fooled Pius XII, then why could he not have also fooled Paul VI? Since Pius XII had *already approved* many of the changes that Bugnini sought to introduce into the New Mass, why not excuse Paul VI on the grounds that he was simply continuing the work initiated by his venerable predecessor and relying on the same advisors that Pius XII himself had trusted with the work? What is conceded for Pius XII (misinformation, deception, lacking practical judgment) must also be conceded for Paul VI, as a matter of equity and fairness.

All of this demonstrates that Fr. Cekada is being completely inconsistent and quite hypocritical for rejecting Pius XII’s liturgical reforms as being “harmful” while recognizing him as Pope, yet, at the same time, claiming that the harmful liturgical reforms that occurred during the reign of Paul VI (many of which were approved by Pius XII) “prove” that Paul VI was not a true Pope. Thus, it is Fr. Cekada, and not Traditional Catholics, who has the “Jansenist/Gallican concept of the papacy,” since he not only “sifts” the liturgical laws of the Popes he chooses to recognize, but also “sifts” the Popes themselves, telling his followers just who is a valid Pope and who is not. It’s quite amazing how Fr. Cekada can hold these positions publicly with a straight face. What is perhaps even more incredible is how those who parrot his arguments against the Recognize and Resist position don’t see (or don’t *want* to see) the blatant contradiction in Fr. Cekada’s positions.

⁷ Cekada, *Work of Human Hands* (West Chester, Ohio: Philothea Press, 2010), p. 64.

⁸ *Ibid.*

And it is not only the liturgical laws of Pius XII that Fr. Cekada rejects. He also refuses to say the Leonine prayers after Mass – prayers mandated by Pope Leo XIII that Cekada certainly cannot reject on the basis that they have *become* “harmful.” Fr. Cekada’s fellow Sedevacantist and former parishioner, Thomas Droleskey, who stopped attending Fr. Cekada’s church following a messy, Protestant-style split (more bad fruits of Sedevacantism), wrote about Fr. Cekada’s refusal to obey the liturgical laws mandating the recitation of the Leonine prayers, which were further enforced by Pius XI and Pius XII. Droleskey explains:

“There were always two major compromises that we had to make in order to assist at Saint Gertrude the Great Church. **The first of these consisted of the refusal to say the prayers after low Mass.** Sharon and I both believe that this is gravely erroneous and offensive to the ecclesial sense, that it is to attack popular piety and the good of Holy Mother Church to exclude these prayers. This was a wound on our consciences from the very beginning of our association with Saint Gertrude the Great Church. **A true pope mandated the recitation of these prayers.** A true pope and no one else can give the order to eliminate them. We *need* to pray three Ave Marias and the shorter version of the Saint Michael the Archangel Prayer after most low Masses now more than ever before.”⁹

Once again, Fr. Cekada’s “Jansenist/Gallican concept of the papacy” allows him to “recognize” Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII as valid Popes, but “sift” their liturgical legislation to suit his own liturgical preferences. By refusing to say the Leonine prayers after Mass, Fr. Cekada’s practice actually follows the liturgical reforms under Paul VI, who Cekada claims is an antipope.¹⁰ And Fr. Cekada has the gall to call Traditional Catholics “heretics” for adhering to the binding declaration of St. Pius V in *Quo Primum* while resisting the *non-binding* liturgical reforms of Paul VI. As the reader will discover in our book *True or False Pope?*, such blatant hypocrisy – especially among priests and bishops of the sect - is quite common in the confused world of Sedevacantism.

⁹ <http://sggscandal.com/articles/sanctimony.htm>

¹⁰ Pope Paul VI suppressed the Leonine prayers by approving the Concilium’s Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*.