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May 24, 2018
Our Lady, Help of Christians

Pastoral Exhortation

An unfortunate situation has arisen with a former seminarian, Rev. Dominic Crawford (a.k.a. Frater Francis), who, following the doctrinal errors of the late Fr. Leonard Feeney (excommunicated by Pope Pius XII in 1953), has obstinately rejected the teachings of the Catholic Church on baptism of desire, and has presumed to pass judgment on the decisions of several Roman Pontiffs in contradiction to the solemn teachings of the first Vatican Council in 1870.

Vatican Council I:

For the fathers of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, following closely in the footsteps of their predecessors, made this solemn profession: "The first condition of salvation is to keep the norm of the true faith. For it is impossible that the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ who said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church' (*Matt. 16:18*), should not be verified. And their truth has been proved by the course of history, for in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept unsullied, and its teachings kept holy.

Indeed, it was this apostolic doctrine that all the Fathers held, and the holy orthodox Doctors revered and followed. For they fully realized that this See of St. Peter always remains untainted by any error, according to the divine promise of our Lord and Savior made to the prince of his disciples, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren" (*Luke 22:32*).

We declare that the judgment of the Apostolic See, whose authority is unsurpassed, is not subject to review by anyone; nor is anyone allowed to pass judgment on its decision.

Now Canon 1239, no. 2 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which was promulgated and enforced by Pope Benedict XV and subsequently enforced by both Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII legislates: "Catechumens, who, through no fault of their own, die without baptism are to be treated as baptized."

The canons of the Code of Canon Law which pertain to divine law (such as Canon 737 and Canon 1239) bind the entire Catholic Church of both the Latin and Eastern rites; as universal laws, they are part of the secondary object of the Church's infallibility.

Tragically, Rev. Crawford rejects Canon 1239, no. 2 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The reason for his rejection of this Canon is to obstinately deny the clear teachings of the Catholic Church on baptism of desire; Rev. Crawford believes that catechumens who, through no fault of their own, die without baptism go immediately to hell. Furthermore, Canon 1239, no. 2 is supported by Canon 737 which states that Baptism is "necessary for salvation in fact or at least in desire."

The Council of Trent has clearly taught that the desire for baptism can suffice for salvation: "through the laver of regeneration or the desire for it." The Catechism of Trent issued after the Council reiterated this when it referred to the reason why adults are not immediately baptized like infants: "...nor is the delay attended with the danger already noticed in the case of infants, for, should any unforeseen accident render it impossible for adults to be baptized, their intention of receiving it, and their repentance for past sins, will avail them to grace and righteousness."

Rev. Crawford also rejects the doctrinal letter issued by the Holy Office, and approved in its entirety by Pope Pius XII on August 8, 1949. This doctrinal letter addressed the errors of Fr. Feeney and set forth the clear teachings of the Catholic Church on baptism of desire as taught at the Council of Trent (1563) and contained in Pope Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943).

By his rejection of these teachings of the Apostolic See, he contradicts the solemn teachings of Vatican Council I "that this See of St. Peter always remains untainted by any error" and he passes judgment on decisions of the Apostolic See in contradiction of Vatican Council I which clearly taught "the judgment of the Apostolic See, whose authority is unsurpassed, is not subject to review by anyone; nor is anyone allowed to pass judgment on its decision." In reality, he erroneously establishes himself as a quasi-magisterium (teaching authority) to sift through the teachings of the popes and to self-determine what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected.

His arrogance is manifested in a special manner when he publicly dismisses the consistent teachings of the Doctors of the Church such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Alphonsus Liguori, and many renowned theologians who explicitly taught baptism of desire.

This situation with Rev. Crawford is identical to that of the late Fr. Feeney; thus, the faithful are admonished to avoid the reception of the sacraments from him. He is not a cleric in good standing. Those who attend his Mass and approach him to receive sacraments are hereby notified that they may not approach the priests under my spiritual care for the sacraments.

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