



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC LETTER  
ISSUED «MOTU PROPRIO»

BY THE SUPREME PONTIFF  
FRANCIS

ON THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION  
"ECCLESIA DEI"

For over 30 years the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, instituted with the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* of 2 July 1988, has carried out with sincere solicitude and praiseworthy concern the task of collaborating with the Bishops and the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, in facilitating the full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, communities or individual men and women religious connected with the Fraternity founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who wished to remain united to the Successor of Peter in the Catholic Church, preserving their own spiritual and liturgical traditions.[1]

In this way, it was able to exercise its own authority and competence in the name of the Holy See over these societies and associations, until otherwise provided.[2]

Subsequently, by virtue of the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of 7 July 2007, the Pontifical Commission extended the authority of the Holy See to those Institutes and Religious Communities which had adhered to the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite and had assumed the precedent traditions of religious life, supervising the observance and application of the provisions established.[3]

Two years later, my Venerable Predecessor Benedict XVI, with the Motu Proprio *Ecclesiae Unitatem* of 2 July 2009, reorganized the structure of the Pontifical Commission, in order to make

it more suited to the new situation created by the remission of the excommunication of the four Bishops consecrated without pontifical mandate. And, furthermore, considering that after this act of grace, the questions addressed by the same Pontifical Commission were of a primarily doctrinal nature, he connected it more systematically to the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), while maintaining its initial aims, but modifying its structure.<sup>[4]</sup>

Now, as the *Feria IV* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of 15 November 2017 formulated the request that dialogue between the Holy See and the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X be conducted directly by the aforementioned Congregation, as the matters being addressed are of a doctrinal nature, to which request I gave my approval *in Audientia* with the Prefect on 24 November 2017 and this proposal was accepted by the Plenary Session of the same Congregation celebrated from 23 to 26 January 2018, after ample reflection, I have arrived at the following decision.

Considering that today the conditions which led the holy [Pontiff John Paul II](#) to institute the [Pontifical Commission \*Ecclesia Dei\*](#) have changed;

noting that the Institutes and Religious Communities which customarily celebrate in the extraordinary form have today found proper stability of number and of life;

recognizing that the aims and questions addressed by the [Pontifical Commission \*Ecclesia Dei\*](#) are of a predominantly doctrinal order;

and wishing that these aims be made ever more evident to the conscience of the ecclesial communities,

with this Apostolic Letter 'Motu Proprio data',

***I decree that***

1. The Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, instituted on 2 July 1988 with the [Motu Proprio \*Ecclesia Dei Adflicta\*](#), is decommissioned.
2. The tasks of the Commission in question are assigned entirely to the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), within which will be established a special Section committed to continue the work of supervision, promotion and protection conducted thus far by the decommissioned [Pontifical Commission \*Ecclesia Dei\*](#).
3. The financial report of the Pontifical Commission returns to the ordinary accounting of the aforementioned Congregation.

Furthermore, I establish that this Motu Proprio — to be observed notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if worthy of specific mention — be promulgated by publication in the 19 January 2019 issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*, entering immediately into force, and that it be inserted thereafter into the official register of the Holy See, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's on 17 January 2019 Sixth Year of My Pontificate

**Francis**

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[1] Cf. Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Ecclesia Dei afflicta*, 2 Iulii 1988, AAS, LXXX (1988), 12 (15 Nov. 1988), 1495-1498, 6a.

[2] Cf. *Rescriptum ex Audientia Sanctissimi*, 18 Oct. 1988, AAS, LXXXII (1990), 5 (3 Maii 1990), 533-534, 6.

[3] Cf. Benedictus PP. XVI, *Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Summorum Pontificum*, 7 Iulii 2007, AAS, XCIX (2007), 9 (7 Sept. 2007), 777-781, 12.

[4] Cf. Benedictus PP. XVI, *Litterae Apostolicae 'Motu proprio datae', Ecclesiae unitatem*, 2 Iulii 2009, AAS, CI (2009), 8 (7 Aug. 2009), 710-711, 5.

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