

# Petition Vaticanum II

Petition Vaticanum II [www.petition-vaticanum2.org](http://www.petition-vaticanum2.org)

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**DO NOT BETRAY THE COURAGE IN FAITH OF THE COUNCIL POPES AND THE COUNCIL FATHERS!**  
Declaration in response to the final communication from the Congregation for the Doctrine of  
the Faith to the PETITION VATICANUM II from 14 August 2009

On 14 August 2009 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith sent the following brief statement through the Apostolic Nunciature in Germany to the initiators of the PETITION VATICANUM II ([www.petition-vaticanum2.org](http://www.petition-vaticanum2.org)): *“The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith confirms receipt of the two letters of yours (mentioned above). The speech of the Holy Father to the Roman Curia on the occasion of the Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering them His Christmas Greetings (22 December 2005)<sup>1</sup> states the hermeneutic principals for a correct interpretation of the II. Vatican Council documents.”*

The initiators of the petition respond with the following statements:

1. The Apostolic Nunciature is the permanent representation of the Pope in Germany and has acted in this case as intermediary. **Obviously the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is not prepared to enter into direct dialogue** as was requested several times by the international initiators of the petition.
2. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in just making reference to the extensive but rather broad and defensive papal reflections from December 2005 about binding rules for the interpretation of the Council decrees, **does not do justice to the current concerns expressed in PETITION VATICANUM II**: the signers want to remind readers of the binding nature of central Council decrees that enable members of the Roman-Catholic church to bear witness credibly in the modern world.
3. The authoritarian responses to questions of interpretation inevitably lead to an **inability to enter into dialogue and to a new fundamentalism**. This results in the discontinuity of traditions for the next generations – deplored by the Vatican as well – which we already can observe in many ways.
4. Our fear is that such defensive and deflective reactions will continue to mark the **nature of the Vatican's thinking about the reception of the Council decrees** – going as far as making decisions about which Council documents might be classified as being of secondary importance as part of the negotiations with the Priestly Society of St. Pius X.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf\\_ben\\_xvi\\_spe\\_20051222\\_roman-curia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html)

5. **Being in danger of such a relegation to secondary importance** are, in the view of the signers of the PETITION, primarily the Council documents mentioned by them, i. e. on ecumenism, on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, on religious freedom, and on the Church in the modern world. This is because many of the statements included in these documents don't preserve the unbroken continuity of Catholic teaching considered necessary by the fundamentalist Priestly Society of St. Pius X.
6. **Required is a critical view with regard to the Roman-Catholic tradition**, one that contributes to the unmasking of traditions that, often over many centuries, have distorted the core of the Christian message about the saving and liberating love of God. However, the advocates of such an “unbroken continuity” regard such a critique of tradition as a menace.
7. **The absence of a critique of tradition** which would have meant a real new beginning with the Council, emanating from a process of reorientation and reconciliation, was **deplored in 1967 by the current Pope and then Council theologian** in a comment to the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *“Unfortunately Vatican II did not bring any progress in this point but the moment of tradition critique was almost completely ignored. ... In particular a Council that consciously understood itself as being a reform Council thereby implicitly conceding the possibility and reality of distorting tradition could have reflexively realized at this juncture a substantial piece of theological foundation of itself and its own volition.”*
8. **Advancement of the tradition in both a continuous and critiqued manner needs the dialogue** between a pastoral practice open to the world, research and doctrinal teachings with an ecumenical, inter-religious and inter-disciplinary orientation, and a church leadership that is capable of dialogue. This type of tradition forming – which also includes admissions of guilt and reorientation processes – is part of the Judean-Christian tradition unfortunately often forgotten now. Despite all of the resistance, many Jewish and Christian communities worldwide continue to practice this development process, trusting in God's word.

The Vatican resistance to the world-wide inter-catholic reform movement leaves the impression of a need to control, to secure, which is incompatible with the message of Jesus and the demands on a *communio* (community) within the meaning of the last Council. The associated sanctions lead to **fears** in pastoral practice, in science and in the church hierarchy **that paralyse church life in many ways**. The PETITION VATICANUM II was and is concerned with the **request not to betray the courage in faith of the Council Popes and the Council Fathers**.

Essen, for 11 October 2009, the 47th anniversary of the opening of the Council

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