

# Catholics petition for a return to the reforming spirit of Vatican II

By staff writers

Concerned Catholics have launched a petition calling on the Church to recognise and follow through on the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, after recent papal actions that seem to point in a different direction.

The online statement, inviting open signatories - unlike another one eulogising Pope Benedict's overtures to ultra-conservatives - has been prepared by Professor Dr Norbert Scholl, in Essen, Germany. An English translation has been created by We Are Church UK.

The petition sets out a positive agenda for theological and social change within the Catholic tradition, and acknowledges evidence within the hierarchy of "a desire to return to a pre-Vatican II Church with its fear of openness to the breath of the Holy Spirit, a positive appreciation of 'the signs of the times', and the values of democratic institutions."

The complete petition statement

For the full recognition of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council

The papal cancellation of the excommunication of bishops from The Society of St Pius X signifies the reception into full communion with the See of Rome those who have consistently opposed the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Regarding the anti-Semitic remarks and the denial of the German national-socialist persecution of the Jews by Bishop Richard Williamson and his followers, we share the indignation of our Jewish sisters and brothers. Moreover, we state that the SSPX's attitude towards Judaism does not correspond to the Council's understanding of and commitment to Jewish-Christian dialogue. We support the recent statements of Bishops' Conferences, and others, all over the world, on this issue. We also welcome the recent statements made on these matters by Pope Benedict XVI and the Vatican's Secretariate of State.

We believe that the close correlation between the excommunication's cancellation and the 50th anniversary of the calling of a General Council of the Church by Blessed Pope John XXIII gives a clear indication of the direction which the present Papacy wishes to take. We sense a desire to return to a pre-Vatican II Church with its fear of openness to the breath of the Holy Spirit, a positive appreciation of 'the signs of the times', and the values of democratic institutions.

We are very concerned that this act of rehabilitation heralds a turn-around on important documents of Vatican II, for example, the decree on ecumenism "Unitatis Redintegratio", the declaration on non-Christian religions "Nostra Aetate", the declaration on religious liberty "Dignitatis Humanae" and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "Gaudium et Spes". Such an act will have a disastrous effect on the credibility of the Roman-Catholic Church. For Catholics who love their Church, the price is too high!

The Pope hopes this act will help unify the Church. However we think it is particularly outrageous that the Vatican's renewed overtures to a schismatic traditionalist movement have been undertaken without the imposition of any conditions whatsoever. In June 2008, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Levebvre's excommunication, the SSPX rejected the invitation of the Holy See towards theological reconciliation.

Likewise, the fraternity rejected the invitation to sign a five-topic declaration containing conditions for its re-integration in the Roman Church.

A return to full communion with the Catholic Church can only be made possible if the documents and teachings of the Second Vatican Council are fully accepted without any reservations, as requested by the motu proprio "Summorum Pontificum" on the topic of the Tridentine rite. It is also imperative that the papal ministries of Blessed Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul I, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI are recognised and accepted.

The Church of Rome, perceived as the Barque of St Peter, lists heavily as long as the Vatican:

- only rehabilitates the "lost sheep" at the traditionalist edge of the Church, and makes no similar offer to other excommunicated or marginalised Catholics
- persists in preventing progressive theologians from teaching
- refuses dialogue with all movements in the Church

We Are Church UK, 5 February 2009

(Based upon an original text by Professor Dr Norbert Scholl, Essen, Germany)

Website and form for signatories: <http://archiv.wir-sind-kirche.de/petition-vatikanum2.org/>

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