

Examining the Claims of Catholic “Contradictions”

Untangling the Misunderstandings



Roles of Magisterium

Preserving Teaching

Protect, clarify, transmit the unchanging deposit of faith

- Ensures fidelity to divine revelation (Scripture & Tradition)
- Defines dogma
- Clarifies doctrine when disputes or heresies arise
- Interprets the deposit of faith authentically
- Ensure continuity over time

Guidance with Application

Interpret and apply doctrine in changing circumstances

- Operates on core principles
- Issues prudential judgments on moral or social issues
- Establishes disciplinary norms (e.g. liturgical laws)
- Provides pastoral guidance
- Can develop non-definitive teachings with prudential element

Theological or Doctrinal Matters (Continuity Throughout Time)	Subjective Application (Contextual Variation)
Dogmas - revealed by God (infallible)	Juridical Decisions / Church Governance / Papal Jurisdiction
Definitive Doctrine (infallible)	Disciplinary Norms
Non-definitive Doctrine (authoritative but reformable)	Prudential / Pastoral Application*

Requires Intellectual Deference (varying degrees)

Requires Obedience (Not Agreement)

**Doesn't Always Require Obedience*

Criteria for Infallibility

- ✓ *Declared by the Pope ex cathedra, or by an Ecumenical Council **in union with the Pope** (Pope ratifies the Council's definitive teachings)*
- ✓ *Concerns a doctrine of faith or morals, not merely a disciplinary, prudential, jurisdictional, or a historical fact*
- ✓ *Must be intended as a definitive and binding teaching for the whole Church and not just for a particular time, place, or group.*
- ✓ *Must be taught with the intention of being held permanently (irreformable teaching), can develop in same sense*

Note on Reading Ecumenical Councils

- **Medicinal: strong but small doses**
 - *Councils address errors with very sharp, authoritative teaching, not meant as daily spiritual nourishment.*
- **Sets a hard boundary, not a trajectory of its own**
 - *Councils define clear limits of doctrine on a specific issue, but must be followed by food of faith ongoing teaching of the Church*
- **“Course corrective” event, needs incorporation and synthesis with larger mind of Church**
 - *Council teachings must be integrated into the ongoing theological and pastoral tradition of the Church. Think: loud, brief key strikes on a piano that are harmonized into the rest of the song.*
- **Key questions to ask about any documents:**
 - *What is the historical context?*
 - *Who is being spoken to?*
 - *What is the core issue at hand?*
 - *How does the Church integrate this into the food of the faith through ongoing teaching?*

Types of Magisterial Teaching

Dogma

Divine revelation, infallible and irreformable (e.g. Trinity)

Definitive Doctrinal Teaching

Defined by Church, infallible and irreformable (e.g. male-only priesthood)

UNIVERSAL AND STABLE DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES (Non-definitive)

Abstract moral & theological truths derived from dogma & doctrine and form basis for prudential teachings (e.g., human dignity, common good, subsidiarity)

PRUDENTIAL APPLICATION (Non-definitive)

Time-bound, context-specific use of principles spoken to particular times, places, people. Authoritative but less binding force, leaves room for development or change.

Broader World: Social, cultural, political, etc.

CHURCH DISCIPLINES (Non-definitive)

Govern the internal life of the Church, includes practices like clerical celibacy, liturgy, or fasting. Also adaptable to historical and pastoral needs.

Ecclesial Life: Canon law, Church legislation, decrees

Catholic "Contradictions" List

Authentic Theological
Development (Synthesis)

Doctrinal Principles (Non-
definitive Teaching, Prudential
Application)

Disciplinary / Pastoral

Salvation Outside the Church

Non-Catholic Baptisms?

Icon Veneration

Pope & Ecumenical Councils

Political Authority Over Nations

Religious Liberty?

Death Penalty Moral?

Non-Catholic Worship

Usury

Communion in Both Kinds

Practice of Confession

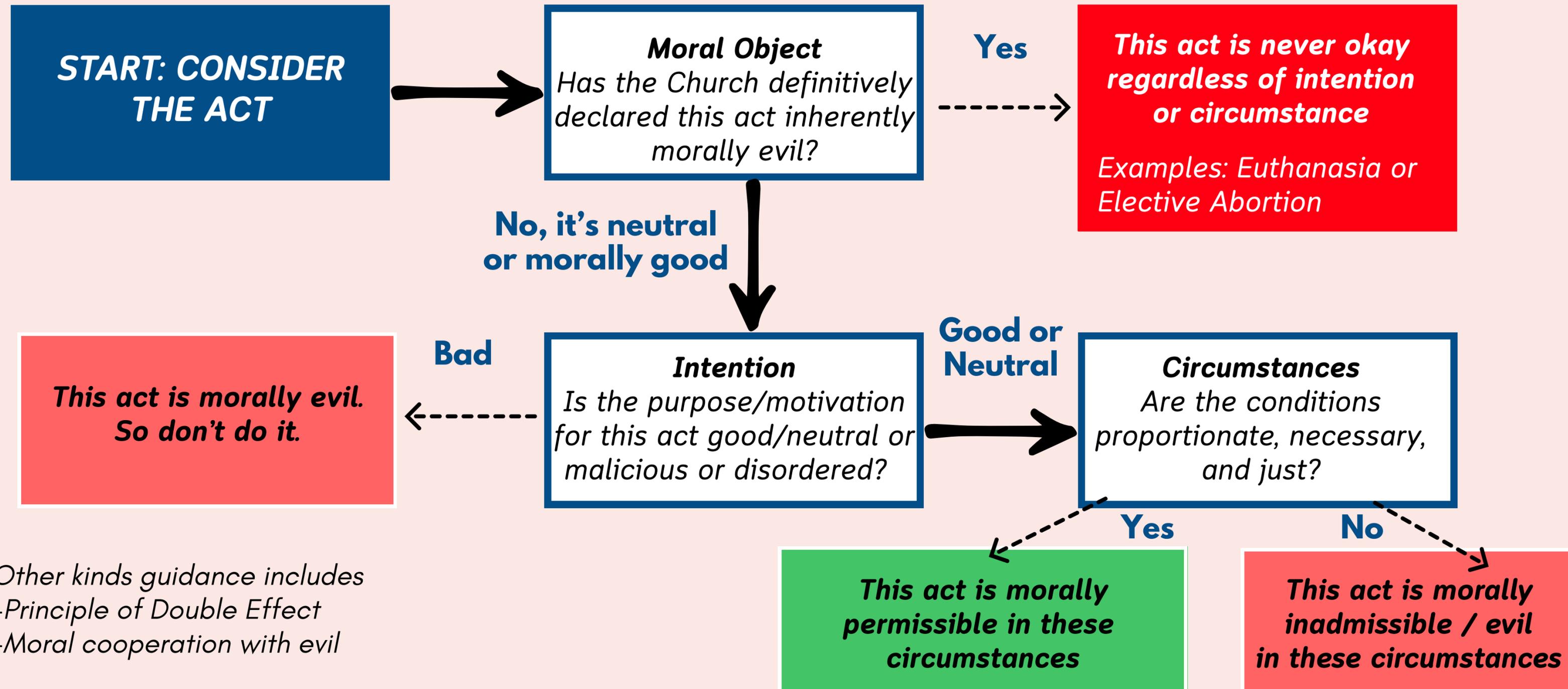
Communion for Div+Remarried

Universal Jurisdiction (first mil)

Mass in Vernacular

Assessing Morality of an Act

Primarily Theological – Morality of an Act in Concrete Situations



Death Penalty | Prudential Application

Assesing Morality:

- Object
- Intention
- Circumstances
 - Horizontal
 - Vertical

Horizontal Circumstances

Terrorist, serial killer, public assassination = no death penalty

Dignitas Infinita

- “under no circumstances”

Today, not permissible in any individual circumstances, even for very serious crimes

Inherently evil would involve both vertical and horizontal planes of “circumstances”

Vertical Circumstances



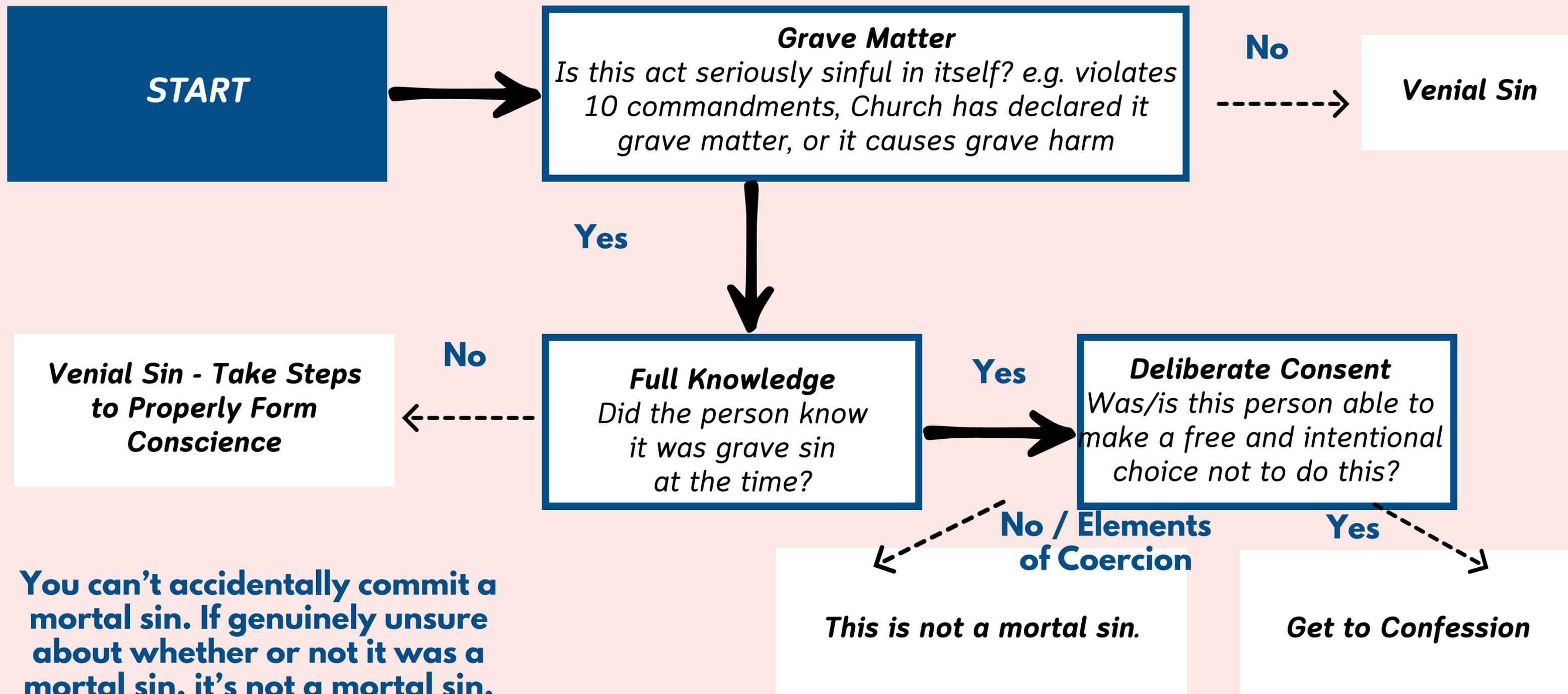
Fratelli Tutti

- “No longer necessary”
- “Today”

Qualified language: indicates the change is related to global shift in broader circumstances **over time**

Assessing Culpability for Grave Sin

Primarily Pastoral – Moral Responsibility of the Person



You can't accidentally commit a mortal sin. If genuinely unsure about whether or not it was a mortal sin, it's not a mortal sin.

Ask: What Kind of Teaching is This?

Is it doctrinal, universally binding, and in union with the Pope?

 Then we should expect continuity with the Church's teaching, in the same doctrine, same sense, and same judgment.

Is it disciplinary, juridical, or involve prudential elements?

 Then we should expect legitimate variation, depending on the historical context, pastoral need, and the particular people or issues it addresses.

Catholic "Contradictions" List

Doctrinal Development of Infallible Teaching

Salvation Outside the Church

Icon Veneration

Non-Catholic Baptisms?

Prudential Application of Principles (Non-definitive)

Death Penalty Moral?

Religious Liberty Good?

Usury

**Juridical-Assertion
(Context Specific)** 

Political Authority Over Nations

Pope & Ecumenical Councils

Church Discipline / Pastoral Application

Mass in Vernacular

Communion for Div+Remarried

Communion in Both Kinds

Non-Catholic Worship

Practice of Confession

Universal Jurisdiction (Chieti)

Mass in Vernacular | Disciplinary Application of Principles

THE CLAIM: Vatican II (Sacrosanctum Concilium) contradicts the Council of Trent by allowing the Mass to be said in the vernacular, despite Canon IX forbidding the Mass to* only be said in the common tongue.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- Council of Trent: Defended the legitimacy of Latin, not its exclusive use.
- Vatican II: Encourages use of vernacular for pastoral and catechetical purposes, alongside the Latin.

Key Point: Disciplinary change, not a doctrinal one. The Church has authority to regulate liturgical practice based on catechetical needs. Idea was to preserve the essential theology of the Mass and make it accessible to those participating. The sacrificial nature of the Mass remain unchanged.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: The theology of the Mass as sacrificial worship remains unchanged. The Eucharistic Body of Christ is both universal (reflected in the use of Latin) and particular (expressed through the vernacular for deeper participation).

Communion in Both Kinds | Disciplinary Application of Principles

THE CLAIM: The Church contradicted early practice and post V2 practice by withholding the chalice from the laity.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- Discipline of Withholding the Chalice: gradually introduced over time to safeguard reverence, prevent spills, and counter theological errors. Some saw this as a denial of doctrine, so Church clarified the theological aspects of real presence.
- Post-Vatican II: Receiving both kinds is restored when pastorally appropriate to better express the fullness of the sign. Still not required for full reception of the Eucharist.

Key Point: This is a disciplinary issue that is rooted in theology and left to the prudential discretion of the Church. We don't have to agree with the current discipline so long as we honor the authority of the Church through obedience and know the theology says Christ is fully present under both species.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: Christ is fully present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, under each species of the Eucharist.

Temporal Papal Authority | Historical-Juridical Assertion

THE CLAIM: *Unam Sanctam* asserts that temporal power is subject to the pope, which seems contradicted by Vatican II's teaching that the Church does not hold temporal political power today.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

Unam Sanctum: Pope Boniface VIII (in the middle of a political battle w King of France) asserts that secular rulers are subject to the pope's spiritual authority in the context of Church-State relationship at the time.

Vatican 2: clarifies that the Church's mission is spiritual. No longer claims temporal political authority as part of its essential role. Temporal political authority is distinct from spiritual authority.

Key point: Vatican II emphasizes Church's spiritual primacy. The Church's role in politics or government depends on the external circumstances of the time, not part of the Church's core spiritual mission. *Unam Sanctum* is historically contextual, so not an infallible definition meant for all times/places. A fair reading of *US* is that it was written in context of a political conflict, not a universally binding statement about salvation/papal supremacy to be held by all people, everywhere, for all time

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLES: The pope's spiritual authority is supreme and universal. The Church's role is primarily spiritual.

Belief in Universal Jurisdiction | Pastoral? (Based on Chieti)

THE CLAIM: Vatican I says teaching authority of the pope was always known, the Chieti document says jurisdiction was not exercised in first millenium, V1 says it was always known the pope exercised judgment.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

Teaching ≠ Jurisdiction: RZ conflates Vatican I's reference to teaching authority with jurisdiction. RZ's first Vatican quote speaks about the authority to teach doctrine, not jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction Possession ≠ Uniform Exercise: Chieti refers to jurisdiction, not teaching authority. RZ says distinction between having/exercising is "absurd" Why? Jurisdiction often allows for deference to locals.

Magisterial vs. Ecumenical Documents: The Chieti Document is ecumenical statement (not magisterial) and carries no doctrinal weight, but Vatican I is a dogmatic council.

Key Point: Theological and magisterial claims about universal jurisdiction to divine appointment, not uniform exercise in every time and place. See my video on "The Papacy in East and West" why first among equals is not historically or theologically supported.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLES: The pope's universal jurisdiction is divinely instituted. The exercise of that jurisdiction develops based on prudential and historical circumstances.

Religious Liberty | Prudential Application of Doctrinal Principles

THE CLAIM: Vatican II contradicts earlier Church teaching (*Libertas*, *Syllabus of Errors*) by affirming religious liberty, which was previously condemned.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- *Syllabus of Errors* and *Libertas*: Liberty is right to choose the good, not doing whatever one wants (license); error has no rights but toleration of error was allowed for the common good
- *Vatican II*: Affirms liberty is right to choose the good; no one should be coerced in matters of religion; Religious liberty is grounded in the freedom/dignity of the person to be able to CHOOSE good

Key Point: The Catholic view of freedom is not Enlightenment freedom, but Catholic freedom to choose the good. Vatican II built on natural law and Thomistic principles, not Enlightenment individualism. Unlike *sola fide* Protestants, Catholicism teaches that the unbaptized can still use reason and conscience to move toward truth, making religious liberty theologically consistent within its own framework.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLES: *Human dignity, moral freedom *to choose good**

No right to error, but right to pursue truth without coercion. Church must propose (not impose!) truth in accordance with Catholic teaching on human freedom as ability to choose the good.

Communion for Divorced and Remarried | Pastoral

THE CLAIM: *Amoris Laetitia* contradicts Catholic tradition by allowing divorced and remarried persons to receive Holy Communion.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Historical Discipline:** The Church has traditionally withheld communion from those in irregular marital situations, assuming ongoing grave sin.
- **Doctrine vs. Culpability:** Objective teaching on the indissolubility of marriage remains unchanged. Some individuals in irregular unions may lack full culpability due to being unable to leave the relationship (e.g., coercion, abuse, or financial dependence, particularly when children involved)
- **Amoris Laetitia:** Opens pastoral pathways under strict conditions and spiritual direction.

KEY POINT: This is not a blanket permission for all the divorced and remarried to receive communion. It is explicitly a pastoral application, accounting for individual culpability in mortal sin.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: Only those in a state of grace (i.e., without mortal sin – which factors in not just objective moral acts but personal culpability) may receive communion.

Conciliarism in Constance Vs. Vatican 1 | Juridical-Assertion

THE CLAIM: Council of Constance said that ecumenical councils have authority over the pope (*Haec Sancta*), but Vatican I says the pope has supreme authority, yet it accepted Constance's papal election.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Council of Constance:** Originally convened in 1414 by antipope John XXIII. In 1415, Pope Gregory XII authorized and convoked the council in his name for legitimacy. He resigned and Martin V was validly elected.
- **Haec Sancta:** Asserted conciliar authority over the pope, but was never ratified by a pope as binding.
- **V1: Pastor Aeternus:** Defined papal primacy and clarified infallibility. Councils are not infallible unless in union with the pope.

Key Point: The Council of Constance had real practical authority (*de facto*) to elect a pope, but did not have doctrinal authority (*de jure*) apart from the pope. Since *Haec Sancta* wasn't ratified, criteria is not met for infallibility as defined by V1.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: The post-V1 Church can accept Constance's *de facto* election of a pope (since it was convoked by Pope Gregory XII) without accepting *Haec Sancta* since it was not ratified. Electing a pope \neq having authority over the pope. See: every papal conclave.

Icon Veneration Apostolic Practice? | Theological Development

THE CLAIM: Nicaea II's defense of icon veneration relies on historical reasoning for its theological claims and anathematizes those who disagree, but then the Church canonized Newman.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Nicaea II:** says icon veneration is rooted in apostolic tradition, which is uncertain history. But infallibility covers faith and morals, *not historical matters*. The theology for icon veneration IS NOT dependent on it being a historical practice: Christ's Incarnation transfigures matter, making veneration of images good. Rejecting icon veneration on the basis it is idolatry is a Christological theological error, a practical denial of the Incarnation by failing to accept its implications
- **Newman:** doubted the historical continuity but upheld the infallible theological points of the Council behind icon veneration.

Key Point: Theology of icon veneration does not depend on historical practice. Nicaea II's anathemas are about theological rejection of icon veneration grounded in heresy (saying it's idolatry), not just historicity

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: The Church (and Newman) affirm the theological points of Nicaea II supporting icon veneration (Christ's Incarnation transfigures matter, honor passes to prototype) , which are not dependent on the historical practice.

Non-Catholic Worship | Pastoral

THE CLAIM: Pope Pius XI condemned Catholic participation in ecumenical worship, while Vatican II promotes ecumenism and shared prayers for unity.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Mortalium Animos:** condemns false ecumenism which is the idea that all religions are equally valid (indifferentism). Rejects interfaith worship that compromised Catholic truth.
- **Unitatis Redintegratio (V2):** Clearly warns against false irenicism. Develops a pastoral approach that promotes dialogue and unity without compromising doctrine. True ecumenism is about *truth* in love, not relativism. True unity is grounded in sacramental communion, not a lowest-common-denominator faith (which is the Protestant notion of “catholicity”). *There are liturgical abuses - not in line with V2!!
- **KEY POINT:** Vatican II and Pius XI both reject indifferentism. The difference is pastoral, not doctrinal. Canon Law still forbids active participation in rites non-Catholic rites, unless dispensations are given for weddings, funerals).

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: True catholicity and unity are a gift of Christ, found in full Eucharistic communion, not created by man. Ecumenical efforts must keep that in mind, building authentic relationship based on shared truths, without falling into indifferentism.

Adapted from my book, *The Cognitive Resonance Workbook* “Boundaries in Ecumenism”

ECUMENISM ✓

- ✓ Builds peaceful and authentic relationship in the sharing of true beliefs and mutual respect
- ✓ Deeply engages the perspectives of others and tries to find real points of connection
- ✓ Understands that truth can be expressed and sought in different ways, but sets necessary boundaries around real conflicts of belief
- ✓ Appeals to reason and is enlightened by faith; remains kind in disagreements but does not compromise truth to avoid conflicts
- ✓ Deepens and widens conversations and understandings between people and religions through authentic encounter with each other

SYNCRETISM ✗

- ✗ Prioritizes the illusion of peace at the expense of truth and authentic relationship
- ✗ Gives a superficial treatment of other beliefs, neither engaging them fully nor taking them seriously
- ✗ Combines conflicting beliefs and considers them to be equally valid, even if they are lacking in reason or are opposed to each other
- ✗ Presupposes one’s own ideas of unity are superior without proper recourse to reason, while often simultaneously viewing the concept of “absolute truth” as oppressive or arrogant
- ✗ Conversations are ineffective and disingenuous; encounters between people and religions are shallow and directionless

Usury| Prudential Application of Moral Principles

THE CLAIM: The early Church condemned all interest as usury, but the Church no longer enforces this.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Early Church:** The early condemnation of usury was tied up in the economic assumption that money is sterile (doesn't generate value on its own). Charging interest on sterile money would be inherently unjust, because a lender would have no real risk or loss on the capital itself (no money markets, no inflation).
- **Modern economies:** Money today is productive capital, value gained through investment, which means lenders have real risk of loss. (Ask my husband, the financial advisor.....)
- **KEY POINT:** The economic context has changed, not the doctrinal principle. If the Church had tied the doctrinal principle to the historical reasoning only (money = sterile), it would make the doctrine *obsolete* in any other economic system. Usury wouldn't even exist in other systems, period. That would actually weaken the moral teaching because the doctrinal principle can't be universally applied. But it can.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: Unjust, predatory lending and exploitation of the borrower is sinful in any economy.



The Order of Confession | Church Discipline

THE CLAIM: The Council of Trent says Confession was instituted by Christ and practiced since the apostles, but the Catechism says it “varied in form.”

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Divine Institution:** The sacrament of confession (authority to forgive sins in Christ’s name) was given to the Apostles in John 20:22–23. (See my video “Apostolic Succession in Peter, Paul, and Ignatius” for why this continues to today)
- **Catechism:** Talks about the particular form or rite or order of Confession, not its essential aspects (sorrow for sin, confession of sin, absolution of sin by a priest acting as sign of Christ).
- **KEY POINT:** Confession was instituted by Christ and has always been part of the Church’s life. Changes in how it is practiced reflect pastoral development of the exact step of the itself, not sacramental theology.

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: Confession has always been the sacramental sign of Christ’s forgiveness through the priesthood. While form can vary, essential elements remain: contrition, confession of sins, and absolution by a priest.

Morality of Death Penalty | Prudential Application of Principles

THE CLAIM: The Council of Trent said the death penalty is morally justified, Pope Francis says it's immoral.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Trent**: affirmed the state's authority to use capital punishment. Not that it is inherently good, but that it can be morally permissible under certain conditions (e.g., justice, protection of society)
- **Catholic moral theology**: judges actions based on: object (what is done), intention (why it's done), and circumstances
- **Fratelli Tutti/2018 Catechism**: says the death penalty is inadmissible today because modern societies can protect themselves without it. Using it unnecessarily is an attack on human dignity. Thus it is not justifiable in current circumstances.
- **Key point**: Trent does not say death penalty is inherently good, and Francis does not say the death penalty is intrinsically evil. Can tell it's contextual as Fratelli Tutti qualifies: "no longer necessary", "today"

CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLE: The Church has always judged the morality of the death penalty based on justice and necessity. While circumstances have changed, the moral principle has not.

Catholic "Contradictions" List

Doctrinal Development of Infallible Teaching

Salvation Outside the Church

Icon Veneration

Non-Catholic Baptisms?

Prudential Application of Principles (Non-definitive)

Death Penalty Moral?

Religious Liberty Good?

Usury

**Juridical-Assertion
(Context Specific)** 

Political Authority Over Nations

Pope & Ecumenical Councils

Church Discipline / Pastoral Application

Mass in Vernacular

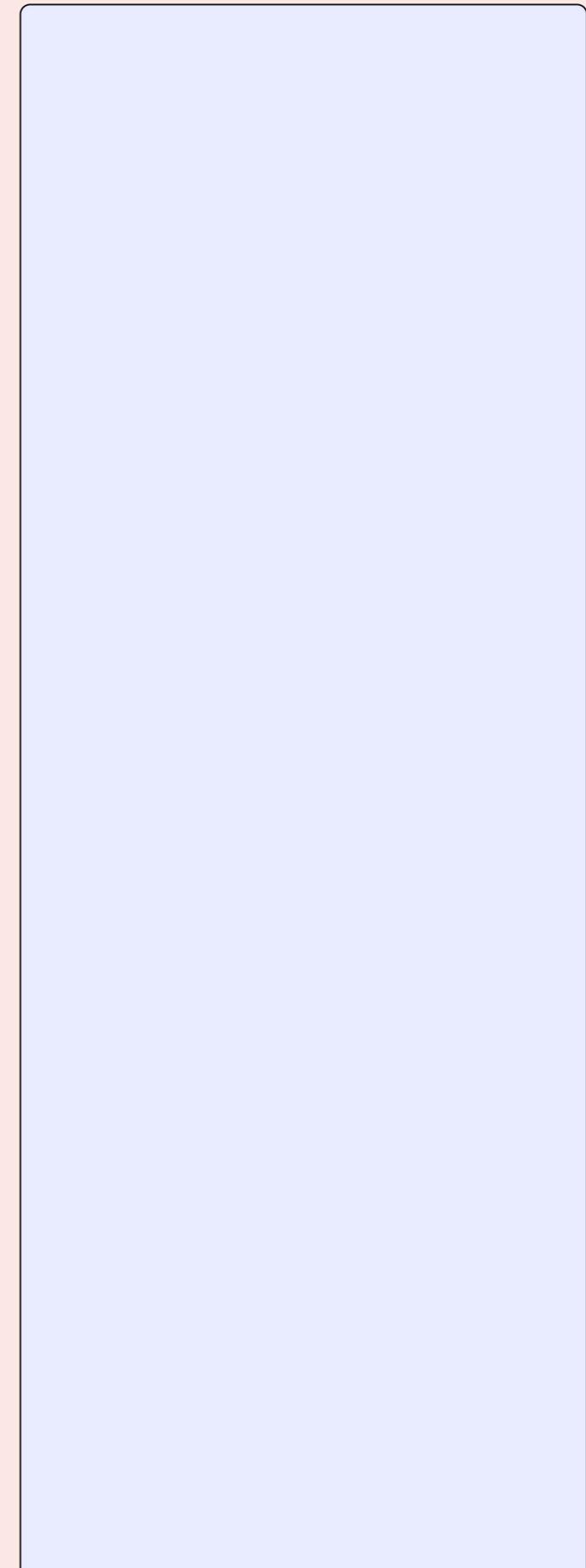
Communion for Div+Remarried

Communion in Both Kinds

Non-Catholic Worship

Practice of Confession

Universal Jurisdiction (Chieti)



What is proper development?

Dei Filius tells us:

“May understanding, knowledge and wisdom increase as ages and centuries roll along, and greatly and vigorously flourish, in each and all, in the individual and the whole church: but this **only in its own proper kind, that is to say, in the same doctrine, the same sense, and the same understanding.**”

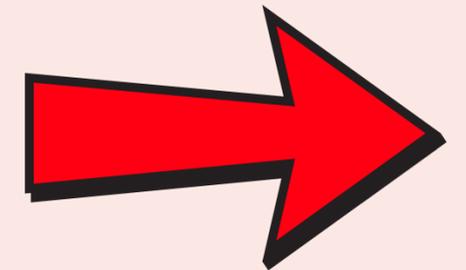
Dei Filius, Vatican 1

Hence, too, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is ever to be maintained which has once been declared by Holy Mother Church, and there must **never be any abandonment of this sense under the pretext or in the name of a more profound understanding.**

Also Dei Filius, Vatican 1

The appearance of this kind of specious contradiction is chiefly due to the fact that either **the dogmas of faith are not understood and explained in accordance with the mind of the church**, or unsound views are mistaken for the conclusions of reason.

So, what kind of growth in understanding is legitimate?



Growth of Understanding

Same Sense (Authentic Development)	Illicit (Different Sense)
Reaffirms the Core Teaching	Reverses the Core Teaching
Synthesizes and Harmonizes With Other Church Teachings	Introduces Novelty and Distorts Other Church Teachings
Clarifies Without Contradiction	Reinterprets to Contradict

Protestant Soteriology

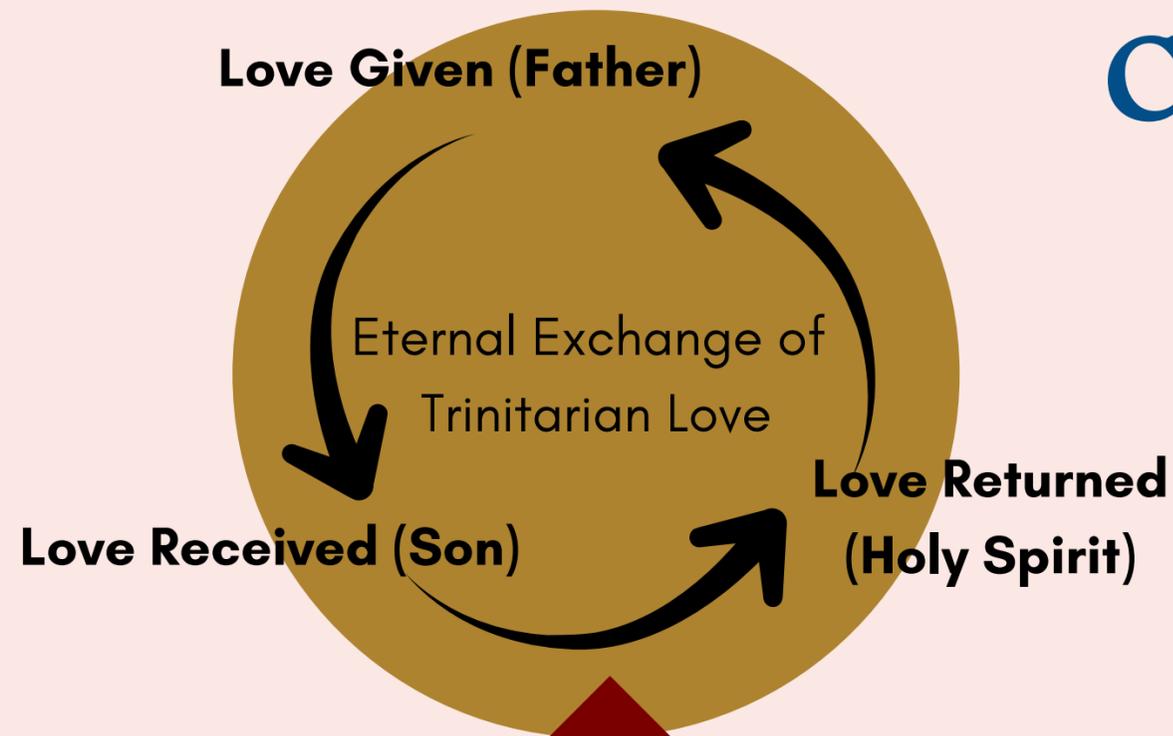
- **God-to-Individual:** direct, personal salvation
- Focus on **abstract** status (justified- or not)
- Salvation is a “**one-time**” event (conversion and justification)
- Prioritizes **Invisible** Church: spiritual unity of all believers
- Focus on the individual **soul** (almost dualist) - and with less emphasis on humanity as a whole or restoration of humanity itself
- Clear **categories** and **legal terms** - “**conceptual**” ideas

Catholic Soteriology

- **God > Body of Christ > Individual**
 - Eucharistic Church (Body of Christ) is not just the “institution” (which is the sign of unity), but a sacrament: visible extension of Christ’s body in time
- Emphasis on **relational transformation**
- Salvation is eternal **life**, a **dynamic process** (ongoing incorporation into Body of Christ through sacraments + sanctification)
- **Visible**, Eucharistic Church: Christ’s ongoing presence in history
- Focus on the whole person (**body and soul**) but also concerned with **humanity as a whole**
- **Embodied and relational** understandings: sacraments, liturgy, communion of saints

Catholic Soteriology

God



Church

**Eucharistic Body of Christ
(Universal, Visible)**



Individuals in time participate in the eternal exchange of Trinitarian love through the Eucharist

Individual

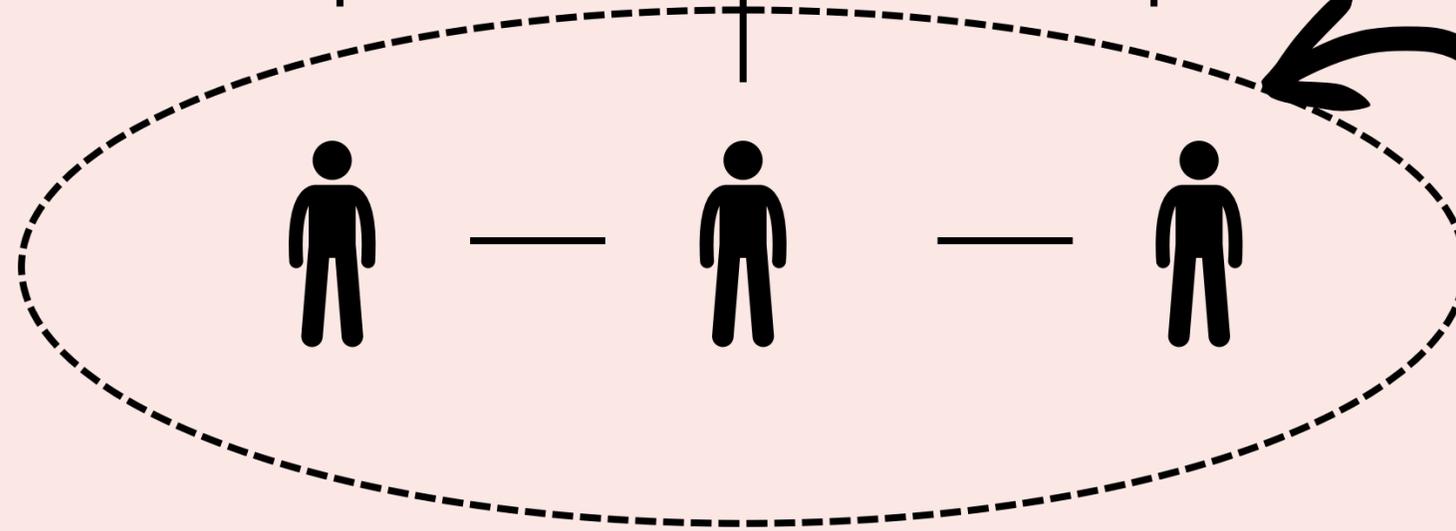


Individuals are incorporated to the universal Body of Christ through baptism

Reformed Soteriology

The Father

Faith in Jesus

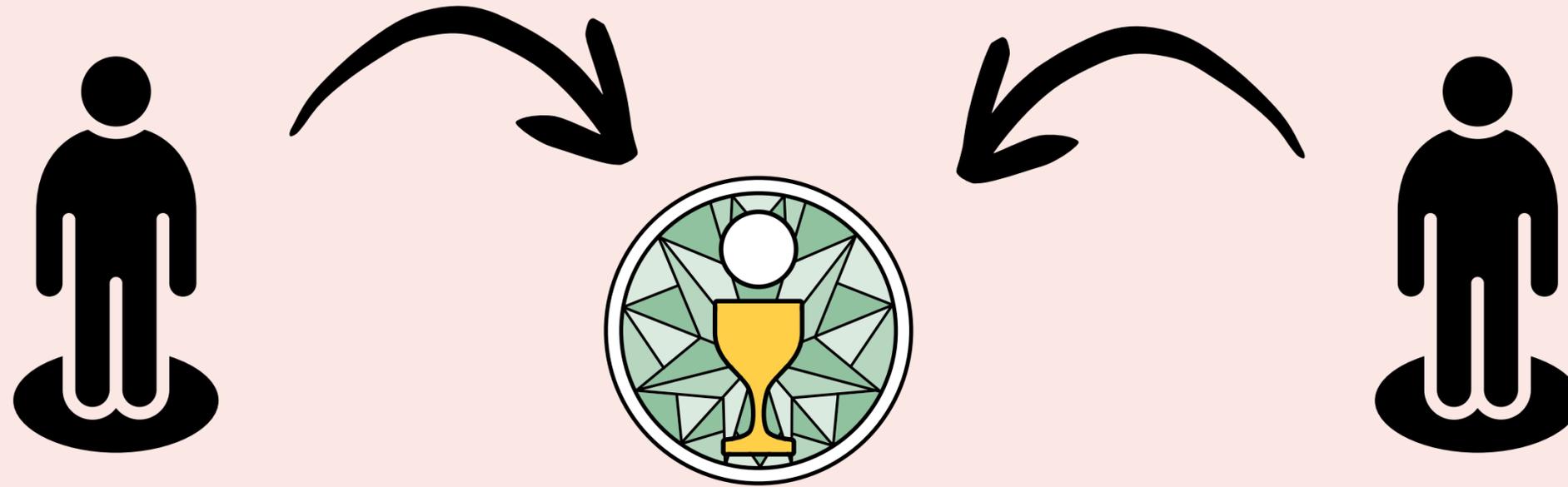


Church (collection of saved individuals)

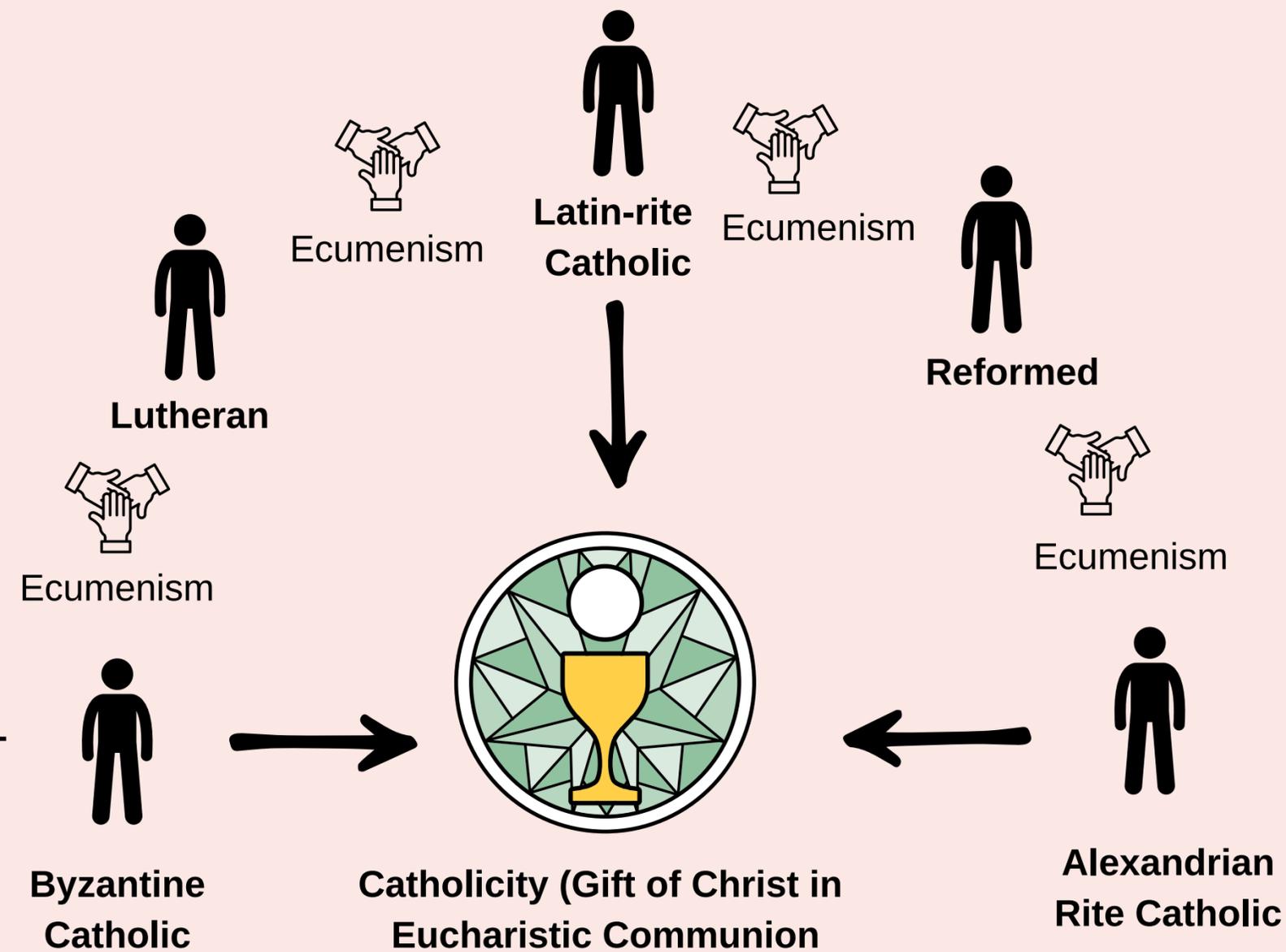
Individual

Why Unity with the Pope?

Sign of the Inner Condition of the Eucharist which
CONSTITUTES Unity (Catholicity)



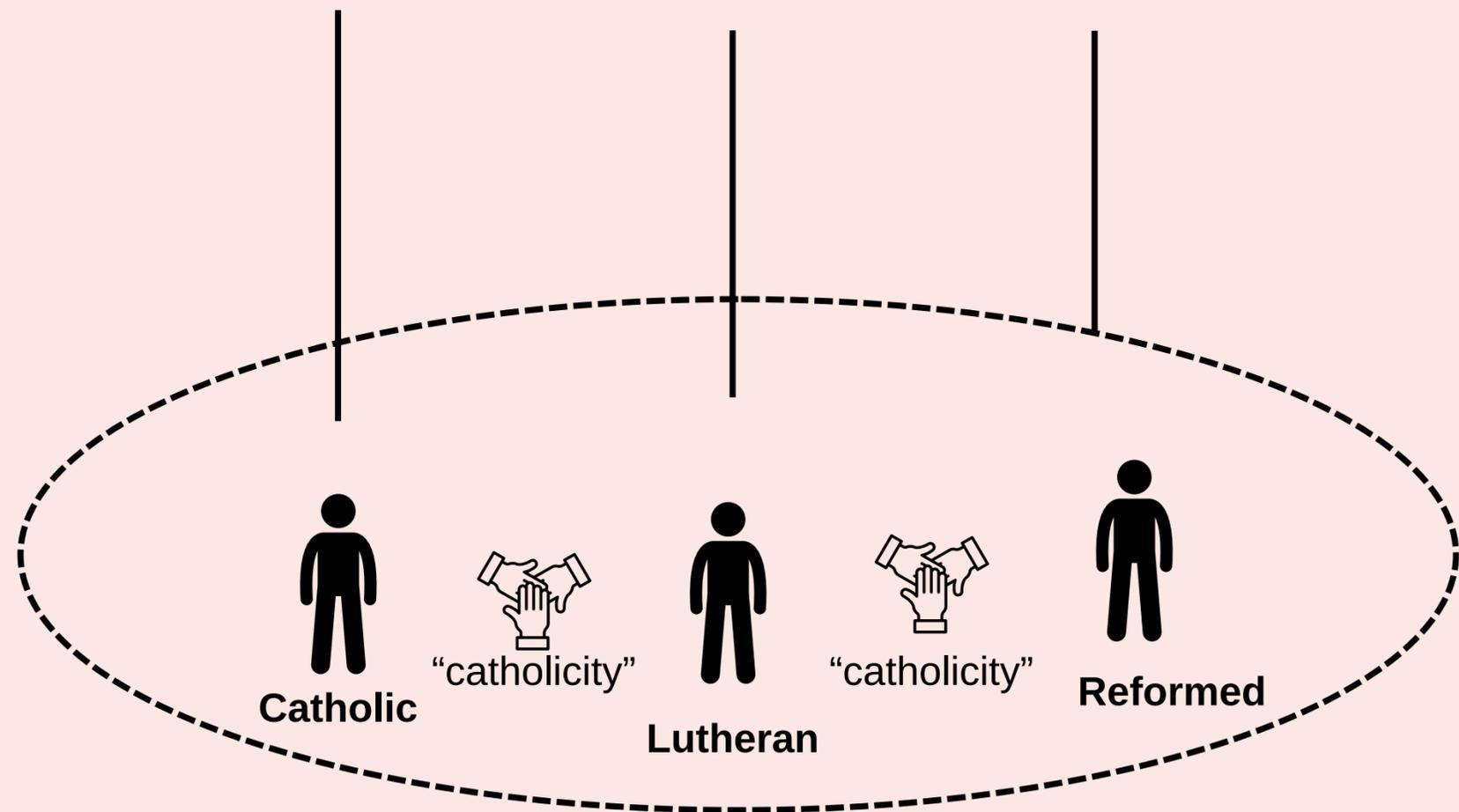
**Men are drawn INTO
the ONE Eucharist and MADE ONE
through incorporation into Christ**



True Catholicity is Condition of Eucharist and Gift of Christ



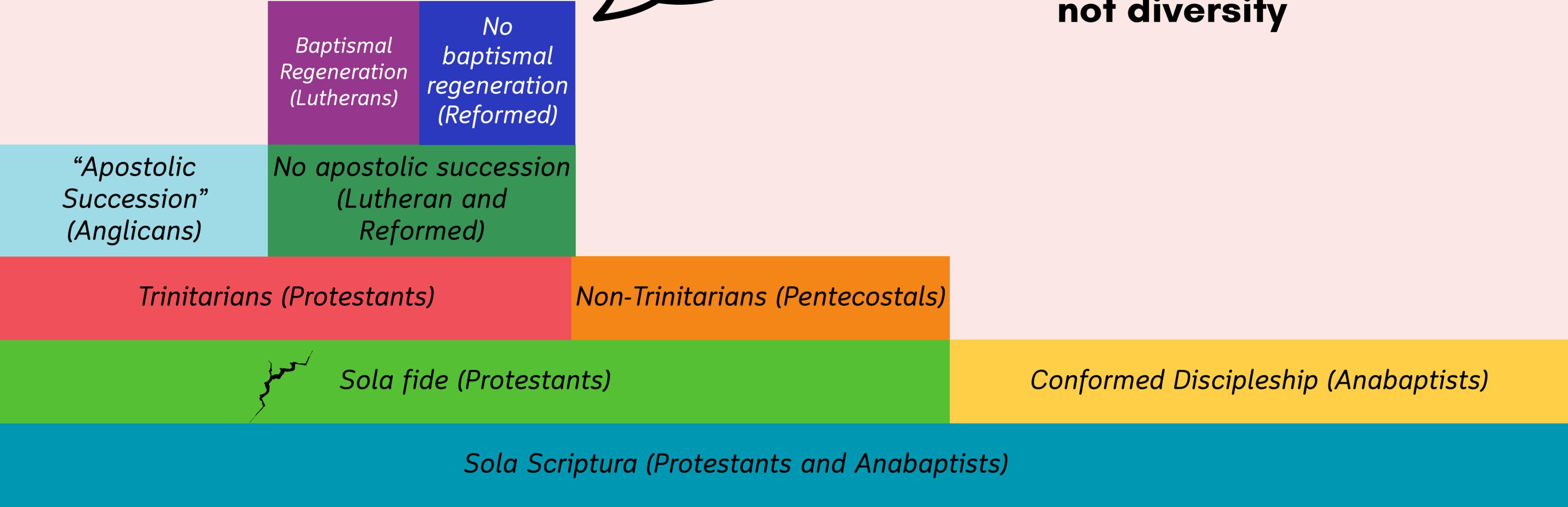
Shared Faith in Christ



Protestant notion of "catholicity" is Catholic notion of ecumenism



**Christians Can't Build "Catholicity"
or "Unity" off a Shared Base
This builds doctrinal division,
not diversity**



Shared Faith in Christ?

Happens in Orthodoxy Too

Autocephalous Churches Can't Find Agreement or Settle Doctrinal Disputes

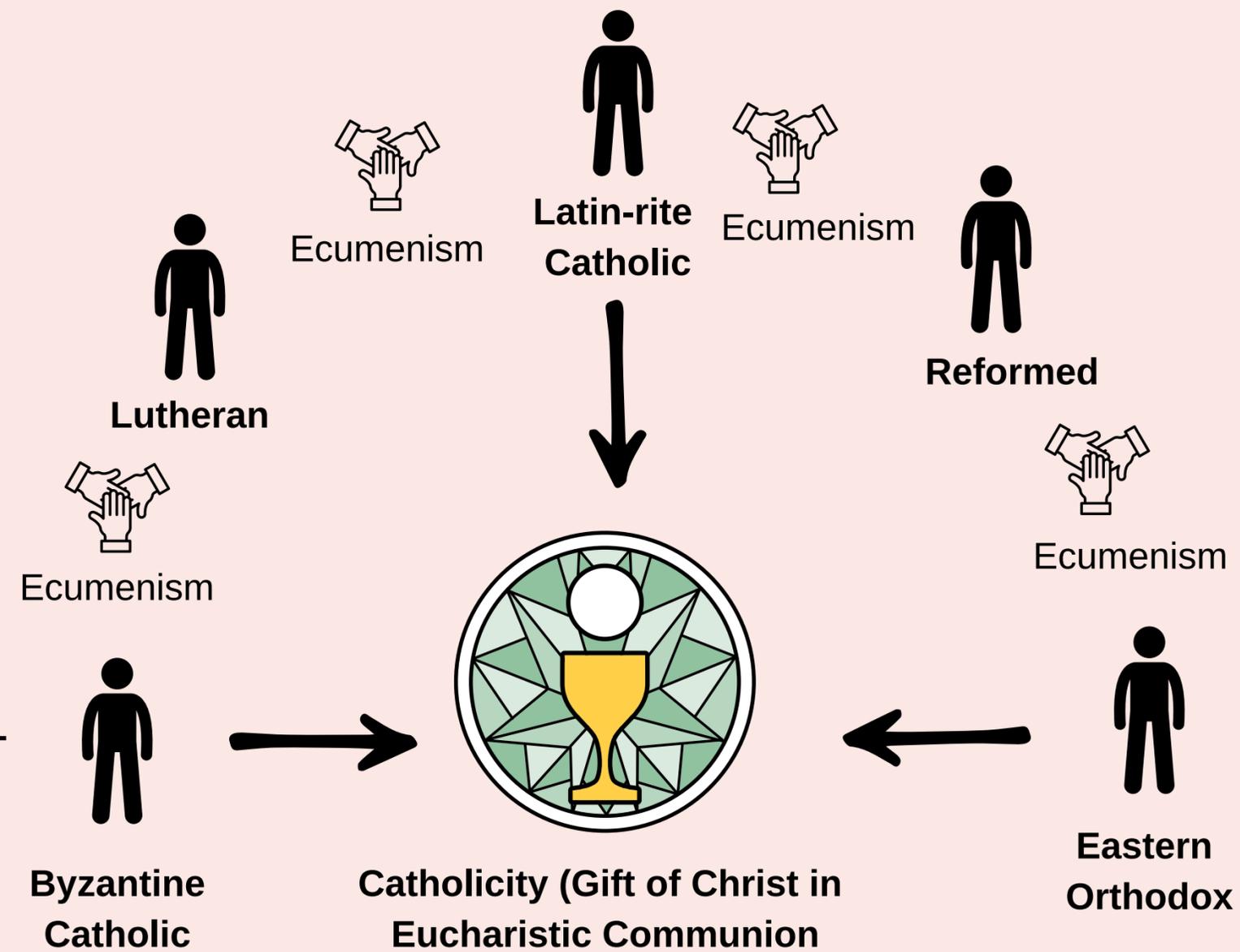


Disputes Happen in Catholicism Too!

But! Catholic theology openly acknowledges that the unity of the Church is not something Christians create through mutual agreement or negotiation, nor is Christian consensus is a cause of unity or even a true sign of catholicity. It is only ever an effect of Christ drawing all people to himself. This is precisely what the theology of the papacy says.

The Pope is not the cause of unity or simply a “resolver of disputes”, but he is the visible sign and servant of the unity that Christ alone gives through the Spirit. The theology of the papacy is what protects TRUE catholicity is a gift, a sacrament, made real through incorporation into Christ’s ONE Eucharistic Body.

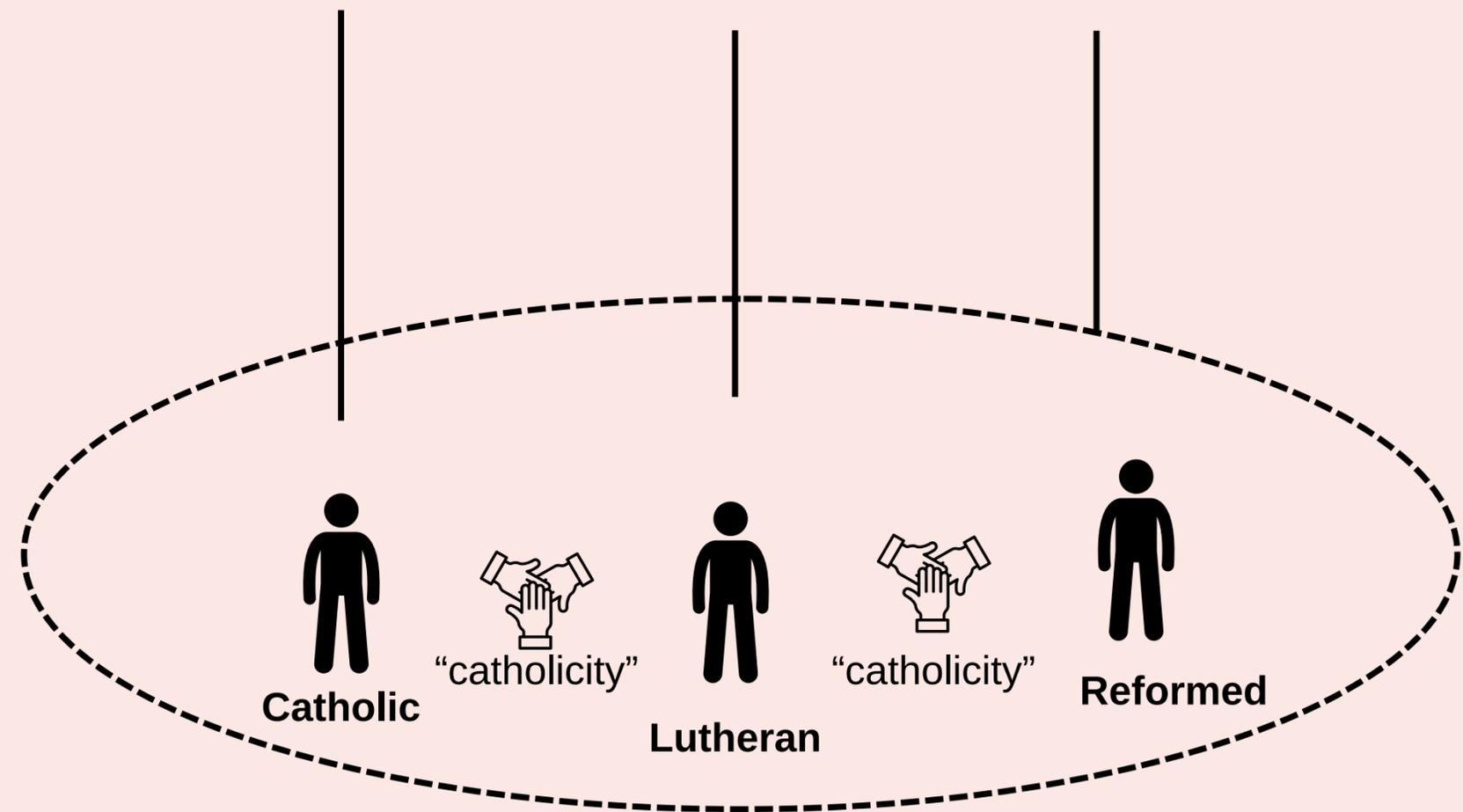
“The Church cannot organize herself according to her own design” - not self-constituted, but Christ-constituted.



True Catholicity is Condition of Eucharist and Gift of Christ



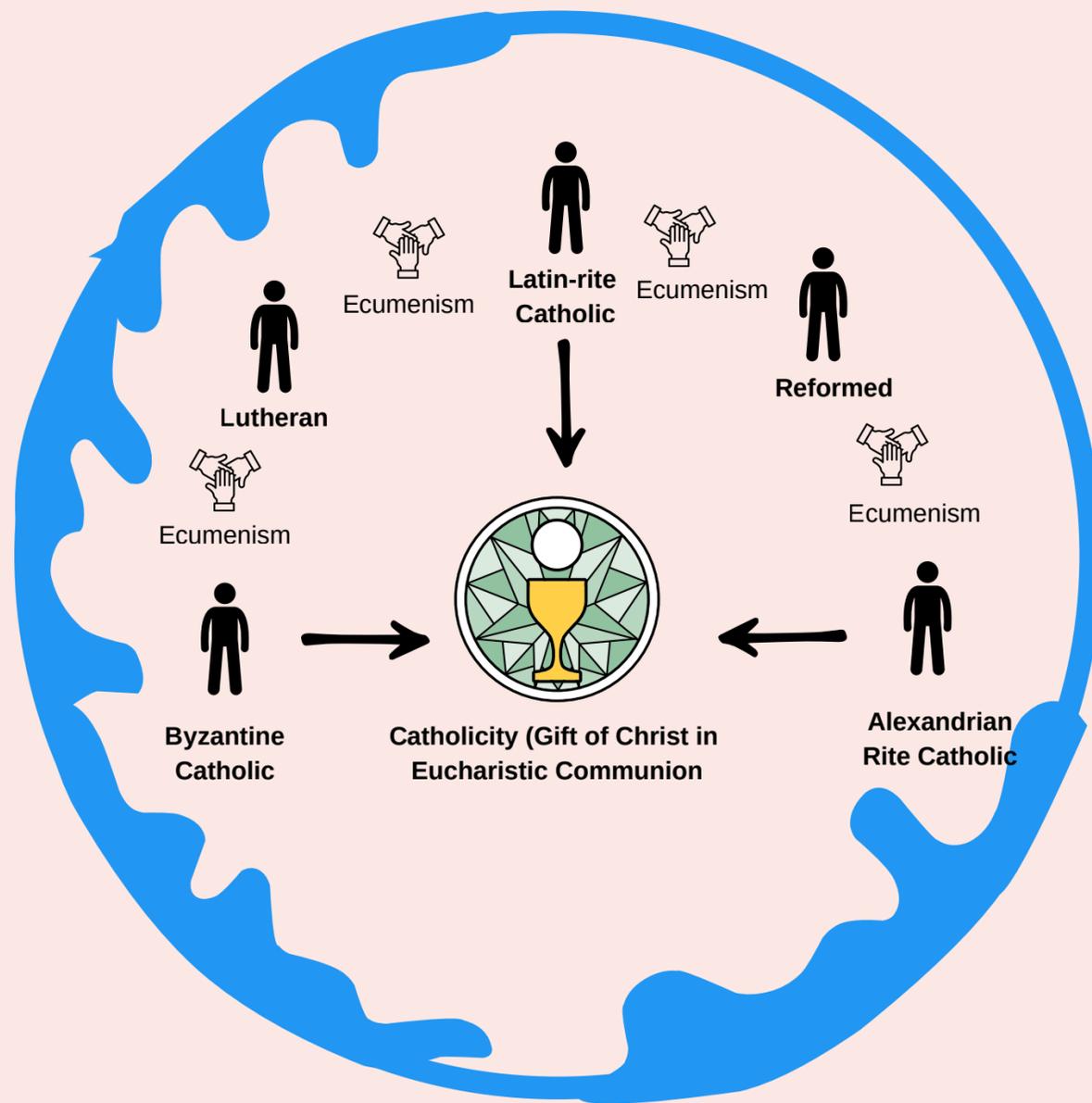
Shared Faith in Christ



Protestant notion of "catholicity" is Catholic notion of ecumenism



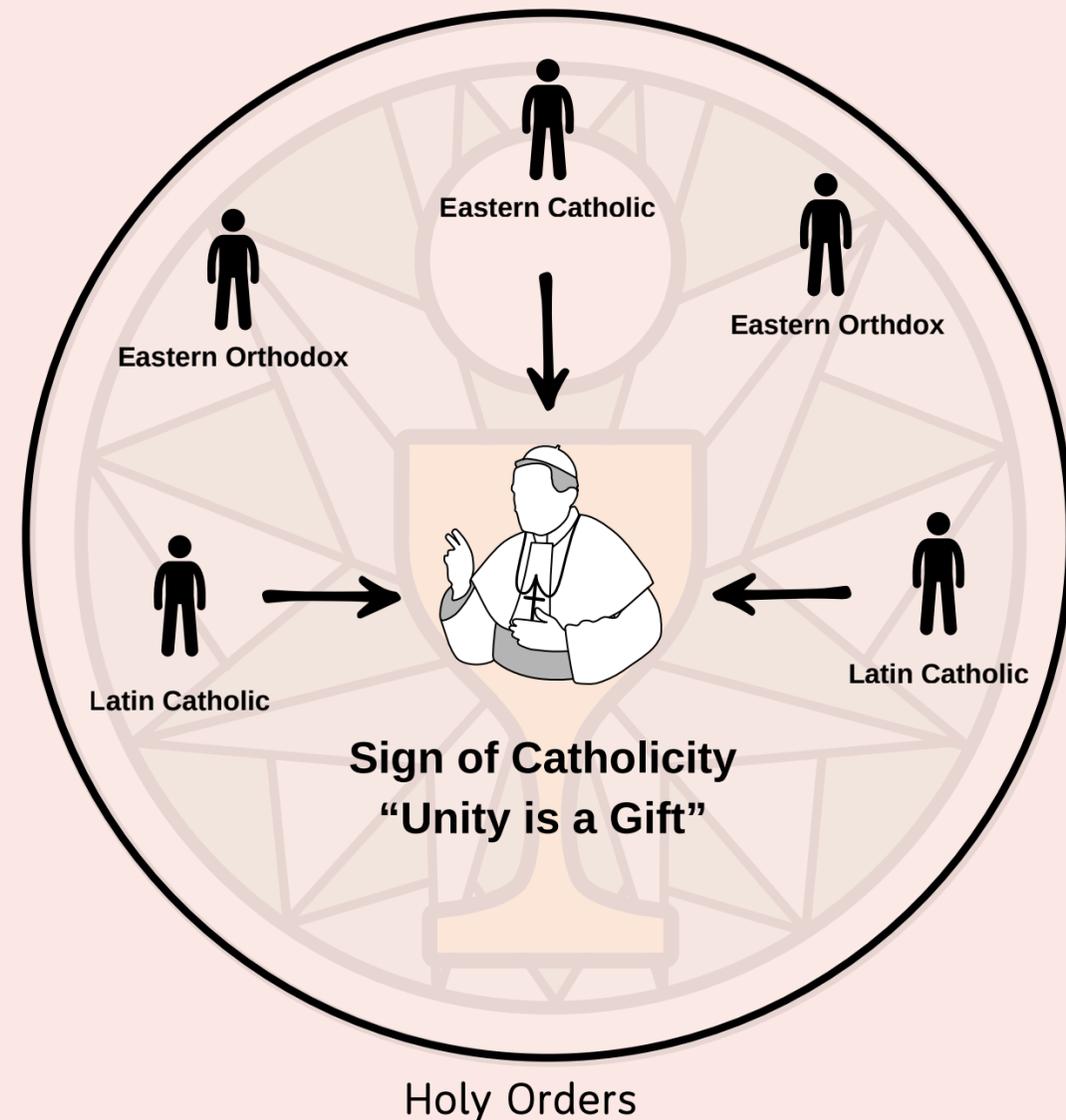
Eucharistic Body of Christ



Protestants and the Catholic Church

- *The Church's view of catholicity mirrors the Christian view of marriage. Marriage is not just two individuals coexisting but two people who truly become one flesh*
- *Protestant view of catholicity more or less mirrors the secular way of understanding marriage: individuals living side-by-side*
- *The Church's communion with Christ is consummated in the Eucharist, the true "marriage supper of the Lamb."*
- *Baptism is ordered toward this one-flesh communion. It is necessary and initiates incorporation into Christ, but it finds its fulfillment in the Eucharist.*
- *Without valid Eucharist, particular Protestant "churches" are not truly the Church, but ecclesial communities*
- *The one Christian baptism (Protestants included) derives efficacy from the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ.*
- *But without the true Eucharist, Protestant baptism is more like an unconsummated bond, real but not brought to full union.*
- *And without the visible sign of a singular unity (papacy), the full meaning of catholicity is lost (as described above)*
- *To be in communion with Rome is to know the sign of the papacy: God *gives* unity through Christ's body, it is not something we build ourselves from below*

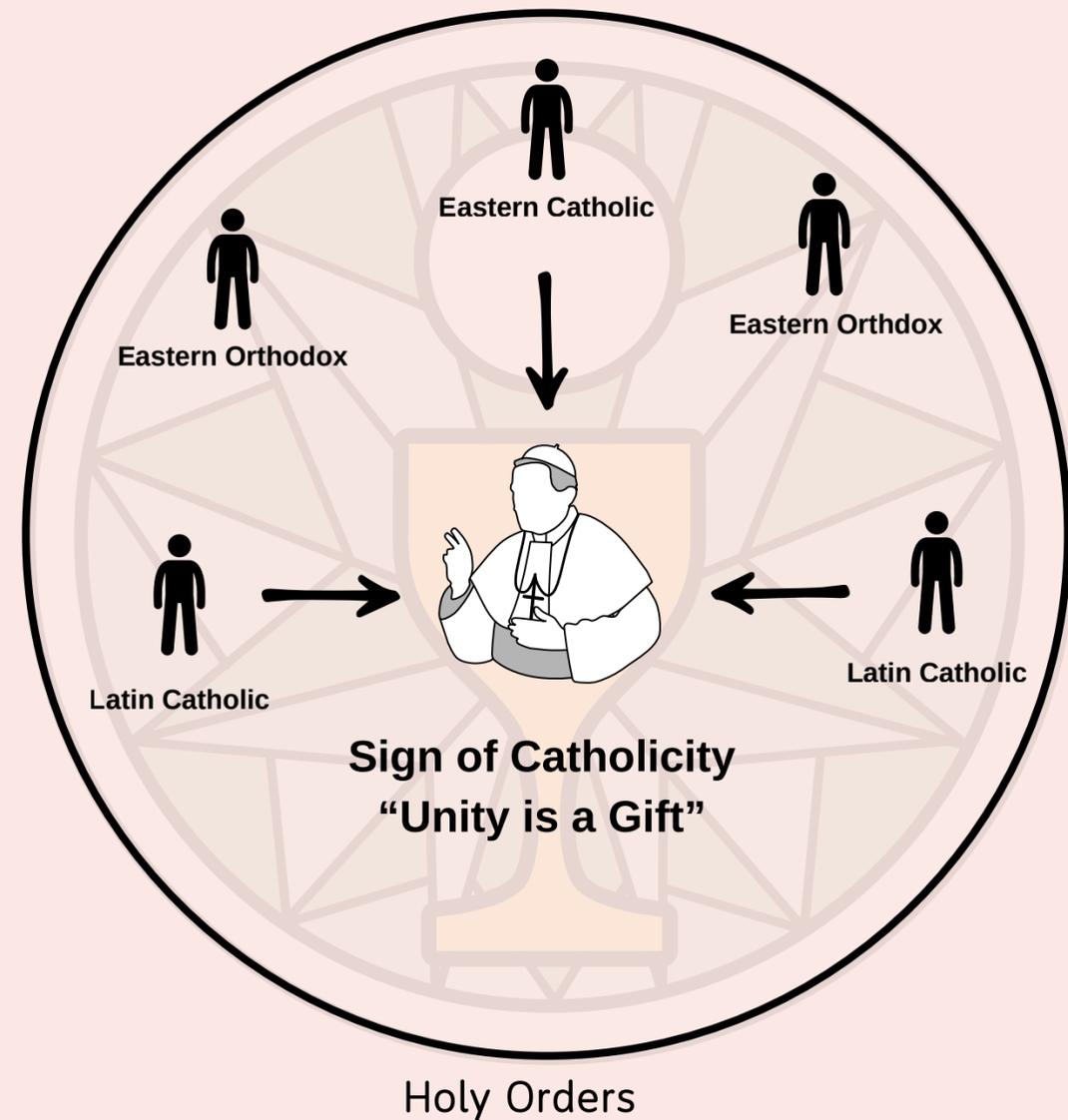
Institution: Sign of “Christ the Head”



Orthodox and the Catholic Church

- *The Orthodox Churches have valid apostolic succession and true sacraments*
- *Unlike Protestant ecclesial communities, Orthodox are true particular Churches that are incorporated into the Eucharistic Body of Christ*
- *Self-exclude from full communion with the Catholic Church; more like a separation than a divorce (in Catholic view) - lack of juridical/visible unity*
- *Division lies in the principle of unity*
 - *Orthodox use “conciliar consensus” among patriarchs*
 - *Catholic Church teaches that the papacy is the visible sign and servant of the unity that comes from Christ and can’t be created by men*
- *The Catholic Church allows Orthodox Christians to receive the sacraments in Catholic liturgies in certain conditions, but Orthodox do not reciprocate.*

Institution: Sign of “Christ the Head”



Orthodox and the Catholic Church

- *The Orthodox have valid succession and sacraments*
- *The Orthodox are truly incorporated into the Eucharistic Body of Christ*
- *The Orthodox attempt to place the sign of unity in “consensus” but instead of the papacy as singular sign of the unity that only Christ can give, thus are not in full communion with the Catholic Church*
- *The Catholic Church *does* allow for shared communion with Orthodox in exceptional circumstance but the Orthodox discipline usually prevents this*

Reform

Protestants



Attempts to “reform” the Church outside of visible apostolic authority leads to doctrinal divisions. What is faithful? What is apostolic? Subjective denominational authorities compete for those answers, deriving their authority to teach from “supposed” faithfulness to apostolicity not “actual” faithfulness to apostolicity. Reform only exists as a “potential” but never achievable in practice.

Conciliar Consensus

Orthodox



In practice, the Orthodox attempts to reach “conciliar consensus” among the patriarchs has lead to stagnation and unresolved disputes. No definitive way to heal divisions or speak with universal authority in service of unity. Without the papacy, no ecumenical council has occurred in the East.

Salvation / Sacraments Outside Church | Doctrinal Development

THE CLAIM: Boniface VIII (Unam Sanctam) says “no salvation outside the Church” / “it is absolutely necessary for salvation to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” Non-Catholic baptism not efficacious apart from Church. Vatican II says people outside the visible Church can be saved and accepts Protestant baptism.

UNTANGLING THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- **Unam Sanctum:** Written in the context of a political conflict. Affirms the necessity of the Catholic Church and the Pope for salvation. Directed at those **culpably** rejecting papal authority. Not a full theology of salvation- doesn't account for subjective culpability/invincible ignorance.
- **Vatican II:** Reaffirms Church is the instrument of all salvation. No one is saved apart from the Church. Develops the theology of invincible ignorance and the baptism of desire. God's grace can reach people outside visible communion when they sincerely seek Truth and Love. Affirms validity of Protestant baptisms (with proper form, matter, intention). Saving power comes from Christ, through the Catholic Church, which is the universal sacrament of salvation.
- **Key point:** Unam Sanctam was asserting papal authority in a political conflict, not giving a full theology of salvation. The Church interprets its own teachings within the broader tradition, not by isolating strong phrases like. Unam Sanctum speaks normatively, does not account for subjective judgments.

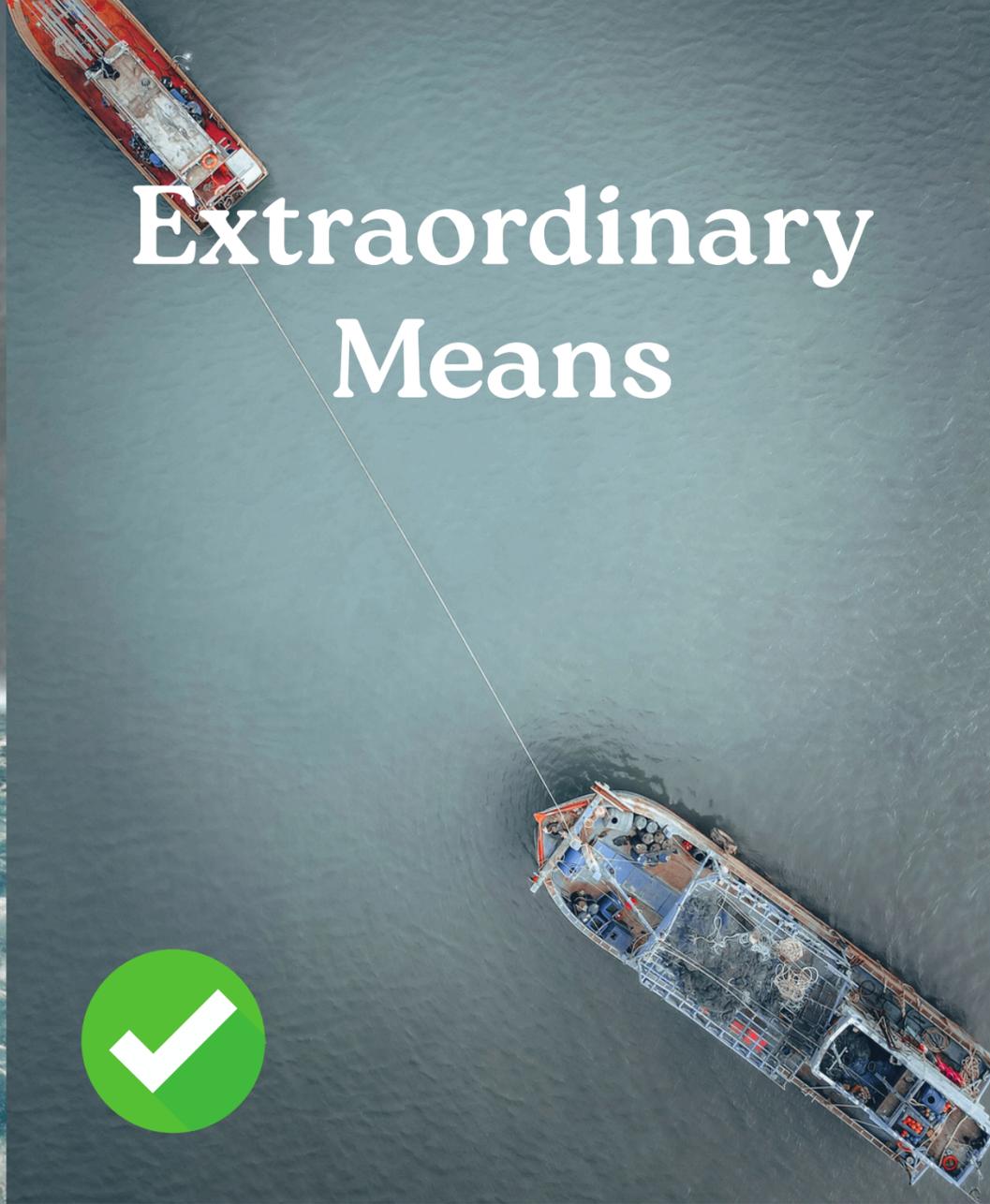
CONTINUOUS PRINCIPLES: There is no salvation apart from the Church. Culpability on knowledge. All grace flows from Christ through His Body, the Church. God judges souls based on their response to grace, not on what they do not know. (John 9:41). Non-Catholic baptisms derive their efficacy from the Church, because Christ acts through her as the visible *and invisible* instrument of salvation.

Same Sense (Authentic Development)	Vatican II
Reaffirms the Core Teaching	Reaffirms the necessity of the Church as the universal instrument of salvation
Synthesizes and Harmonizes With Other Church Teachings	Integrates truths about freedom/responsibility, conscience, invincible ignorance, degrees of culpability, justice and sovereignty of God
Clarifies Without Contradiction	Clarifies ordinary means (membership/sacraments) and extraordinary means (desire, openness to truth and grace), without denying the Church's necessity.

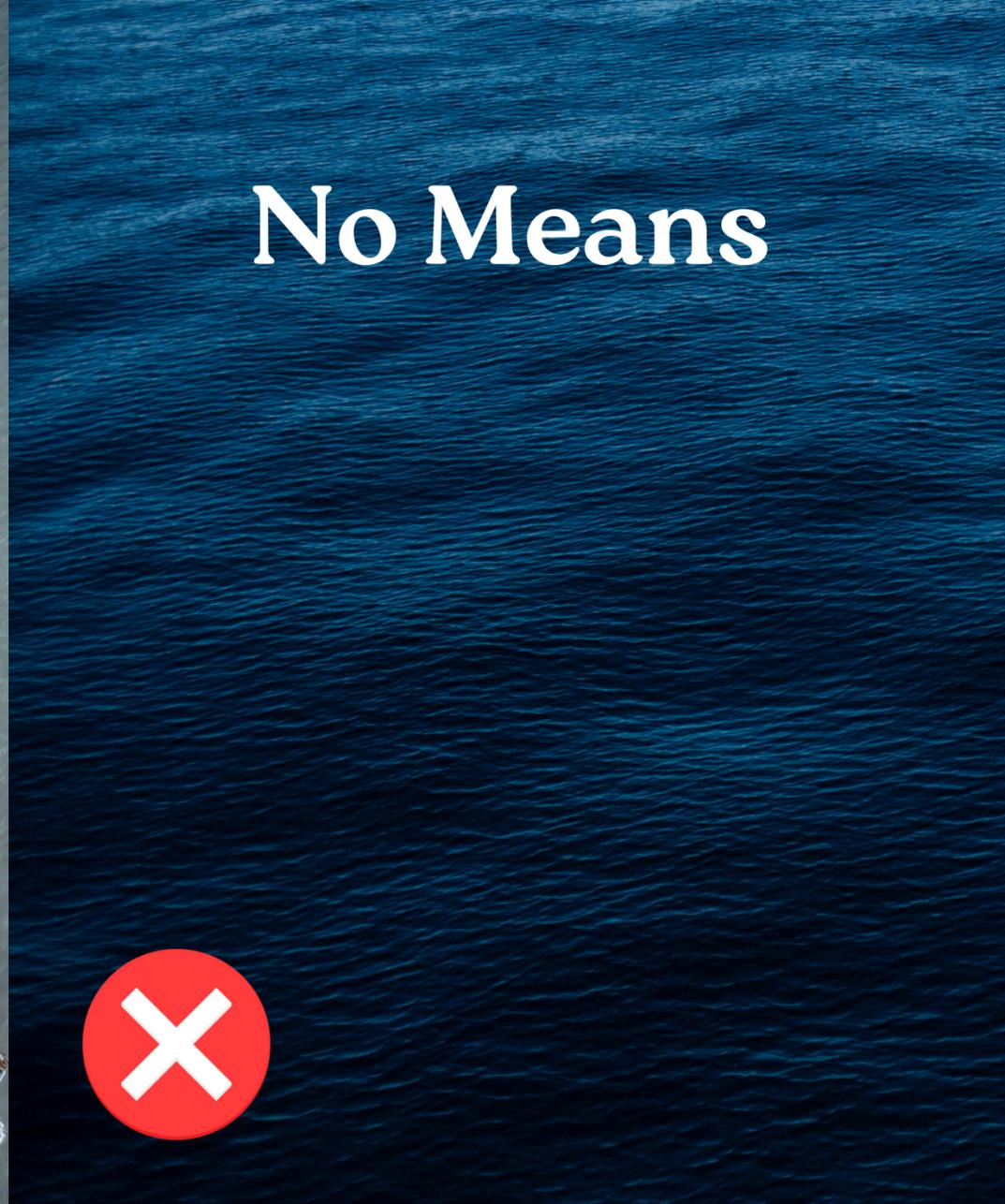
Ordinary Means



Extraordinary Means



No Means



Core Theological Point:

The Catholic Church is absolutely necessary for salvation.

An actual contradiction would be: The Catholic Church is not necessary for salvation.

In what way is the Church necessary?

Divine Initiative: God takes the first step, becomes man in the Incarnation.
Divine-Human Response: In his humanity, Jesus offers himself in perfect love to the Father, enduring the full weight of injustice and suffering in his earthly life.
Human Participation: Through the Eucharist, we are united to Christ's eternal, once-for-all self-offering. While still in time, we are drawn into his eternal act of love, joining our imperfect humanity to his perfect sacrifice, that is now glorified beyond pain and injustice.

