

Does a lay person have the right to “judge” and label another as a heretic?

To begin with, apply the Thomistic “Objection/Response” method here.

Can a private individual recognize someone as a heretic before the Church does?

“*What would be the point of the rule of faith and morals if in every particular case the simple layman could not himself apply them directly?*” (Don Felix de Sarda y Salvany: *Liberalism is a Sin*, Chap. xxxviii, p. 203)

Yes, private individuals *can* recognize someone as a heretic before the direct judgment of the church, on certain conditions, namely:

1. The false doctrine held by the culprit must in *manifest* and *direct* opposition to a truth that must certainly be believed with divine and Catholic faith. (1) below.
2. It must be *morally certain* that the culprit is aware of the conflict between his opinion and the teaching of the Catholic Church. (2) below.
3. The private individual may “judge” that someone is a heretic in the sense of recognizing a fact — the epistemological meaning of the word “judge” — and not in the juridical sense of pronouncing a definitive sentence. Hence such judgments can *oblige* only the conscience of the person forming them, in full awareness of the facts, and no one else. (3) below.
4. It is obligatory to incline, out of charity, as far as is reasonably possible, in favor of a suspect, and to reach the conclusion that anyone is a heretic only as a last resort. (4) below.

Pitfalls to be avoided:

1. It is incorrect to give the name “heresy” to an error which is opposed to a doctrine taught by the Church, but **not as having to be believed** with divine and Catholic faith, or which does not *certainly* belong in this category;
2. It is incorrect to give the name “heresy” to an error which is opposed to a doctrine to be believed with divine and Catholic faith, **where the opposition is not direct and manifest but depends on several steps of reasoning**: in such cases the qualification “heresy” is not applicable before a definitive judgment on the part of the Church;
3. It is incorrect to accuse anyone of heresy on the grounds that, while not embracing the heresy in question, **he refuses to accept that it is in fact heretical or to count its devotees as heretics pending the Church’s formal judgment**;
4. It is incorrect to affirm that pertinacity is present **when other explanations could reasonably be supposed**.

First Objection: "A heretical *proposition* is one which is directly and clearly opposed to a doctrine which must be believed with divine and Catholic faith — the private individual can judge whether or not that is so in a particular case. But the *act* of heresy, which makes its perpetrator a heretic, requires not only assent to an objectively heretical proposition, but also moral culpability — the conscious rejection of Catholic doctrine on the part of one is not unaware of the duty to accept it. This element is called pertinacity. It exists invisibly in the soul and cannot therefore be the object of the judgment of a private individual who sees only externals."

Answer: As with every other sin, **Christians must strive not to attribute the sin of heresy to their neighbor as long as another explanation remains possible.** But charity does not require mental gymnastics in order to excuse what is manifest. However, the thesis here defended does *not* depend on identifying pertinacity as defined by the *moralists*, but as defined by canonists: *conscious* rejection of dogma on the part of a baptized person. This prescind from the moral order altogether, forming a judgment which need concern only the external forum, yet which has no connection with the error of those who "presume" pertinacity where some other reasonable explanation of the external data remains available, such as simple ignorance or inadvertence. **Obstinacy may be assumed when a revealed truth has been proposed with sufficient clearness and force to convince a reasonable man.** (Dom Charles Augustine: *A Commentary on Canon Law*, Vol. 8, p. 335.)

Second Objection: "Such a judgment inevitably constitutes a usurpation of the rights of ecclesiastical authority."

Answer: The sentence of ecclesiastical authority that a man is a heretic differs from the judgment of private individuals in two main respects: (i) **the judgment of authority is authoritative, and therefore commands the adherence of all Catholics;** (ii) **authority alone can resolve doubtful cases.** The judgment of the private individual would be a usurpation if it claimed either of these prerogatives. But where the facts admit no prudent doubt and no pretense is made to constrain the judgment of others, the individual who anticipates the judgment of authority by concluding that a given miscreant is clearly a heretic does no injury to authority. There can be no law against recognizing facts.

Proofs of the Thesis

(1) Denzinger 1105: Pope Alexander VII condemned the statement that one is not obliged to denounce to the authorities someone whom one knows to be certainly a heretic if one does not have strict *proof* that he is a heretic. This condemnation directly implies that private individuals can sometimes know that someone is a heretic before the authorities of the Church realise this, and even without having strict proof.

(2) St Alphonsus Liguori discusses the duty of denouncing heretics even among the members of one's own family. He declares that this duty obliges without exception, but only when the miscreant is truly and formally a heretic and not merely suspected or erring in good faith. This distinction, presented in a clear and detailed manner, would be perfectly otiose if individuals were unable to recognize heretics before the authorities had intervened. So St Alphonsus clearly presumes that individuals can, at least sometimes, distinguish suspicion of heresy from certainty and can, at least sometimes, recognize the presence or absence of pertinacity. (*Theologia Moral*, lib. 5, n. 250)

(3) Canon 1325 gives the classic definition of the word "heretic", based on St Thomas: "a baptized person who, while continuing to call himself a Christian, pertinaciously denies or doubts a truth which must be believed with divine and Catholic faith." Canonists are agreed that the pertinacity in question consists in *knowing* that the doctrine one denies (or doubts) is taught by the Church as revealed. No other condition, such as authoritative judgment is required to make someone a heretic.

(4) Canon 2314 declares that all heretics incur *latae sententiae* excommunication. Some *other* penalties incurred by heretics must be specifically inflicted by the authorities, and only after a warning has proved fruitless, but the excommunication itself is *automatically* incurred from the very instant that the heresy is externally expressed. The express stipulation that this censure is immediately incurred by the fact of heresy and not as a result of sentence would clearly be pointless and inapplicable if no one could know in any concrete case that it had been so incurred.

(5) Canon 188§4 declares that if a cleric should publicly fall away from the Catholic faith, all his offices would become vacant *ipso facto* and *without need of official declaration*. Canonists agree that this falling away is verified by public heresy as defined in Canon 1325: there is no need, they say, to join any particular sect, but only publicly to reject what one knows the Church teaches. Now this canon would be deprived of any meaning or value if no one could recognize the presence of heresy before an official judgment. How could an office become automatically vacant by the very fact of heresy, and *without* any declaration, if in fact a formal trial and a declaration were necessary to know that anyone was a heretic? What would be the point of advising us of this pre-judgment, pre-declaration effect of heresy if no one could ever take account of it?

(6) The meaning of Canon 188§4 is quite clear in itself and requires no commentary to understand it, in accordance with the canonists' axiom: "*Clara verba non indigent interpretatione sed executione.*"(6) Indeed all canonists are unanimous that it means

exactly what it says: public heretics forfeit all offices *ipso facto* and without any need for trial or declaration by anyone. However, Canon 188§4 has never been the object of official interpretation emanating from the Holy See. By contrast, it has a sister-canon — Canon 646§1 n. 2, concerning religious life — which has been officially explained and which sheds considerable reflected light on Canon 188§4 too and on the whole principle according to which private individuals can recognise manifest heretics irrespective of authoritative condemnation. This is because Canon 646§1 n. 2 declares that any religious who publicly abandons the Catholic Faith must be considered by that very fact to be legitimately dismissed (from his or her religious order or congregation) .

The second paragraph of the same canon requires that the fact in question (public heresy and consequent automatic dismissal) be declared by the superior. The canonists agree that public abandonment of the Catholic Faith would be fulfilled by any case of public heresy. In view of this second paragraph, the Holy See was consulted as to whether the dismissal was *conditional* upon the superior's declaration. The Commission for the Interpretation of the Code replied, 30th July 1934, in the *negative*. The canonist Heribert Jone O.F.M. cap. explains that the superior's declaration does not involve any trial and serves simply to make known facts that have already taken effect: the heresy and the dismissal which it produces.

Manifestly, therefore, the superior and the other religious must be able to recognize the fact of heresy in order to draw the practical conclusions that flow from it and to make the obligatory declaration of what has already happened.

(7) A very large number of theologians have discussed whether a pope could fall into heresy subsequent to his election, and if so what consequences would follow. Their discussion of this hypothesis also sheds light on the effect of public heresy, pending the Church's judgment, when perpetrated by someone of lower rank. A few authors considered that a heretical pope would still have to be recognized as pope by the Church — Cajetan, Suarez, John of St Thomas, Journet and Bouix. But the weight of authority is massively in favor of the opposing view — namely that the miscreant pope would automatically forfeit his office by virtue of the very fact of public heresy and that the faithful would thereby be absolved of all duty of obedience towards him because he would no longer be pope at all. The principle advanced is that one who is not *in* the Church, cannot possibly hold office in her, and particularly not be her head. (St Robert Bellarmine, St Alphonsus Liguori, Ballerini, Naz, Billot, Sylvius, Melchior Cano, Wernz-Vidal, *et al.*)

Now this theological teaching would be worthless and indeed absurd if the faithful were unable, at least sometimes, to recognize heretics and to draw practical consequences from their recognition. St Robert Bellarmine's treatment of this topic in his *De Romano Pontifice* is of exceptional value and weight. He considers as utterly without theological probability the opposing opinion (i.e. that a manifestly heretical pope — if God permitted such to exist — would *not* be automatically deprived of all offices, in common with all other manifest heretics). And among the five recognized theological opinions which he lists concerning the case of a heretical pope, the idea that it would be impossible to

recognize such a case because pertinacity cannot be known with sufficient certainty does not even figure at all.

(8) St Hypatius, a Bithynian monk of the fifth century, insisted on suppressing the name of Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, from the sacred diptychs (equivalent to the Canon of the Mass) from the moment when Nestorius began to preach his heresy, which denied the unity of person in Our Lord. Hypatius's ordinary, the bishop Eulalius (who was a suffragan of Nestorius), refused Nestorius's heresy, but rebuked the monk for having withdrawn from communion with their patriarch before he had been condemned by a council. Hypatius replied: "Ever since I learned that Nestorius teaches error about our Lord, I am not in communion with him neither do I include his name in the Eucharistic sacrifice, for he is not a true bishop. Do as you wish to me, for I have made up my mind to suffer all things and nothing will induce me to change my behavior." (See *An Extract from the Life of Saint Hypatius* translated by the present writer from the original fifth-century Greek of the monk Callinicus)

(9) St Hypatius's judgment relative to Nestorius seems to be confirmed not only by the approval of the hagiographers, but also by the decree of Pope St Celestine deciding that all of Nestorius's acts were to be considered null from the moment when he began to preach heresy, "... for he who had abandoned the Faith by such preaching can neither deprive nor depose anyone." (St Robert Bellarmine: *De Romano Pontifice*, Cap. XXX) The excesses of one school of traditional Catholics call for a reminder, however, that St Hypathius withdrew from communion only with Nestorius, not with Eulalius also!

(10) It has occurred several times that a saint has suspected a reigning pope of heresy, even to the extent of threatening to withdraw from obedience to him if the pope failed to manifest his orthodoxy by withdrawing the grounds for suspicion. St Bruno, St Hugh of Grenoble and St Godfrey of Amiens all took this attitude towards Pope Pascal II. Moreover, though St Yvo of Chartres disagreed with his three fellow-saints, the disagreement did not concern the principle of how to react if "the person placed in the chair of Peter...should manifestly depart from the truth of the Gospel" (*Patrologia Latina*, tom. 162, col. 240), but only the practical question of whether this had in fact happened in Pascal's case.

(11) Holy Scripture often warns us to beware of heretics. It does not seem possible to understand all these texts as referring exclusively to those who have been condemned as such in person by the Church or who belong to sects which are notoriously outside her communion.

(a) The most striking is the passage in St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so now I say again: if anyone preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." (1:8,9) St Paul does not simply warn his converts to reject the novel doctrines; he instructs them to pass judgment — the most severe of all judgments — on the person responsible for

disseminating them: *anathema*, with all that the word implies. And since it is clearly not appropriate to pronounce anathema against a Catholic who errs in good faith, it is plain that St Paul believes that the Galatians are able to distinguish pertinacious heresy from innocent mistakes in the doctrinal order.

(b) St Paul commands Titus: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment." (3:10, 11) The greatest Catholic scriptural commentators, such as Cornelius a Lapide and St Robert Bellarmine, understand this passage as meaning that the warnings are required when it is doubtful whether or not someone is truly pertinacious in heresy. The former writes, in his commentary on this text: "the Apostle speaks not of a pertinacious and formal heretic, but of one who errs and follows an erring sect through ignorance or bad instruction, or of whom there is doubt whether or not he be pertinacious." An alternative interpretation, favoured by Cardinal de Lugo (loc. cit.) and Suarez (as quoted by de Lugo), maintains that the "man that is a heretic" must *already* be a heretic before the warnings, as the syntax implies, and is rebuked to see if it be possible to reclaim him. In this view, the bishop (St. Paul is addressing St. Titus, the Bishop of Crete) is required to try to reclaim the delinquent and to avoid him only after failing to do so; but the ordinary faithful would avoid him even before the warnings, as already a heretic and therefore a source of danger. Whichever interpretation one chooses, both make it plain that the warnings are *not* envisaged as invariably necessary to establish every case of pertinacity, since both recognize that an individual may well be sufficiently exposed as a heretic even without having received any warnings. In the case of manifest heresy, no warning would be necessary. Our *Code of Canon Law* retains this distinction. (See J. F. Lane: *The Loss of Ecclesiastical Offices: Is Holy Church Unprotected?* Perth 1999)

(c) "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves." (Matthew 7:15) Such is the solemn warning of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the subject of those heretics who disguise their errors by pretending to be faithful Catholics. Some of JP II's apologists seem to have the impression that Catholics must take great care to avoid accidentally rejecting an innocent sheep which had the misfortune to be dressed as a wolf, but Our Lord declares the opposite. He tells us to beware even of *disguised* heretics (explanation of Cornelius a Lapide, *ad locum*), which would not be possible if we were unable to penetrate beyond their disguise ("sheep's clothing") to recognise their obstinate corruption of the Church's faith, despite their deceptive protestations of orthodoxy.

(12) Cardinal de Lugo, considered by St Alphonsus to be the greatest theologian since St Thomas, devoted the most detailed study we are aware of to the subject of the pertinacity required to make someone a heretic. He discusses whether a warning is needed in order to establish that someone is a heretic, and concludes, after considering the opinions of all the noted theologians and canonists, that such warnings are not always necessary — nor are they always required in practice by the Holy Office. The reason for this is that the

warning serves only to establish that the individual is aware of the opposition existing between his opinion and the Church's teaching. If that were already evident, the warning would be superfluous. (*Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Disp. XX, De Virtute Fidei Divinae, Sectio vi, n. 174 et seq.)

(13) Pope Paul IV's bull *Cum Ex Apostolatus* (15th February 1559, *Bullarium Romanum* vol. iv. sect. i, pp. 354-357) provides that if ever the cardinals should elect as pope someone who was guilty of prior heresy, the election would be simply null and the faithful would have the entire right to withdraw from obedience to the person elected, as he would not be their head. Historians inform us that this bull, in the mind of Pope Paul IV, aimed particularly at excluding the possibility that after his death the conclave might elect Cardinal Morone, widely believed to be a heretic, but never condemned by the Church. Hence the bull clearly admits that the faithful in such a case (of any rank) could recognise the presence of heresy and withdraw from obedience to the "pope" infected thereby, *without waiting for an official judgment*.

Conclusions

(i) Those who claim that private individuals can never know that this or that person is a heretic until the Church has pronounced on his case are clearly mistaken.

(ii) Such judgments are certainly possible, but are usually exceptional and should be reserved for cases of peculiar blatancy or when the intervention of superior authority is in abeyance.

(iii) Those who recognize someone as clearly a heretic are bound in conscience to treat him as such, but their conviction does not bind others who do not share it. This is the chief distinction between heretics who have been condemned by the Church (or belong to condemned sects) and those who are uncondemned and still claim to be Catholics.

Notes

(1) While Canon 1325 brands as a heretic whoever *pertinaciously* denies or doubts a truth that must be believed with divine and Catholic faith, Canon 1323 underlines that no doctrine is considered to belong to this category "nisi id manifeste constiterit" (unless it is manifestly certain that it does). Herrmann sums up the common doctrine of the theologians when he states that a heretical proposition is one which is opposed *directly, certainly* and *manifestly* to one of these truths. (*Inst. Theol. Dogm.* I. 32)

(2) St Alphonsus Liguori: "No one is a heretic as long as he is disposed to submit his judgment to the Church, or does not realize that the true Church of Christ holds the opposite, even if he defends his opinion doggedly as a result of ignorance that is culpable or even crass." (*Theol. Moral.* lib. 3, n. 19) To learn how to recognize this pertinacity, see de Lugo: (*Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Disp. XX, De Virtute Fidei Divinae, Sectio vi) and A. V. Xavier da Silveira: *Actions, Behaviour, Attitudes and Omissions Can Reveal a Heretic*, in the Brazilian theological review *Catolicismo*, n. 204, December 1967.

(3) See Don Felix Sarda y Salvany: Liberalism is a Sin, chapter 38, for the distinction between the judgment of the individual and that of authority in doctrinal matters. Notice also, for instance, that in his bull *Cum Ex Apostolatus* declaring null any election of a heretic to the papacy, Pope Paul IV invites those who become aware of this nullity to withdraw their obedience from the heretic thus invalidly elected, but in no way censures those who, failing to perceive the reality, remain in his communion.

(4) In evaluating facts, we must above all conform our judgment to objective reality, but St Thomas reminds us that in judging *men*, “we must strive rather to judge them good, unless there be manifest proof of the contrary.” (*Summa Theologiae* : II-II, Q.60, A.4 *responsio ad secundum*)

St Augustine applies the law of charity more explicitly to the case of doctrinal deviation, in the following words: “And yet, if, within the Church, different men still held different opinions on the point, without meanwhile violating peace, then till some one, clear and simple decree should have been passed by a universal council, it would have been right for the charity which seeks for unity to throw a veil over the error of human infirmity, as it is written, ‘For charity covers a multitude of sins.’ *For seeing that its* [sc. charity’s] *absence causes the presence of all other things to be of no avail, we may well suppose that in its presence there is found pardon for the absence of some missing things.*” (*On Baptism, against the Donatists*, bk. 1)

(5) “The intention not to submit to ecclesiastical authority is necessary and sufficient to constitute pertinacity against the faith.” (Suarez: *Opera*, XII, p.474, ed. Vivès) Numerous authors could be cited to confirm the simple truth that when a baptised person *knowingly* denies a doctrine of divine and Catholic faith, he is deemed a heretic in the external forum. In the internal forum, in some cases, indeed he may be innocent of the sin of heresy — perhaps he was acting in consequence of mental illness, grave fear or under the influence of narcotics. Perhaps, if brought up outside the Church, he is simply unaware of the duty of submission to the Magisterium. In these hypotheses the *sin* of heresy is not committed. But in the eyes of the Church, the person involved is not one of her children. He is deemed a heretic for all practical purposes. (See Card. Billot: *De Ecclesia*, 4th ed., p. 289-90, and canon E. J. Mahoney, writing in *The Clergy Review* 1952, vol. XXXVII, p.459 where the subject is analyzed in detail.)

(6) “Clear words call for obedience, not interpretation.” Cf. St Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 120, a. 1, resp. ad tertium.

(7) And this paradoxical hypothesis of an apostle or an angel from heaven preaching a false gospel — is it not an image of the paradox of our days: “the heretical pope”?

So, to sum this part, Tom, a simple analogy. If I see a guy murder his wife across the street from me, do I need the local judge (assuming he is not corrupt!) to tell me to stay

away from him? Keep in mind, it was a layman in the pews who called out Nestorius at a Mass for his heresy.

Galatians 1:8-9 [8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. [9] As we said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema.

So now we come to the crux of the matter.

John Paul II, *Angelus Address*, Oct. 12, 1986: **"In a few days we shall go to Assisi, representatives of the Catholic Church, of other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities, and of the great religions of the world... I issued this invitation to 'believers of all religions.'"**

On Oct. 27, 1986, John Paul II prayed with over 100 different religious leaders of various false religions, thereby repudiating the teaching of Scripture and the 2000-year teaching of the Catholic Church outlawing prayer with false religions. The entire day of prayer with the pagans, infidels, and heretics was Antipope John Paul II's idea and they came at his invitation. During this meeting, the Dalai Lama placed a Buddhist statue on the tabernacle in the Church of St. Francis. Among the various false religious leaders at Assisi, there were rabbis, Islamic muftis, Buddhist monks, Shintoists, assorted Protestant ministers, Animists, Jainists and others. During the meeting, a member of each false religion came forward and offered a prayer for peace. (I have provided the photos before to you in the past.)

Benedict XVI, *Message*, Sept. 2, 2006: **"This year is the 20th anniversary of the Interreligious Meeting of Prayer for Peace, desired by my venerable Predecessor John Paul II on 27 October 1986 in Assisi. It is well known that he did not only invite Christians of various denominations to this Meeting but also the exponents of different religions.** It constituted a vibrant message furthering peace and an event that left its mark on the history of our time attestations of the close bond that exists between the relationship with God and the ethics of love are recorded in all great religious traditions.

"Among the features of the 1986 Meeting, it should be stressed that this value of *prayer* in building peace was testified to by the **representatives of different religious traditions**, and this did not happen at a distance but in the context of a meeting... We are in greater need of this dialogue than ever... I am glad, therefore, that the initiatives planned in Assisi this year are along these lines and, in particular, that the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has had the idea of applying them in a special way for young people.... I gladly take this opportunity to greet the representatives of **other religions** who are taking part in one or other of the Assisi commemorations. Like us Christians, **they know that in prayer it is possible to have a special experience of God** and to draw from it effective incentives for dedication to the cause of peace." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Sept. 13, 2006, p. 3.)

And what was the impetus of why JP II did this in 1986? To what did he point?

Two months after the 1986 Assisi event, in a Christmas speech to his Cardinals published in the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano*, John Paul II said, "The day of Assisi, showing the Catholic Church holding hands with our brothers of other religions, *was a visible expression of [the] statements of the Second Vatican Council.*"

"The event of Assisi" he said, "can thus be considered as a visible illustration, an exegesis of events, a catechesis intelligible to all, of what is presupposed and signified by the commitments to ecumenism and to the inter-religious dialogue *which was recommended and promoted by the Second Vatican Council.*"

This is professed by the accepted Vicar of Christ, the ultimate competent authority in all things in regards to faith and morals, who was there at the council and participated in the construction of the documents. I would hope we all agree Assisi was scandalous. He is telling us what VII intended. Prayer with non Catholics is a grave and mortal sin condemned by Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the many, many teachings of popes and councils. Paul VI, who signed the VII documents, without which they would've been meaningless because he was the pontiff, tells us that this was an act of the Universal Magisterium.

Paul VI in a general audience of 12th January 1966: "In view of the pastoral nature of the Council, it avoided any extraordinary statements of dogmas endowed with the note of infallibility but it still provided its teaching *with the authority of the Ordinary Magisterium* which must be accepted with docility according to the mind of the Council concerning the nature and aims of each document."

As I demonstrated above what is Magisterial teaching, and demonstrating the post VII clergy clearly teaching that their actions are the manifestation of what VII called for and for all to do, I now present Magisterial pre Vatican II teaching on this matter.

Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* (# 2), Jan. 6, 1928: "For which reason conventions, meetings and addresses are frequently arranged by these persons, at which a large number of listeners are present, and at which all without distinction are invited to join in the discussion, both infidels of every kind, and Christians... Certainly such attempts *can no wise be approved by Catholics*, founded as they are on that false opinion which considers all religions to be more or less good and praiseworthy... Not only are those who hold this opinion in error and deceived, *but also in distorting the idea of true religion they reject it...*"

Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* (# 10): "So, Venerable Brethren, it is clear why *this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics...*"

"Those who hold such a view fall into an open error; they also reject the true Religion; they distort its tenets and fall gradually into Naturalism and Atheism. Therefore, it is perfectly evident that one who joins with the partisans and propagators of similar doctrine **abandons entirely the divinely revealed Religion.**"

This is the very theological definition of Apostasy!

Pius XI was reiterating the already defined teaching from a prior Ecumenical council, which is an act of the Extraordinary Magisterium and other authoritative sources.

"If any ecclesiastic or layman shall go into the synagogue of the Jews or to the meeting-houses of the heretics to join in prayer with them, let them be deposed and deprived of communion. If any bishop or priest or deacon shall join in prayer with heretics, let him be suspended from communion. (III Council of Constantinople)"

"No one shall pray in common with heretics and schismatics." (Council of Laodicea)"

"We decree that those who give credence to the teachings of the heretics, as well as those who receive, defend or patronize them, are excommunicated. [...] If anyone refuses to avoid such accomplices after they have been ostracized by the Church, let them also be excommunicated." (IV Lateran Council)

"That Christians and ecclesiastics should pray for Christian unity under the direction of heretics and, what is worse, according to an intention which is radically impregnated and vitiated with heresy, is absolutely impossible to tolerate!" (Pope Pius IX)

"One must neither pray nor sing psalms with heretics, and whoever shall communicate with those who are cut off from the communion of the Church, whether clergy or layman: let him be excommunicated." (Council of Carthage)

I could cite almost countless sources from saints, doctors and patristic fathers that reiterate the same. I will point to just a few.

"To know whom to avoid is a great means of saving our souls. [...] Thus, the Church forbids the faithful to communicate with those unbelievers who have forsaken the faith by corrupting it, such as heretics, or by renouncing it, such as apostates." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

"Wherefore, since outside the Catholic Church there is nothing perfect, nothing undefiled, the Apostle declaring that "all that is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23), we are in no way likened with those who are divided from the unity of the Body of Christ; we are joined in no communion." (Pope St. Leo the Great)

"There are some, you know, who are accustomed to go around with the Name [of Christ] on their lips while they indulge in certain practices at variance with It and an insult to God. You must shun these men as you would wild beasts: they are rabid dogs that bite in secret; you must beware of them!" (St. Ignatius of Antioch)

"Whoever is separated from the Church must be avoided and fled from; such a man is wrong-headed; he is a sinner and self-condemned. [...] But if some of the leaders of schism persist in their blind and obstinate foolishness, and if advice for their own good fails to bring them back to the way of salvation, let the rest of you [...] break away from their ensnaring falsehood. [...] One must withdraw from those who are engaged in sin; rather, one must fly from them, lest by joining in their evil course and thus taking the wrong road, one should [...] become involved in the same guilt oneself." (St. Cyprian, Church Father)

Was this something they invented?

"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with different seeds, lest both the seed that thou hast sown and the fruit of the vineyard be sanctified together." (Deut 22:9)

"And the good seed are the children of the kingdom; and the cockle are the children of the wicked one." (St. Matthew 13:38)

"Do not work together with unbelievers, for what does justice have in common with injustice?" (II Cor 6:14)

I think I have sufficiently demonstrated that what I have presented is not personal opinions. This is clear and easy to understand Catholic teaching. The actions of the post Vatican II church are clear to see and they have made no secret about it, so there isn't some mysterious, esoteric way of understanding of what these actions and words mean and make it line up with prior Church teaching.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, Prefect of Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity: **"... today we no longer understand ecumenism in the sense of a return, by which the others would 'be converted' and return to being Catholics. This was expressly abandoned by Vatican II."** (*Adista*, Feb. 26, 2001)

Conclusion

The Church cannot say with her supreme authority that what was once a mortal sin is now recommended for all to do (praying with non-Catholics like at Assisi and participating in false worship). I think you would agree that that would be the height of absurdity. Not to mention it would mean she had defected from her divine commission as well as make a mockery of the Holy Ghost.

There is so much more I can say about this, but I think I have drilled far enough down on just this issue, false Ecumenism, to demonstrate that I do not deny Catholic teaching like Protestants, nor do I interpret by my own authority anything contained above. I submit to all Church teaching, and many times I fail. I merely parrot what Holy Mother Church has so clearly taught. I believe I also have demonstrated what VII adherents clearly and openly admit what it/they adhere to. The above clearly demonstrates that they cannot be reconciled without resorting to a dialectic clearly condemned by Pope St. Pius X. That would be the jettisoning of Thomistic philosophy (which it did) and the embracing of Modernism, which was firmly entrenched in the Church prior to Vatican II, and as he described, the synthesis of all heresies. This one of the reasons that Paul VI got rid of the Oath Against Modernism within the ranks of the clergy. He, and all the post VII claimants to the Chair of St Peter, are of them.

The ecclesiastical ramifications from all of this has been addressed in Church teaching prior to the council. There is a rational, orthodox Catholic response, which I will present to you after your reading of this, if you are still willing to dialogue.