

Benedict XVI Is the True Pope!

October 13, 2019 – 102nd Anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima

Introduction

The metaphysical definition of man is rational animal. Essentially belonging to man are several powers, such as the intellect, will, internal and external senses, and sensory appetites. The exercise (or operation) of these powers include reasoning, consenting, imagining, seeing, and desiring. Now the first intrinsic principle that makes man to be man is his soul (i.e., the substantial form of man). Hence, it is ultimately man's soul that allows for his powers and the exercise of his powers. We have here, then, three distinctions: man's soul, the powers of man's soul, and the exercise of the powers of man's soul. Note, however, and this is critical, that man's soul and the powers of his soul cannot be separated. Where there is man's soul there is *always* the powers of his soul. This is because the powers of man's soul are proper accidents of his soul, that is, the powers of man's soul are part of the essence of his soul. *However*, the *exercise* of the powers of man's soul are *not* part of the essence of his soul. For example, man's soul has the power of sight, but when he is sleeping or if he has some defect in his eyeballs that makes him blind he is not exercising that power of sight. Nevertheless, the power of sight remains. It is only a matter of activating that power and placing it in operation. The same can be said of all the other powers of man's soul. To try to separate man's soul from any of its powers is to make man not man.

Understanding what was written above, let us now analogously look at the office of the papacy. Consider the office of the papacy to be like man's soul, the powers of the office of the papacy to be like the powers of man's soul, and the exercise of the powers of the office of the papacy to be like the exercise of the powers of man's soul. Like man's soul and the powers of his soul, the office of the papacy and the powers of the office of the papacy cannot be separated. Where there is the office of the papacy there are *always* the powers of the office of the papacy. This is because the powers of the office of the papacy are divinely constituted proper accidents of the office of the papacy, that is, the powers of the office of the papacy are part of the essence of the office of the papacy. *However*, like the *exercise* of the powers of man's soul are *not* part of the essence of his soul, the *exercise* of the powers of the office of the papacy are *not* part of the essence of the office of the papacy. For example, a pope that is held captive or is in a coma cannot exercise his powers of teaching, governing, and sanctifying. Nevertheless, the powers of teaching, governing, and sanctifying remain. It is only a matter of activating those powers and placing them in operation. To try to separate the office of the papacy from any of its powers is to make the office of the papacy not the office of the papacy. Using these distinctions, it is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that Pope Benedict XVI's "resignation" on February 11, 2013¹ did not validly effect the loss of the office of the papacy. Therefore, Benedict XVI remains the true pope with all the powers of the office of the papacy.

¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/la/speeches/2013/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20130211_declaratio.html
Also can be found at: https://ecclesiamilitans.com/BenedictXVI_Declaratio_Latin.pdf.

Canon Law, the Office of the Papacy, and the Resignation of a Pope

In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, there is one canon that deals directly with the resignation of a pope:

Can. 332 - §1. Plenam et supremam in Ecclesia potestatem Romanus Pontifex obtinet legitima electione una cum episcopali consecratione. Quare, eandem potestatem obtinet a momento acceptationis electus ad summum pontificatum, qui episcopali caractere insignitus est. Quod si caractere episcopali electus areat, statim ordinetur Episcopus.

§2. Si contingat ut Romanus Pontifex muneri suo renuntiet, ad validitatem requiritur ut renuntiatio libere fiat et rite manifestetur, non vero ut a quopiam acceptetur.²

Can. 332 - §1. The Roman Pontiff acquires full and supreme power in the Church when, together with episcopal consecration, he has been lawfully elected and has accepted the election. Accordingly, if he already has the episcopal character, he receives this power from the moment he accepts election to the supreme pontificate. If he does not have the episcopal character, he is immediately to be ordained Bishop. §2. Should it happen that the Roman Pontiff resigns from his office, it is required for validity that the resignation be freely made and properly manifested, but it is not necessary that it be accepted by anyone.³

Note that in §2 the Latin term “muneri”⁴ is translated as “office” and it is in reference to the office of the papacy. “Officium ecclesiasticum” (ecclesiastical office) itself is defined in the following canon:

Can. 145 - §1. Officium ecclesiasticum est quodlibet munus ordinatione sive divina sive ecclesiastica stabiliter constitutum in finem spiritualem exercendum.

§2. Obligationes et iura singulis officiis ecclesiasticis propria definiuntur sive ipso iure quo officium constituitur, sive decreto auctoritatis competentis quo constituitur simul et confertur.⁵

Can. 145 - §1. An ecclesiastical office is any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose.

§2. The duties and rights proper to each ecclesiastical office are defined either by the law whereby the office is established, or by a decree of the competent authority whereby it is at one and at the same time established and conferred.⁶

Note that in §1 the term “munus” is in the very definition of “officium ecclesiasticum” (ecclesiastical office) and is translated as “post”. In this case, it is proper that the term “munus” not be directly translated as “office” because then “office” would be used in the very definition of “ecclesiastical office” and would hence make for a poor definition. The key point is that “munus” is the term chosen for the Latin definition of “officium ecclesiasticum” and it is also the term chosen for referring to the office of the papacy in §2 of Canon 332.

Let us now look at the canon that describes the office of the papacy:

² <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/P15.HTM>. I give the Latin version first because Latin is the official language of the Roman Catholic Church.

³ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/P15.HTM>

⁴ “Muneri” is the dative case (noun as an indirect object) of the noun “munus”, which is the nominative case (noun as a subject or predicate).

⁵ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/PF.HTM>

⁶ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/PF.HTM>

Can. 331 - Ecclesiae Romanae Episcopus, in quo permanet munus a Domino singulariter Petro, primo Apostolorum, concessum et successoribus eius transmittendum, Collegii Episcoporum est caput, Vicarius Christi atque universae Ecclesiae his in terris Pastor; qui ideo vi muneris sui suprema, plena, immediata et universali in Ecclesia gaudet ordinaria potestate, quam semper libere exercere valet.⁷

Can. 331 - The office uniquely committed by the Lord to Peter, the first of the Apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, abides in the Bishop of the Church of Rome. He is the head of the College of Bishops, the Vicar of Christ, and the Pastor of the universal Church here on earth. Consequently, by virtue of his office, he has supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church, and he can always freely exercise this power.⁸

Again we see the term “munus” and now the term “muneris”⁹ chosen for the “office” of the papacy. Also, note that the pope, by *virtue* of his *office*, has supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary *power* in the Church, and he can always *exercise* his *power* freely. This aligns with the distinctions made in the Introduction section of this paper.

Let us now take a look at the definition of “ecclesiastical office” in the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

Can. 145 - §1. Officium ecclesiasticum lato sensu est quodlibet munus quod in spiritualem finem legitime exercetur; stricto autem sensu est munus ordinatione sive divina sive ecclesiastica stabiliter constitutum, ad normam sacrorum canonum conferendum, aliquam saltem secumferens participationem ecclesiasticae potestatis sive ordinis sive iurisdictionis.

§2. In iure officium ecclesiasticum accipitur stricto sensu, nisi aliud ex contextu sermonis appareat.¹⁰

Can. 145 - §1. Ecclesiastical office in the wide sense is any responsibility exercised legitimately for a spiritual end; in the strict sense, however, it is a divinely or ecclesiastically ordered responsibility, constituted in a stable manner, conferred according to the norms of the sacred canons, entailing at least some participation in ecclesiastical power, whether of orders or of jurisdiction.

§2. In law, ecclesiastical office is taken in the strict sense, unless it appears otherwise from the context of the words.¹¹

Note that also in the 1917 Code the term “munus” is in the very definition of “officium ecclesiasticum” (ecclesiastical office), but this time it is translated as “responsibility”. What is most important, however, is that both Codes contain the genus of the office of the papacy in stating in the exact same terms “munus ordinatione sive divina” (i.e., post/responsibility by divine disposition/order). Clearly, then, both Codes use the term “munus” (or any of its Latin cases) when meaning the office of the papacy.

Let us now go back to the canon of the 1983 Code that deals directly with the resignation of a pope:

Can. 332 - §2. Si contingat ut Romanus Pontifex muneri suo renuntiet, ad validitatem requiritur ut renuntiatio libere fiat et rite manifestetur, non vero ut a quopiam acceptetur.

⁷ http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/_P15.HTM

⁸ http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/_P15.HTM

⁹ “Muneris” is the genitive case (noun as possessive) of “munus”.

¹⁰ https://ecclesiamilitans.com/1917_Code_of_Canon_Law_Latin.pdf

¹¹ Peters, Edward N. *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law: In English Translation with Extensive Scholarly Apparatus*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001.p.72

Can. 332 - §2. Should it happen that the Roman Pontiff resigns from his office, it is required for validity that the resignation be freely made and properly manifested, but it is not necessary that it be accepted by anyone.

The following are the key elements I want to emphasize:

“Should it happen that the Roman Pontiff resigns from his *office* (muneri), it is *required for validity* that the resignation be.....*properly manifested*.....”¹²

If a pope resigns, then, from his office, he must properly manifest his intention that he is doing such. Otherwise, the resignation is invalid, that is, it does not take place and thus the man performing the act remains pope. Note also that the mind of the legislator of this law expresses that a resignation by a pope *only* consists in resignation from the *office* of the papacy. Therefore, if the man performing the act were to state, “I resign the *exercise* of the powers of the office of the papacy.” It would not be valid. Even if he were to state, “I resign the *powers* of the office of the papacy.” It would still not be valid. The resignation can *only* be the resignation of the office of the papacy for the act to valid. Furthermore, there cannot be a *partial* resignation of the office of the papacy. It must a complete (i.e., 100%) resignation of the office of the papacy or none at all. The following canon makes it clear that laws must be interpreted according to the proper meaning of the words:

Can. 17 - Leges ecclesiasticae intellegendae sunt secundum propriam verborum significationem in textu et contextu consideratam; quae si dubia et obscura manserit, ad locos parallelos, si qui sint, ad legis finem ac circumstantias et ad mentem legislatoris est recurrendum.¹³

Can. 17 - Ecclesiastical laws are to be understood according to the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context. If the meaning remains doubtful or obscure, there must be recourse to parallel places, if there be any, to the purpose and circumstances of the law, and to the mind of the legislator.¹⁴

Some of you reading this paper at this point may protest, “But the pope is above canon law and thus he can say or do whatever he wants to effect a valid resignation of the office of the papacy.” This is not true. When the man who is pope decides to resign the office of the papacy, he is a subject of the law during his act of resignation. If he does not like the law, he can change it before he performs the act of resignation.

Another canon of the 1983 Code that deals with resignations from offices in general is the following:

Can. 188 - Renuntiatio ex metu gravi, iniuste incusso, dolo vel errore substantiali aut simoniace facta, ipso iure irrita est.¹⁵

Can. 188 - A resignation which is made as a result of grave fear unjustly inflicted, or of deceit, or of substantial error, or of simony, is invalid by virtue of the law itself.¹⁶

The following are the key elements I want to emphasize:

¹² The more precise English translation of “renuntiet” is “renounces”. Nevertheless, the term “resigns” suffices.

¹³ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/P2.HTM>

¹⁴ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/P2.HTM>

¹⁵ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/PM.HTM>

¹⁶ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/PM.HTM>

“A resignation which is made as a result of.....substantial error.....is invalid by virtue of the law itself.”

Therefore, if, for example, there is a substantial error in the meaning of the terms one uses during his act of resignation (e.g., using terms that mean something different than the ones defined in canon law) and he thinks that they effect a valid resignation, then the resignation is invalid by virtue of the law itself.

Before we end this section, there is another canon of the 1983 Code that is worth mentioning because of its signification regarding the relationship between an office and the powers of that office:

Can. 131 - §1. Potestas regiminis ordinaria ea est, quae ipso iure alicui officio adnectitur; delegata, quae ipsi personae non mediante officio conceditur.¹⁷

Can. 131 - §1. Ordinary power of governance is that which by virtue of the law itself is attached to a given office; delegated power is that which is granted to a person other than through an office.¹⁸

Again we see here, as we saw above in Canon 331, that “power” is attached to an “office”. The power attached to an office may be delegated, but he who occupies that office rightly possesses that power and may therefore withdraw it from the delegate.

The Declaratio of Pope Benedict XVI

On February 11, 2013, it is alleged that Pope Benedict XVI declared his resignation from the office of the papacy. The following is the full text in Latin as read by him:

“Fratres carissimi

“Non solum propter tres canonizationes ad hoc Consistorium vos convocavi, sed etiam ut vobis decisionem magni momenti pro Ecclesiae vita communicem. Conscientia mea iterum atque iterum coram Deo explorata ad cognitionem certam perveni vires meas ingravescente aetate non iam aptas esse ad munus Petrinum aequè administrandum.

“Bene conscius sum hoc munus secundum suam essentiam spiritualem non solum agendo et loquendo exsequi debere, sed non minus patiendo et orando. Attamen in mundo nostri temporis rapidis mutationibus subiecto et quaestionibus magni ponderis pro vita fidei perturbato ad navem Sancti Petri gubernandam et ad annuntiandum Evangelium etiam vigor quidam corporis et animae necessarius est, qui ultimis mensibus in me modo tali minuitur, ut incapacitatem meam ad ministerium mihi commissum bene administrandum agnoscere debeam. Quapropter bene conscius ponderis huius actus plena libertate declaro me ministerio Episcopi Romae, Successoris Sancti Petri, mihi per manus Cardinalium die 19 aprilis MMV commisso renuntiare ita ut a die 28 februarii MMXIII, hora 20, sedes Romae, sedes Sancti Petri vacet et Conclave ad eligendum novum Summum Pontificem ab his quibus competit convocandum esse.

“Fratres carissimi, ex toto corde gratias ago vobis pro omni amore et labore, quo mecum pondus ministerii mei portastis et veniam peto pro omnibus defectibus meis. Nunc autem Sanctam Dei Ecclesiam curae Summi eius Pastoris, Domini nostri Iesu Christi confidimus sanctamque eius Matrem Mariam imploramus, ut patribus Cardinalibus in eligendo novo Summo Pontifice materna sua bonitate assistat. Quod ad me attinet etiam in futuro vita orationi dedicata Sanctae Ecclesiae Dei toto ex corde servire velim.”

¹⁷ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/ PE.HTM>

¹⁸ <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/ PE.HTM>

Ex Aedibus Vaticanis, die 10 mensis februarii MMXIII¹⁹

The following is the English translation, which is more faithful to the Latin text and more in accordance with the meaning of the terms used in the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law than the translation issued by the Vatican, provided by the Franciscan Br. Alexis Bugnolo, member of Veri Catholici²⁰:

“Not only for the three canonizations have I called you to this Consistory, but also so that I may communicate to you a decision of great moment for the life of the Church. Having explored my conscience again and again before the Lord, I have arrived at certain recognition that with my advancing age my strengths are no longer apt for equitably administering the Petrine Office [munus Petrinum].

“I am well aware that this office [munus], according to its spiritual essence, ought to be exercised not only by acting and speaking, but no less than by suffering and praying. Moreover, in the world of our time, subjected to rapid changes and perturbed by questions of great weight for the life of faith, there is more necessary to steer the Barque of Saint Peter and to announce the Gospel a certain vigor, which in recent months has lessened in me in such a manner, that I should acknowledge my incapacity to administer well the ministry [ministerium] committed to me. On which account, well aware of the weightiness of this act, I declare in full liberty, that I renounce the ministry [ministerio] of the Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, committed to me through the hands of the Cardinals on April 19, 2005, so that on February 28, 2013, at 20:00 Roman Time [Sedes Romae], the see of Saint Peter be vacant, and that a Conclave to elect a new Supreme Pontiff be convoked by those whose duty it is [ab quibus competit].

“Dearest brothers, I thank you with my whole heart for every love and work, by which you bore with me the weight of my ministry [ministerii], and I ask pardon for all my failings. Moreover, now We confide God’s Holy Church to the care of Her Most High Shepherd, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and We implore His Mother, Mary, to assist with Her maternal goodness the Cardinal fathers in electing a new Supreme Pontiff. In my own regard, I wish to serve in the future by a life of prayer dedicated to the Holy Church with my whole heart.”

[From the halls of the Vatican, Feb. 10, 2013]²¹

The first thing to note is that Pope Benedict XVI twice uses the term “munus” in reference to the office of the papacy. At the end of the first paragraph, he states “munus Petrinum” (Petrine Office) and in the beginning of the second paragraph he states “hoc munus” (this office), thereby referring to what he had just finished stating in the previous paragraph. The use of the term “munus” in these two instances is consistent with both the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law when the two Codes use the term “munus” (or any of its Latin cases) when meaning the office of the papacy.

The second thing to note is that at the end of the first paragraph Pope Benedict XVI implicitly makes a distinction between the *exercise* of the *powers* of the office of the papacy and the *office* of the papacy itself when he states, “.....I have arrived at certain recognition that with my advancing age my strengths are no longer apt for equitably *administering the Petrine Office.*” Now keep in mind here what I said earlier that the powers of the office of the papacy are part of the essence of the office of the papacy. Therefore, they cannot be separated. So when Pope Benedict XVI speaks of “administering the Petrine Office”, but without

¹⁹ See Footnote 1.

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/VeriCatholici>

²¹ <https://fromrome.wordpress.com/2018/11/23/litteral-english-translation-of-benedict-xvis-discourse-on-feb-11-2013-a-d/>
Also can be found at: https://ecclesiamilitans.com/Br._Bugnolo_Declaratio_Translation_English.pdf.

explicitly mentioning the “powers” of the office of the papacy, you must read that the *administering* is the *exercise* of the *powers* of the office of the papacy. The term “administrandum” itself signifies this.

The third thing to note is that in the beginning of the second paragraph Pope Benedict XVI speaks about the spiritual essence of the office of the papacy and how it ought to be exercised (keeping in mind again the proper distinctions). He states that the spiritual essence of the office of the papacy is exercised by “acting and speaking, but no less than by suffering and praying”. He therefore breaks down the exercise of the office of the papacy into two parts: an active part (i.e., acting and speaking) and a passive part (i.e., suffering and praying).

The fourth thing to note is that Pope Benedict XVI states that it is more necessary in our time to “steer the Barque of Peter and to announce the Gospel with a certain vigor, which in recent months has lessened in” him “in such a manner, that” he “should acknowledge” his “incapacity to administer well the ministry (ministerium) committed to” him. Now if we read again the end of the first paragraph, Pope Benedict XVI states that his “strengths are no longer apt for equitably *administering the Petrine Office (munum Petrinum)*”, which he breaks down in the beginning of the second paragraph into active and passive parts. However, in the middle of the second paragraph he changes it to the “incapacity to *administer well the ministry (ministerium)*”. He does this after speaking about it being necessary to “steer the Barque of Peter (acting = exercise of the power of governing) and to announce the Gospel (speaking = exercise of the power of teaching) with a certain vigor”. This shift in focus brings to the forefront the *active* part (i.e., acting and speaking) of the exercise of the office of the papacy and is a preparation for what he is about to renounce.

The fifth thing to note is that right after speaking about the *active* part (i.e., acting and speaking, steering the Barque of Peter and announcing the Gospel, governing and teaching) of the exercise of the office of the papacy Pope Benedict XVI declares what he renounces, that is, “.....**I declare in full liberty, that I renounce the *ministry [ministerio] of the Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter.....***”

The sixth thing to note is that Pope Benedict XVI believes that the renunciation of the *ministry (ministerium)* of the Bishop of Rome, Successor of Peter, vacates the see of St. Peter.

The seventh thing to note is that in the last paragraph Pope Benedict XVI ends his Declaratio stating, “In my own regard, I wish to serve in the future by a *life of prayer* dedicated to the Holy Church with my whole heart.” By this statement Pope Benedict XVI indicates his desire to serve in a passive manner.

Conclusions Drawn from the Analysis of the Declaratio

The following conclusions are drawn from the analysis of Pope Benedict XVI’s Declaratio:

1. Pope Benedict XVI did not resign from the office (munus) of the papacy.

Canon 332 §2 requires a resignation from the office (munus) of the papacy and that the resignation formula properly manifest that resignation from the office (munus) of the papacy. This is absent in the Declaratio. As a matter of fact, the Declaratio manifests Benedict XVI’s intention by expressing the intention to *not* renounce the office (munus).

2. Pope Benedict XVI renounced only the active part of the exercise of the powers of the office of the papacy.

If Pope Benedict XVI intended to renounce both the active and passive parts of the exercise of the powers of the office of the papacy, he could have simply stated, “I renounce the office of the papacy.” However, it is only the *active* exercise of the ministry that he “acknowledge(d) (his) incapacity to administer well”. This conclusion is the one that follows from Pope Benedict XVI’s presentation and line of reasoning as shown above. His renunciation, then, could be read as if it were stated as, “I renounce the *exercise* of the *power* of governing of the *office* of the papacy”. “Governing” in this sense includes the powers of teaching, governing, and sanctifying. Nevertheless, even if it were stated as this, the office (*munus*) and all its powers would remain with Pope Benedict XVI.

In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the term “ministry” (*ministerium*) is not defined. However, it is typically used to mean the execution/exercise/operation of some activity. The following is an example:

Can. 41 - Exsecutor actus administrativi cui committitur merum exsecutionis ministerium, exsecutionem huius actus denegare non potest, nisi manifesto appareat eundem actum esse nullum aut alia ex gravi causa sustineri non posse aut condiciones in ipso actu administrativo appositas non esse adimpletas; si tamen actus administrativi exsecutio adiunctorum personae aut loci ratione videatur inopportuna, exsecutor exsecutionem intermittat; quibus in casibus statim certiolem faciat auctoritatem quae actum edidit.²²

Can. 41 - The executor of an administrative act to whom the task of execution only is entrusted, cannot refuse to execute it, unless it is quite clear that the act itself is null, or that it cannot for some other grave reason be sustained, or that the conditions attached to the administrative act itself have not been fulfilled. If, however, the execution of the administrative act would appear to be inopportune, by reason of the circumstances of person or place, the executor is to desist from the execution, and immediately inform the person who issued the act.²³

Note that “exsecutionis ministerium” is translated as “task of execution”. It is a fair translation given the meaning of the text within the context of the canon.

Here is another example:

Can. 230 - §1. Viri laici, qui aetate dotibusque pollent Episcoporum conferentiae decreto statutis, per ritum liturgicum praescriptum ad ministeria lectoris et acolythi stabiliter assumi possunt; quae tamen ministeriorum collatio eisdem ius non confert ad sustentationem remunerationemve ab Ecclesia praestandam.

§2. Laici ex temporanea deputatione in actionibus liturgicis munus lectoris implere possunt; item omnes laici muneribus commentatoris, cantoris aliisque ad normam iuris fungi possunt.

§3. Ubi Ecclesiae necessitas id suadeat, deficientibus ministris, possunt etiam laici, etsi non sint lectores vel acolythi, quaedam eorundem officia supplere, videlicet ministerium verbi exercere, precibus liturgicis praeesse, baptismum conferre atque sacram Communionem distribuere, iuxta iuris praescriptas.²⁴

²² http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/_P5.HTM

²³ http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/_P5.HTM

²⁴ http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0010/_PU.HTM

Can. 230 - §1. Lay men whose age and talents meet the requirements prescribed by decree of the Episcopal Conference, can be given the stable ministry of lector and of acolyte, through the prescribed liturgical rite. This conferral of ministry does not, however, give them a right to sustenance or remuneration from the Church.

§2. Lay people can receive a temporary assignment to the role of lector in liturgical actions. Likewise, all lay people can exercise the roles of commentator, cantor or other such, in accordance with the law.

§3. Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of their functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer baptism and distribute Holy Communion, in accordance with the provisions of the law.²⁵

Note, for example, that “ministerial lectoris et acolythi” is translated as “ministry of lector and acolyte” and “videlicet ministerium verbi exercere” is translated as “exercise of the ministry of the word”. Once again, these are fair translations given the meaning of the text within the context of the canon.²⁶

These uses of the term “ministerium” (and its Latin cases) signify an “active” ministry and are therefore consonant with what Pope Benedict XVI renounced in his Declaratio. However, the term “ministerium” (and all of its Latin cases) is never used in the 1983 Code to signify the “munus” (office) of the papacy.

Further evidence, albeit non-essential because the Declaratio speaks for itself, that the use of term “ministry” in Pope Benedict XVI’s renunciation means the “active” part of the exercise of the powers of the office of the papacy can be found in his last general audience of February 27, 2013. The following is the passage of interest (emphasis mine; words in brackets mine):

“Here, **allow me to go back once again to 19 April 2005** (i.e., the date he accepted the office of the papacy). The real gravity of the decision was also due to the fact that **from that moment on I was engaged always and forever by the Lord. Always – anyone who accepts the Petrine ministry no longer has any privacy.** He belongs always and completely to everyone, to the whole Church. In a manner of speaking, the private dimension of his life is completely eliminated. I was able to experience, and I experience it even now, that one receives one’s life precisely when one gives it away. Earlier I said that many people who love the Lord also love the Successor of Saint Peter and feel great affection for him; that the Pope truly has brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, throughout the world, and that he feels secure in the embrace of your communion; because he no longer belongs to himself, he belongs to all and all belong to him.

“**The ‘always’ is also a ‘for ever’ – there can no longer be a return to the private sphere. My decision to resign the active exercise of the ministry does not revoke this** (i.e., his commitment to the office of the papacy). I do not return to private life, to a life of travel, meetings, receptions, conferences, and so on. I am not abandoning the cross, but remaining in a new way at the side of the crucified Lord. I no longer bear the power of office for the governance of the Church, but in the service of prayer I remain, so to speak, in the enclosure of Saint Peter. Saint Benedict, whose name I bear as Pope, will be a great example for me in this. He showed us the way for a life which, **whether active or passive**, is completely given over to the work of God.”²⁷

²⁵ http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/_PU.HTM

²⁶ I want to make clear that I do NOT agree with some of the activities that this canon allows, such as lay people distributing Holy Communion.

²⁷ http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2013/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20130227.html

Also can be found at: https://ecclesiamilitans.com/2013_02_27_BenedictXVI_General_Audience.pdf

3. That the see of St. Peter is vacated with the renunciation of the ministry is a substantial error.

A renunciation of the office (munus) of the papacy is required for the see of Peter to become vacant. Since Pope Benedict XVI did not renounce the office (munus) of the papacy, but only the ministry (ministerium), his vacating of the see of Peter was based on a substantial error. Therefore, in virtue of Canon 188, his resignation was invalid.

Let us bring forth again the key elements of Canon 188 that pertain to this:

“A resignation which is made as a result of.....substantial error.....is invalid by virtue of the law itself.”

Conclusion of Paper

In his Declaratio of February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI renounced only the active ministry (ministerium) of the office (munus) of the papacy. This did not validly effect the loss of office (munus) of the papacy. Therefore:

Benedict XVI is the true pope!

+ FOR THE REIGN OF THE SACRED AND IMMACULATE HEARTS! +

Further Recommended Reading

1. To Deceive the Elect by Fr. Paul Kramer. <http://todeceivetheelect.us/>
2. Quaestio Disputata by Br. Alexis Bugnolo. <https://www.ppbxvi.org/quaestio-English.pdf>
3. The Resignation of Benedict XVI: Between History, Law and Conscience by Fr. Stefano Violi. <https://archive.fatima.org/news/newsviews/newsviews031315.pdf>