

The fundamental differences in position between Fr. Giorgio Maria Faré and journalist Dr. Andrea Cionci

Fr. Giorgio Maria Faré



THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN POSITION
BETWEEN FR. GIORGIO MARIA FARÉ AND JOURNALIST DR. ANDREA CIONCI

In his YouTube video titled “‘The Vatican Can No Longer Ignore the Question of the Sede Impedita’: John Westen’s Article” dated April 15, 2026¹ Andrea Cionci downplayed the differences between my positions and his with these words:

“Here, I had pointed out to John Westen the need to specify that Father Faré and Don Cornet hold different views on secondary aspects, even though they agree on the sede impedita.”

And again:

“Well, yes, setting aside the differences on other issues—the lawfulness of the sacraments, the possibility of participating, and things like that—Don Cornet, Father Faré, and I all agree on the sede impedita of Benedict XVI.”

I feel it is necessary to provide a summary of the main differences between my views and those of Dr. Andrea Cionci, because they are anything but “minor.”

1. Participation in the sacraments “*una cum*”

Dr. Cionci seems to underestimate the gravity of our difference of position regarding the sacraments. As a theologian, I affirm that this is by far the most important divergence, because the salvation of souls is closely linked to it.

I will limit myself here to addressing the issue from a general perspective. For a detailed analysis and refutation of Dr. Cionci’s claims, I refer you to the YouTube videos in which I have extensively addressed the topic and to the written texts I have made public².

¹<https://youtu.be/OawupXXU5Sg?si=uYsi9WK4x9n4X1W2>

² GIORGIO MARIA FARÉ, *The Eucharistic Miracle of Moncada – The Validity of the Sacraments During the Great Western Schism* (July 27, 2025); *Remaining in the Church – Fidelity to the Eucharist in Times of Trial* (July 30, 2025); *AD VALIDITATEM – The Sacraments Are Valid* (August 6, 2025).

Dr. Cionci believes that the faithful should avoid sacraments celebrated “*una cum*,” that is, by priests who mention the name of Leo (preceding that of Francis) in the Eucharistic Prayer. He believes that, since these sacraments are illicit, the faithful are morally excused from the festive precept and that, indeed, they would be guilty if they participated in them.

From the very beginning of my preaching on topics related to *the Declaration*, that is, since October 13, 2024, I have always opposed those who urge the faithful to reject sacraments celebrated “*una cum*” (I use this expression for brevity) and, in general, by priests who consider Benedict XVI’s resignation valid.

And this is for several reasons.

The first is that those sacraments are valid.

The validity of the sacraments, in fact, is based on the objectivity of *the potestas ordinis* of the ordained minister and not on his belonging to the legitimate “canonical jurisdiction.” St. Thomas teaches that even heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated persons validly consecrate if they have been validly ordained³.

Further confirmation comes from the Miracle of Moncada, which occurred during the Great Western Schism. This Eucharistic miracle took place precisely to confirm a priest who doubted the validity of the Masses he celebrated, given that there was doubt as to who the true Pope was. The priest in question did indeed belong to the Avignonese sphere of obedience (and was therefore under the antipope Clement VII) and had been consecrated by a bishop appointed by Clement VII. The miracle reassures us of the validity of the Eucharistic consecration, despite human uncertainties regarding the authority of the consecrating bishop and papal obedience.

The second reason is that, in the absence of an official pronouncement by the Church, even if the sacraments were illicit, no sin would be committed by participating in them. St. Thomas already affirmed this, speaking even of excommunicated persons, heretics, and schismatics: “Therefore, until the Church’s judgment, it is lawful to receive Communion from them and to attend their Mass”⁴. Here St. Thomas is very clear: the prohibition on participation applies only to celebrations presided over by persons condemned by a formal sentence of the Church, and this is clearly not our case.

³ THOMASAQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 82, a. 7, co.

⁴ THOMASAQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 82, a. 9, co.

The third reason is of a pastoral nature: given that the overwhelming majority of priests consider Benedict XVI's resignation to be valid, in reality the position of Dr. Cionci and others amounts to completely depriving large segments of the People of God of the sacraments. This is terrible and unacceptable. Over the past year and a half, I have encountered lives destroyed, souls suffering enormously because of their exclusion from the sacraments. Parents who died without the Anointing of the Sick or Viaticum, children left without First Communion, devout people who had not gone to confession for years!

What I have always strongly affirmed is that the faithful must participate in validly celebrated sacraments, and this is the most important criterion to follow.

This distinction is fundamental and vital; it is the one I, as a theologian, consider most important, and it cannot in any way be dismissed as a "secondary aspect."

2. The translation of the *Declaratio*

A second point of disagreement concerns the translation of *the *Declaratio** proposed by Dr. Cionci.

This is the Latin version delivered by Benedict XVI during the Consistory of February 11, 2013:

«*Quapropter bene conscius ponderis huius actus, plena libertate, declaro me ministerio Episcopi Romae, Successoris Sancti Petri, mihi per manus Cardinalium die 19 aprilis MMV commissum 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*
»

There is a grammatical error in the text pronounced by the Pontiff: "commissum" should have been "commisso" to agree with "*ministerio*."

In the Vatican's official transcript and its translation, in fact, "commisso" was written, which agrees with "ministerio" and translates as follows:

"For this reason, fully aware of the gravity of this act, and of my own free will, I declare that I renounce the office of Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on April 19, 2005, so that, as of February 28, 2013, at 8:00 p.m., the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and the Conclave for the election of the new Supreme Pontiff must be convened by those to whom it pertains."

Dr. Cionci, on the other hand, focused on the version spoken by Benedict XVI, seeking at all costs to preserve the term “*commisum*.” The result is a translation that strains the style and structure of Latin—both classical and ecclesiastical—reintroduces rare constructions and meanings, and sounds bizarre even in Italian. This translation was carried out by Prof. Matteo Corrias⁵:

“For these reasons, fully aware of the gravity of this act, I freely declare that I renounce, to my own detriment, the office of Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter, due to the misdeed of a handful of cardinals on April 19, 2005, to the extent that as of February 28, 2013, at the twentieth hour, the See of Rome, the See of St. Peter shall remain vacant, and I declare that a Conclave is to be convened for the election of a new Supreme Pontiff by those to whom it pertains.”

Based on this translation, Dr. Cionci began to advocate an interpretation of *the Declaratio* as a judicial ruling of determination (a “judgment”) by which the Pontiff denounced and sanctioned an alleged ecclesiastical coup d’état.

According to the authors of the study underlying this interpretation (Attorneys Antonacci and Settesoldi), the term “*Declaratio*” should not be understood as a mere statement of intent, but in a technical-legal sense as a decision-making act of mere determination. Benedict XVI, acting as supreme judge, would have “ascertained” the existence of criminal conduct on the part of a faction of cardinals, making public the *latae sententiae* penalties they would have incurred.

I disagree entirely with both this translation and the legal interpretation built upon it. I consider both to be extremely far-fetched.

3. Benedict XVI “placed himself in a position of impeded jurisdiction”

Dr. Cionci insists on the legal term “*sede impedita*” in reference to Benedict XVI’s status following the *Declaratio*. The expression he frequently uses is: “Benedict XVI has placed himself in a state of *sede impedita*.” I have repeatedly pointed out that this expression is a contradiction in terms. The Apostolic See is impeded when the Pope is in a condition (due, for example, to imprisonment or the loss of his mental faculties) that makes it impossible for him to govern the Church. It cannot be a condition voluntarily sought by the Pope, otherwise one could not speak of an “impediment.”

⁵ Dr. Cionci also attributes the translation to Prof. Rodolfo Funari, who, however, when I asked him about it, distanced himself from it.

Although I myself initially used the term “Sede impedita” more freely when speaking of Benedict XVI, as my studies progressed, I came to the conclusion that the utmost caution is required in this regard. This is because it is impossible—and it would be dishonest—to claim to know Benedict XVI’s circumstances and intentions.

I have therefore adopted a position limited to stating the facts. On the one hand, I have highlighted the elements that cast doubt on the validity of the *Declaratio* as a renunciation of the Papacy; on the other hand, I have noted that the only legal “status” provided for by canon law for a living Pope who has not abdicated but does not sit on the Chair of Peter is that of “impeded” Pope. My analysis is limited to these observations.