

## CHURCH POLARIZATION or DANGEROUS CONSENSUS?

While Vatican State Secretary, Cardinal Parolin, urges US Catholic Bishops to seek "Profound Consensus," others see the dire danger of a Church moving way too far in exactly that direction.



**Opus Dei-genre Evangelical Catholicism, as described by George Weigel's book, grows daily stronger and more influential globally while Vatican II Catholicism grows continually weaker according to sources below.**

While many believe Church polarization to be looming ever larger as a dangerous threat to Church unity, others alert us to a much greater threat: a dangerous type of theological uniformity underlying every aspect of the ecclesial reality, including doctrine, governance, and liturgy.

### **EVIDENCE FOR UNEQUAL LEVERAGE WITHIN POLARIZED CHURCH**

Speaking from the perspective of the United States, while understanding the influence and spread of OD-genre Evangelical Catholicism worldwide, we offer excerpts from the metadata collected in the National Catholic Reporter article by retired long-time editor of NCR, Tom Roberts:

- “The annual Napa Institute gatherings held at one of Busch's California resorts regularly attracts leading conservative archbishops and cardinals from the U.S. and the Vatican. It is a gathering for those at the upper end of the economic spectrum...”
- “In addition to Acton, the Becket Fund and the Federalist Society, [another high-profile conservative funder] lists as affiliations on his company's website the following: the American Enterprise Institute; Catholic Leadership Institute; EWTN; Ethics and Public Policy Center; FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students); and the Napa Institute. “
- Timothy Busch, speaker at the “Good Profits” conference for high-profile conservative funders at Catholic University, noted **“that big money and the right economic philosophy can bridge deep ideological and theological divides.”**
- A former director of Catholic University's Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies perceives this surge in growth of Catholic nonprofits like the Napa Institute seeing themselves as “the real evangelizing corps in the church” as **providing an alternative structure to the church.**

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/conservative-donors-aim-shape-catholic-narrative-wider-culture>. (Also NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER [Dec. 29, 2017-Jan. 11, 2018](#) print issue under the headline: Money and church)

Theologian and Vatican II expert, Massimo Faggioli, even in his alarm over polarization, sees the dire consequences of heavily weighted polarization for the Church. He blames this type of polarization for the growing one-way consensus of “doing theology”:

“The polarization has changed not only the politics of funding theological initiatives on Catholic campuses. It has also distorted the way of doing theology.

[international.la-croix.com/news/polarization-in-the-church-and-the-crisis-of-the-catholic-mind/6444](https://international.la-croix.com/news/polarization-in-the-church-and-the-crisis-of-the-catholic-mind/6444)

According to Massimo, “**theological polarization** over interpretations of Vatican II,” **IS** the issue of dire concern for the Church...a “self-inflicted wound”...with “clear symptoms that point to a looming epochal crisis for Catholic intellectual life,”...“with no imaginable survival of Catholic theology...” if nothing is done about it.

## **BALANCE IS NOT THE GOAL**

As far as Church polarization is concerned, Massimo also writes in the above article, “Balance alone is no virtue; the truth does not always lie in the middle.” (See link above)

If balance is not the goal...

Rather than “profound consensus,” might Interactive Listening and Challenging Creativity be the goal? A dynamic interaction with the potential to come to new understandings together?

Some might say that profound consensus includes this process.

**Yet, how can interactive listening and creative challenge take place within a context of unequal leverage within the Church?**

## Opus Dei PRELATURE



## WHERE IS THE VATICAN II PRELATURE?

**Without the JURIDICAL status of Prelature,  
Ordinariate, or Church/Rite,  
Vatican II has little if any potential to  
influence the future of the Catholic Church.**

“There are many ways to ‘stifle the Spirit’ and refusal to trust in multiple forms of expression is one of the deadliest.”

Author and theologian Megan McKenna

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