

# The Catholic Catechism on Freemasonry

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Lecture Series on Freemasonry Through the Light of Catholicism

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## Session Six – Etsi Multa

The objective of this sixth lecture is to ground the student in the focus of Pope Pius IX's *Etsi Multi* which was to speak of the dangers of Freemasonry within the context of the culture wars taking place in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Belgium (called Kultrkampf - i.e., culture struggle)

CATHOLIC  
CATECHISM ON  
FREEMASONRY  
LESSON SIX -  
ALTHOUGH MANY

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Etsi Multa

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Historical Background of Papal Encyclical

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Areas of Major Contribution & Legacy

# ETSI MULTA - FAST FACTS

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- **Author:** Blessed Pope Pius IX (1846 – 1878)
- **Promulgated:** at St. Peter's, November 1873
- **Purpose:** Nineteen years after the 'Pope's Masonic Cornerstone Scandal' and twenty-seven years after the beginning of his Papacy, Pope Pius IX promulgated *Etsi Multi*, in which he outlined all the dangers that were threatening the Catholic Church from within and from without in Europe; included in this litany of dangers is Freemasonry.
- The primary issue being addressed in this encyclical is Kulturkampf (i.e., culture struggle), which was a sweeping series of anti-clerical reform laws in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Belgium. These laws were primarily attempting to seize for the state control of education out of the hands of the Catholic Church and to control ecclesial appointments. Pope Pius IX believed that Freemasons and the philosophy of Freemasonry, in general, was responsible for Kulturkampf.
- Out of thirty-two paragraphs, only paragraphs 28 through 30 are treating the dangers of Freemasonry and the prohibitions against it. Paragraph 30 is a very important in the history of Papal pronouncements against Freemasonry.

# ETSI MULTA - HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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- Perhaps the most challenging aspect of Pius IX's papacy were the revolutions of 1848 that swept across Europe, just two years after his election to the Throne of Peter. In every country, except for Russian, Spain, and the Scandinavian countries, the movement of discontent and revolution spread and was intent on toppling governments. As these revolutions began to break out first in Palermo, Sicily, on January 12, and then by March reaching Paris, Berlin, and Milan, people knew that the Freemasons had conspired them.
- Even the Pope was not spared from the demands of the revolutionaries, as they demanded that he declare war on Austria. Given that Vienna considered Pius IX an enemy, given his implementation of liberal policies, his plea that they voluntarily cede the Italian providence was rejected with prejudice. On November 15, 1848, Pius IX's prime ministers were assassinated, and two days later, the Swiss Guards were disarmed. This was quite the turn of events for a Pope who just two years previously was unrelentingly cheered by liberals, but who were now teaching him that the more you give liberals, the more they will feel entitled to take.
- Pius IX had to contend not only with Giuseppe Maria Garibaldi (the so-called 'father of Italian independence') who had become a Freemason in 1844 in the Grand Orient of France, and in 1860 was invited to become the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy; an office in which he served with distinction from 1862 to 1868, but also Louis Napoleon who was very friendly with the Freemasons and took advantage of their global network to advance his agenda and, in turn, they used his influence to advance their Masonic program.

# ETSI MULTA - AREAS OF CONCERN

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**Pius IX – Three Step Plan to bring those who have fallen into error back into the faith (read paragraph 30):**

1. To expose them to the error of thinking, Freemasonry is just an organization that is engaged in polite socializing, progressive civic engagement, charity work, or mutual benefits. We saw this, perhaps, with Haydn, whose petition for membership expressed that he thought Freemasonry was just a social organization. Today, Freemasons and appendant Masonic bodies like the Shriners aggressively push this idea out into the public that charity work is a central emphasis of their organization. Still today, people join Freemasonry due to this clever marketing scheme and pretention.
2. To explain to them the dogmatic teaching on this matter that has been promulgated by the Supreme Pontiffs. As I stated in the Preface of this catechism, arguing that Catholics cannot be Freemasons based upon what Freemasonry teaches about itself is ineffective. The most effective method, according to Blessed Pope Pius IX here, is to argue that Catholics cannot be Freemasons based upon what the Catholic Church teaches about Freemasonry, and
3. To teach them that the prohibition against Freemasonry and sects like them is global; it is not just for Europe, but also for all continents *"and in other regions of the world."* This here is a very vital point because, in the coming decades and centuries, there will be efforts made by Catholics to argue that the Anglo and Prince Hall Masonic sects are acceptable for Catholics to join. This will cause the Catholic Church to revisit the topic and affirm, once again, that no matter the region where Freemasonry is being practiced or the race of people practicing it, the principles of Freemasonry remain in them and, thereby, the Church makes no distinctions or gives dispensations for the various sects of Freemasonry.

# ETSI MULTA - CONTRIBUTION & LEGACY

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- The importance of *Etsi Multa* is that it was the first time in over a century that the prohibition against Freemasonry had been revisited as an individual topic and not a part of the broader subject of secret societies or Masonic philosophes, such as indifferentism. By name, Pius IX cites how *Etsi Multa* belongs to the body of previous Papal pronouncements on this issue and states that the Catholic Church maintains the exact prohibitions against Freemasonry that were set forth by his predecessors.
- Uniquely important to *Etsi Multa* is this was the first time that it was clarified that there are no global distinctions with Freemasonry; that the prohibition against Freemasonry is global and not specific just to Europe. Also unique is the three-step action to prevent Catholics from falling into the error of Freemasonry and how to bring those who have fallen into its error back into the faith. A similar action plan will be included in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Humanum Genus*.
- First time a Pope called Freemasonry 'The Den of Satan'

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## Session Seven – Humanum Genus

The objective of this seventh lecture is to ground the student in the focus of Pope Leo XIII's *Humanum Genus*, which was to expose Freemasonry as being created by Satan to use it to destroy the world by freeing countries and state governments from the influence of Catholic teaching and replacing it with naturalism.