

*Movimiento internacional*  
**Somos-Iglesia**

*Movimento Internacional*  
**Nós somos Igreja**

*Movimento Internazionale*  
**Noi siamo Chiesa**

*Mouvement international*  
**Nous sommes Eglise**

*Internationale Bewegung*  
**Wir sind Kirche**

# *International Movement* **We are Church**

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Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Pope Benedict - 4 years on: *We are Church* calls for urgent and substantial reforms. Hoping for the Holy Spirit and for the Spirit of the Council**

The *International Movement We are Church* takes the opportunity of the 4 year anniversary of the election of Pope Benedict (April 19, 2005) to renew and strengthen its **call for the Pope, all Bishops and all believers to remain true to the direction and spirit as laid down by the Second Vatican Council.**

**The Pope's problematic attempt to seek reconciliation with the Lefebvrists early this year was a rebuttal to the teachings and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).** This Council brought among others a new approach to collegiality, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, especially with the Jews, religious freedom, freedom of conscience, also within the Church, and a positive regard for the world, together with a liturgy in which all can participate.

**Although presented as an act aiming at reunifying Catholics, Benedict's autonomous decision in reality was a severe disservice to the Catholic Church as a community of faith and also as an institution in today's world.** In times of severe social, economic, and ecologic problems *We are Church* deeply regrets that the Roman Catholic Church, a Church with one of the largest memberships in the world, has lost much of its credibility because of the actual crisis within the Church.

**This crisis is a crisis of leadership - Pope Benedict's leadership and that of the Roman Curia.** The Pope has insisted on a style of governance of the Church that owes nothing to transparency, accountability and even basic competence. The hope of millions of Christians, based on the Second Vatican Council and on the Pope's promises shortly after his election for more ecumenical progress and collegiality have not become true so far.

### **Growing Disappointment About Pastoral Standstill:**

By maintaining the rule of compulsory celibacy and forbidding women's ordination the Pope denies the canonical right of the faithful to have the Sunday Eucharist guaranteed (can. 213 CIC Codex Iuris Canonici) in active communities. **All these facts** and the extension of the pre-conciliar Tridentine Rite and the changed prayer for the conversion of Jews on Good Friday, **are only a few of many indications that Pope Ratzinger has embarked in the direction of a counter-reform against Vatican II.**

On his recent visit to Africa the Pope spoke out strongly against corruption, tribalism, women's oppression, and in favour of good governance and environmental protection. However, instead of focusing on these important issues, his unfortunate remarks on the use of condoms in the prevention of AIDS drowned out all others. **The emphasis given to the discussion of abortion, condoms, etc. resulted in the Pontiff losing a vital opportunity to convey the more important messages of justice, peace and of the battle to secure people 'their daily bread'.**

At this point *We are Church* feel it is important to stress that **the Pope should not consider the various criticisms expressed all over the world as hostile towards him, but as an expression of deep concern regarding the welfare of the whole Church - as provided for in can. 212 § 3 CIC**: ‘All the Christian faithful ... have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful.’

### **International Petition to be presented at the CDF:**

The enormous response to the international petition ‘For the full recognition of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council’ supported by the *International Movement We are Church* is proof of the concrete desire of numerous theologians, priests, members of congregations, pastoral workers, and many, many of the faithful throughout the world for a renewal of our Church in line with the Second Vatican Council.

The petition (<http://www.petition-vaticanum2.org>) collected 50.000 qualified signatures by Maundy Thursday. The initiators of this petition now want to present the results to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in Rome as soon as possible.

### **Background information**

The *International Movement We Are Church* - a grassroots church reform movement of lay persons, priests, and persons in religious orders - was started in Austria and Germany in 1995 and then spread out in Europe and all continents. *We Are Church* is represented in more than twenty countries and is in touch with other reform movements all over the world. Its goal is to keep continue the process of reform in the Roman Catholic Church, a process which has been opened with Vatican II Council (1962-1965) and came to a standstill in recent years. Website: <http://www.we-are-church.org>

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