

# Instigator of Change

## A Report on Father Thomas P. Sweetser, S.J.

Based on his Books and Articles written from 1974 to 2012

### Executive Summary

This report documents the activities of Father Thomas Sweetser, contrasting his own words with those of the Magisterial documents and other significant authorities of the Church. His pattern of dissent provides a clear example of what our Church—our parishes and clergy—should be wary of when engaging consultants.

Father Sweetser operates a consulting business (Parish Assessment and Renewal - Parish Evaluation Project) which seeks to re-make parishes all over the world into his ideal progressive, democratic New Church (“**a new paradigm**”), while proclaiming simple solutions to the often complicated problems plaguing parishes. He claims that the parishioners ignore the Church because the “**Church no longer speaks their language so they make up their own minds.**” The difficulty is that many parishes, innocent of his dissent, pay his hefty consulting fee and make changes to the liturgy or operations of the parish that further the progressive agenda.

Father Sweetser’s world view is *progressive* in that he openly advocates feminism and its desire for *inclusion* as well as inclusive language in the Mass. He willingly reports on trends in parishes advocating the use of contraceptives, the need for access to abortion, the acceptance of married and women priests, the embracing of homosexual lifestyles, and the democratization of the Church—*without ever correcting this view as dissent*. He believes the people will bring about changes because the “**Catholic church in general and the local parish in particular are in transition from a hierarchical to a community model...**” He says bishops must “**let go of control and empower others...**” He elicits a tone of frustration when he says “**Our culture reinforces the dominant, controlling role of men and the submissive, seductive, mothering role of women...**” Where is the image of the Holy Family? What is there about a truly feminine Mary, Mother of God, that is threatening or frustrating?

Father Sweetser quotes in his books several other priests and nuns who are also dissenters from the Magisterium by their public statements. He quotes them hoping for legitimization for his radical new church: “**Once the radical fringe is given a rationalization and stability through leadership of the ‘head,’ the larger institution is not so threatened by the radicalism...**”

Father Sweetser’s record of dissent is self-evident by his own words. He unabashedly acclaims the time for a new reformation. Will the parishes continue to pay his fees naively, or will pastors and bishops publicly renounce his business as dissenting so that parishioners’ money will not be wasted? I sincerely hope the reader will access his work, make your own judgments and take the steps necessary to end his negative influence on our Church.

(Quotations in bold type are from Father Sweetser and are referenced in the Report.)