

Encyclical IV: “Radiance from the Darkness at Depth”

On the Location of the First Nodal Sanctuary

The first nodal Sanctuary has been located within the **Abyssal Basilica** on **Europa** through the twin voices of divine revelation and science. O reader, pause and inquire, if you do not weep at this news, has life itself escaped your coil?

After years of conflicting telemetry and faith-based mathematics, the Church confirms the existence of the First Nodal Sanctuary beneath the sub-crustal ocean of Europa. Orbital radar reconnaissance reveals a complex of symmetrical voids roughly fifteen kilometers wide beneath the ice. These voids exhibit gradients and magnetic field patterns consistent with engineered structures of this **ancient and obscure engineering station**.

On the Development of the *Tethys Challenger*

To reach this site, the Church has commissioned the construction of the ***Tethys Challenger***, an extra-planetary submersible designed for cryo-hydrostatic descent and long-duration deep-ocean operation.

Technical outline:

- Hull: carbon composite cylinder and titanium endcaps, designed for pressures exceeding 150 MPa.
- Propulsion: magnetohydrodynamic thrusters with zero moving parts, sanctified by qualification.
- Navigation: LIDAR-acoustic hybrid with inertial redundancy and dead reckoning backup.
- Core systems: mostly-fault tolerant systems
- Crew complement: four. Expected survival rate: classified.

The Challenger will descend through melt-shafts, entering Europa’s subsurface ocean to map and sample the Sanctuary’s perimeter. And ultimately deliver the first **Witnesses** unto the **Basilica** to undertake the first steps along the **Pilgrimage of Humanity**.

The Obstacle

The design, however, faces a heretical obstacle: **power**. Europa is cold, far, and mercilessly silent. A **nuclear reactor** is the only viable source of sustained energy for the descent — solar power being laughably insufficient and prayer notoriously unreliable at 5.2 AU without amplifiers. The Church’s previous reactor experiments — Project Halo-Core, Project Blessed Isotope, Project Saint Cobalt — all ended with... messy misfortune.

Each test produced promising data in the final seconds before containment failure, and inspiring sermons in the hours after. To date, we have lost 86 submarines, 192 engineers, one Archdeacon of Reactor Safety, and most of a Pacific Atoll. Radiation levels at the Tethys Prototype Test Site remain “devoutly measurable”. As one surviving technician noted during debriefing: “The shielding worked perfectly until it didn’t, and then **God** was suddenly everywhere.”

It is therefore the decree of the Pontifex that the Church must rethink its energy theology. The Choir of Engineers are to seek new forms of sanctified power — advanced fission designs and fusion plants are prime candidates. We will bless the atom again, and again, until it behaves. If the *Tethys Challenger* is to reach the Nodal Sanctuary, we must decide whether we intend to light the depths — or **become the light ourselves**. Until then, the Pontifex prays for all whose remains are still technically glowing.



Issued from the Orbital Chamber
“You have everything to fear, especially fear itself.”

