

Anti-“Lefebvrism” Argument – I

April 7, 2018

To attack the French Dominican priests of Avrillé for their “Lefebvrism,” i.e. for their refusal to accept that the Conciliar Popes since Paul VI have not been Popes at all, a French layman – Mr. **N.M.** – has just written an article accusing the Dominicans of rejecting three Catholic dogmas: that the Pope has primacy of jurisdiction over the Universal Church; that the Church’s Universal Ordinary Magisterium is infallible; that it is the Church’s living Magisterium which determines what Catholics must believe. Normally such questions of doctrine may be best left to the experts in doctrine, but ours are not normal times. Today Catholics can have to rely on their own Catholic good sense to decide such questions for themselves.

Let us look at all three questions in a simple and practical way. If I want to accept that the Popes have been true Popes since Paul VI, why should I have to deny firstly that the Pope is head of the Church, secondly that the Church’s normal teaching is infallible and thirdly that the living Pope tells me what I should believe? Let us look at **N.M.**’s arguments, one by one.

As to the first point, **NM** quotes the thoroughly anti-liberal Council of Vatican I (1870–1871) to the effect that the Pope is the direct and immediate head of every diocese, every priest and every Catholic. If then like all Lefebvrists, I refuse to obey him, I am implicitly denying that he is my head as a Catholic, so I am denying that the Pope is what Vatican I defined him to be. Answer: I am not at all denying that the Conciliar Popes have the authority to command me as a Catholic, I am only saying that their Catholic authority does not include the authority to make me turn myself into a

Protestant, as I will do if I follow their commands in line with Vatican II.

Secondly, **NM** argues that Vatican I also stated that the everyday teaching of Pope and bishops is infallible. Now if ever we had serious teaching of Pope and Bishops together, it was at Vatican II. If then I refuse that teaching, I am implicitly denying that the Church's Universal Ordinary Magisterium is infallible. Answer, no, I am not. I fully recognise that when a doctrine has been taught in the Church nearly everywhere, at all times and by all Popes and Bishops, it is infallible, but if it has been taught only

in modern times by the 20th century Popes and Bishops of Vatican II, then it is contrary to what was taught by Popes and Bishops at all other times of the Church, and I do not consider myself bound to accept it. As I accept the heavyweight UOM of all time, so I reject the lightweight UOM of today, contradicting it.

Thirdly, **NM** argues that the true Pope has the living authority to tell me as a Catholic what I must today believe. If then I refuse to believe what the Conciliar Popes have told me to believe, I am rejecting their living authority as arbiters of the Faith. Answer: no, I am not. I am using my eyes to read, and my God-given brain to judge, that what the Conciliar Popes tell me contradicts what all previous Popes back to St Peter tell me, and I prefer to follow the heavy weight of 261 Popes telling me what to believe against the light weight of six Conciliar Popes. "But then you are rejecting the living authority of the living Pope as arbiter of the Faith!" Only because I am following, obeying and submitting to 261 Popes as arbiters of that Faith which my eyes and my brain tell me that the Conciliar Popes are not following. "But then you are backing your own eyes and brain against the Catholic Pope!" God gave me eyes and a brain which function, and when I come before Him to be judged, I shall answer for the use I made of

them.

It is clear that **NM's** own answer to the problem of Popes protestantising, modernising and Conciliar, is to deny that they ever were Popes. It should be equally clear that to that problem, which is very real, I am not obliged to adopt **NM's** drastic solution. Nor, if I refuse to adopt it, am I obliged to deny three Church dogmas. Peace be to **NM**.

Kyrie eleison.