

Conciliar Popes – IV

July 11, 2015

Many readers of these “Comments” presently find they are treating too often of sedevacantism, or of the position that the See of Rome is vacant, i.e. no Pope since Vatican II has been a real Pope. Now if a Catholic needs to hold that opinion in order not to lose his Catholic faith, let him hold it, because his faith is paramount (Heb. XI, 6). But the opinion in itself is dangerous precisely because it can be the beginning of a slide towards losing the faith, and that is why these “Comments” are so insistent on discouraging sedevacantism. From an opinion it becomes all too easily a dogma, then the super-dogma and the measure of whether one is Catholic or not, from where it can slide into complete disbelief in the structural Church and into “home-aloning,” even to loss of one’s Catholic faith. Consider what Archbishop Lefebvre said (slightly adapted, and with emphasis added) in late 1979 in a conference to Écône seminarians:—

“We must be prudent. It is obvious that if Pope Paul VI was not Pope, then the Cardinals he appointed are not Cardinals, so they cannot have elected John-Paul I, and they cannot have validly elected John-Paul II, that much is clear. I don’t think one can say such things. I think these are exaggerations, arguing in a manner too absolute and too rapid. I think the reality is more complex.

“I think that those who argue like this are in a certain way forgetting moral theology and ethics. They are being too speculative. Moral theology and ethics teach us to reason and to judge of people and their acts according to a whole context of circumstances which we must take into account: “Who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when” – all seven circumstances must be examined if we are to judge of the morality of an act. So we cannot remain in the pure stratosphere, one might say, in the realm of pure dogmatic

theology, by pronouncing, for instance, that such an act is heretical, therefore whoever did it is a heretic. But was this person aware of what he was doing, did he do it truly by himself, was he not deceived or forced into doing it?

“I think that here is how to solve the grave problems posed by John XXIII, Paul VI and John-Paul I. The latter is quoted in the newspapers as having said that he had thought at first that the Council’s new definition of religious liberty was unacceptable because the Church taught the opposite, but on further study of the Council document and all its contents he had realized that the Church was mistaken beforehand. Now I have no idea what were John-Paul I’s exact words, but to say that the Church could be mistaken on such a matter as religious liberty just boggles the mind! However, I put it down to liberal minds. Liberalism is like that. Liberalism both makes a statement and then contradicts it, and if one shows that what it said is not true, then it comes up with another ambiguous formula with a double meaning. The liberal mind is continually floating around, with expressions that are not clear, with things that can be taken two ways How many things there are like that in the Council, expressions equivocal and unclear, altogether typical of minds adrift, liberal minds As I see it, I think that the fact that the Pope is a liberal is enough to explain the situation in which we find ourselves.”

Bravo, your Excellency! Is not the Archbishop saying here exactly what these “Comments” have so often been saying? And the reason why these “Comments” have been saying it so often is because they see here the key to avoiding liberalism without having to resort to sedevacantism.

Kyrie eleison.