

Continuing Damage – II

August 3, 2013

Besides arguing that the Doctrinal Declaration of mid-April last year was refused by Rome and so is of no further interest, people claiming that there has been no significant change in the Society of St Pius X also resort to the three bishops' recent Declaration of June 27, which was obviously designed to reassure people that the SSPX lifeboat is undamaged and still perfectly seaworthy. However, souls wishing not to drown need to take a closer look.

It is the 11th paragraph which has become notorious. In brief, the bishops here state that they intend in the future to follow Providence, whether Rome soon returns to Tradition, or it recognizes explicitly the right and duty of the SSPX to oppose in public the Conciliar errors. Now this "whether" clause is out of the question because nothing short of a divine intervention is going to make the enemies of God, firmly established within the Vatican, let go of their Council. We come to the "or" clause. What can the bishops have meant by Rome "explicitly recognizing" the "right and duty" of the SSPX to oppose the Council?

The obvious meaning is that Rome would grant to the SSPX some official status within the mainstream Church, or some form of canonical regularisation. Some such recognition is obviously what the SSPX leaders have been striving for ever since they adopted the ideas of the Parisian think-tank, GREC, well over ten years ago. But when those leaders in April of last year largely accepted Rome's terms for such a recognition, they created such a storm of protest within the SSPX that they were forced to pretend that they no longer want any such recognition based on the mid-April terms. Then what can the "or" clause of June 27 mean?

Within a few days the French District Superior put to them

exactly that question. He was told that the “or” clause does not necessarily entail any official recognition, but merely the eventuality of a weak but Catholic Pope being on the one hand Catholic enough to recognize the SSPX’s “right and duty,” etc., but on the other hand too weak and isolated within Rome to be able to impose on the Romans any official recognition, etc. And the District Superior at least appeared to be content with this answer when he immediately transmitted it to the priests of his District.

Well, knock me over with a feather! Firstly, who, just reading the text of June 27, could ever have guessed that this was what the bishops had in mind? And secondly, what in the text of June 27 excludes a range of other possibilities that the bishops would accept in the name of “following Providence”? Given that on June 17, 2012, Bishop Fellay wrote to Benedict XVI that he would continue to do all he could to pursue a reconciliation between Rome and the SSPX, what in the text of June 27 excludes the cunning Romans eventually making to the bishops such an offer of reconciliation that – always in the name of “Providence” – they could not refuse?

Good luck to anyone who accepts the interpretation of the “or” clause given to the French District Superior. However, there are many of us who will remain unconvinced that the leadership of the SSPX has given up on its mad dream of reconciling irreconcilables. Until clear proof to the contrary, we will assume that those leaders remain, however unwittingly, intent upon turning the SSPX lifeboat into a deathboat. And when everyone drowns, they will make it all the ocean’s fault!

Kyrie eleison.