

Contradictory Romans?

August 22, 2015

Two Roman churchmen have seemed to contradict one another in remarks made recently about relations between Rome and the Society of St Pius X, but one explanation of the contradiction may be that Rome is playing on the Society a police trick as old as the hills. By the “good cop, bad cop” routine, when the police want to get a confession out of a criminal, firstly a brutal policeman is sent in to beat up the criminal until he is in a very sorry condition, requiring all kinds of sympathy. Then a really nice policeman is sent in, oozing with a sympathy which often makes the criminal open up and confess his crime.

The “bad cop” in this case would be no less than the Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Müller, who early this month in an interview with katholisch.de, official website of the German Bishops' Conference, said about a Rome-SSPX agreement that *“There is no substantial new development. The Holy Father wishes that we keep trying: “con tenacia e pazienza” – “with tenacity and patience.” The precondition for a full reconciliation is the signing of a doctrinal preamble in order to guarantee a full agreement in the essential questions of the Faith. In the past months, there were encounters of different ways which are meant to strengthen the mutual trust.”*

Here it is clearly stated that the SSPX will have to sign a doctrinal text agreeable to neo-modernist Rome if it wishes for an agreement with Rome. The Cardinal is also being a “bad cop” when he reveals that there were *“encounters of different ways”* between Romans and the SSPX *“to strengthen mutual trust.”* Or is the SSPX happy that Rome is shedding the light of day upon contacts otherwise unknown? Yet who that has the Catholic faith is re-assured by mutual trust being established with neo-modernists? But now comes the “good cop.”

Earlier this year Bishop Athanasius Schneider visited two seminaries of the SSPX *“in order to conduct a discussion on a specific theological topic with a group of theologians of the SSPX and with His Excellency Bishop Fellay.”* Just recently he conducted an interview with a Hispanic website, [Rorate Caeli en español](#), in which among other things he commented favourably on these visits. He himself was treated with cordial respect, and he observed a respect all around for the reigning Pontiff, Pope Francis. After his visits he could see *“no weighty reasons to deny the clergy and faithful of the SSPX the official canonical recognition, and meanwhile they should be accepted as they are.”* Bishop Schneider confirmed that he saw no doctrinal problem in the way of an agreement by downplaying the importance of Vatican II: the Council was primarily pastoral, and of its time, he said.

So who represents the real Rome? Cardinal Müller or Bishop Schneider? Certainly both. If the “good cop, bad cop” routine is not conscious, it is certainly instinctive. Rome, by keeping its options open, can continue to play the SSPX like a fish, reeling it in, letting it out, raising hopes and then dashing them, bending the wire and straightening it out again, and again, until finally it snaps. Alas, one may suspect that by *“encounters”* the leaders of the SSPX are complicit in this game of Rome.

Kyrie eleison.