

Convert Today – III

March 16, 2019

Dear young friend,

Two weeks ago these “Comments” related your own story of your conversion from the wasteland of a modern university to the truth of the Catholic Faith. It ended with your request for advice because you yourself realised that God had given you the Truth, but you needed to get your bearings in a very confused situation of Church and world. It took last week’s issue of the “Comments” to give you the basic advice that is valid for a Catholic convert in general, i.e. in all times and places. It will take this issue to offer you the particular advice recommended for you to see where you are in today’s chaos of the Church, unprecedented in all 20 centuries of Church history.

The crisis is unprecedented because the world will have only one ending, and we are approaching it. See Our Lord’s own description of the last times (Mt. XXIV, Lk. XXI), and see St Paul’s warning, dating from around 67AD, for these times (II Tim. III, 1–9), especially verses 5 and 8: men will be “corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith,” “having the appearance of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Now these avoid.” Excellent advice for 2019AD, because it is important to realise that today men in general and Catholics in particular are as a whole not “normal,” but men at the wrong end of a long process of degeneration. The purpose of such a realisation is neither to scorn them, nor to despair, but to take the right measure of what it means to live as a Catholic in a post- and anti-Christian world. In God it can be done – “I can do all things in Him who strengthens me” (Phil. IV, 13).

The chaos in the Church is special today because never before Vatican II in the 1960’s had the official Church in Rome

departed officially from the Catholic Faith. Now Catholic Truth and Catholic Authority were designed by Our Lord to go hand in hand – when Peter is to be confirmed in the Faith (Catholic Truth), then he is to confirm the other Apostles (Catholic Authority – Lk. XXII, 32). Thus Truth is the very purpose of Authority, but it needs Authority to protect it. Each needs the other, but at Vatican II they were split apart, because the Popes and Cardinals and Bishops (Authority), magnetised by the modern world, gave up the old religion (Truth). From now on all Catholics had to be schizophrenic – either they clung to Truth and let go of the false authority, or they clung to Authority and let go of the Truth, or they found their way somewhere in between. From now on every Catholic sheep had to find its own way through the thorn-hedge set up by the bad shepherds of Vatican II.

Judging by the fruits (Mt. VII, 15–20), Archbishop Lefebvre's way, of resisting the false shepherds while still recognising their authority, has proved to be one of the most fruitful ways of dealing with the confusion let loose by the Council, but his successors at the head of his Society have not proved faithful to his balance between Truth and Authority. Even now many are crawling back to false Rome, when it is falser than ever! Let this be a warning to you of the danger of thinking today that the appearance of Catholicism is the same thing as its substance. Then how do you know where the substance is to be found? The best answer is Our Lord's, just mentioned – judge by the fruits. By what fruits? By supernatural faith, as God has just given you to understand it, and by genuine supernatural charity.

Then mix for a while with all kinds of Catholics, but listen more than you talk. Be in no hurry to pursue a vocation because God is never in a hurry (Gal. I, 18; II, 1). Have a boundless trust in His Wisdom and Providence, and be careful of clinging to any human leader or leaders, until God puts His Church back on its feet (as He certainly will do). Always

honour your father and mother, however wrong they may seem to be (God has not given them the grace He has given to you). Have a boundless compassion on the mass of confused souls around you, but never confuse subjective sincerity with objective truth. Love the Mother of God, and pray every day for as long as you can all 15 Mysteries of Her Holy Rosary. And God be with you.

Kyrie eleison.