

Deep Problem

November 17, 2012

Many Catholics do not conceive of the full depth of the problem posed by the Conciliar Revolution of Vatican II (1962–1965) in the Catholic Church. If they knew more Church history, they might be less tempted either by liberalism to think that the Council was not all that bad, or by “sedevacantism” to think that the Church authorities are no longer its authorities. Did Our Lord question the religious authority of Caiphas or the civil authority of Pontius Pilate?

The problem is deep because it is buried beneath centuries and centuries of Church history. When in the early 1400's St Vincent Ferrer (1357–1419) preached all over Europe that the end of the world was at hand, we today know that he was out by over 600 years. Yet God confirmed his preaching by granting him to work thousands of miracles and thousands upon thousands of conversions. Was God confirming untruth? Perish the thought! The truth is that the Saint was correctly discerning, implicit in the decadence of the end of the Middle Ages, the explicit and near total corruption of our own times, dress rehearsal for the total corruption of the end of the world.

It has merely taken time, God's own time, several centuries, for that implicit corruption to become explicit, because God has chosen at regular intervals to raise Saints to hold up the downward slide, notably the crop of famous Saints that led the Counter-Reformation in the 16th century. However, he would not take away men's free-will, so that if they chose not to stay on the heights of the Middle Ages, he would not force them to do so. Instead he would allow his Church, at least to some extent, to adapt to the times, because it exists to save present souls and not past glories.

Two examples might be Molinist theology, made virtually necessary by Luther and Calvin to guarantee the protection of

free-will, and the Concordat of 1801, made necessary by the Revolutionary State to enable the Church in France to function at all in public. Now both Molinism and the Concordat were compromises with the world of their time, but both enabled many souls to be saved, while the Church allowed neither to undermine the principles which remained sacred, of God as Pure Act and of Christ as the King of Society respectively. However both compromises allowed for a certain humanising of the divine Church, and both contributed to a gradual secularising of Christendom. Compromises do have consequences.

Thus if a slow process of humanizing and secularizing were to go too far in that world from which alone men and women are called by God to serve in his Church, they could hardly enter his service without a strong dose of radio-active liberalism in their bones, calling for a vigorous antidote in their religious formation. Naturally they would share the instinctive conviction of almost all their contemporaries that the revolutionary principles and ideals of the world from which they came were normal, while their religious formation opposed to that world might seem pious but fundamentally abnormal. Such churchmen and churchwomen could be a disaster waiting to happen. That disaster struck in mid-20th century. A large proportion of the world's 2000 Catholic bishops rejoiced instead of revolting when John XXIII made clear that he was abandoning the anti-modern Church.

So nobody who wants to save his soul should follow them or their successors, but on the other hand the latter are so convinced that they are normal in relation to modern times that they are not as guilty as they would have been in previous times for destroying Christ's Church. Blessed are the Catholic souls that can abhor their errors, but still honour their office.

Kyrie eleison.