

Difficult Discussions – II

September 5, 2009

What is the best outcome one may hope for, and the worst outcome one may fear, from the “doctrinal discussions” due in theory to begin this autumn in Rome between the mainstream Church and the Society of St. Pius X? In practice the doctrinal gulf between Rome’s Conciliarism and the Society’s Catholicism is so fundamental (can or cannot 2 and 2 equal both 4 and 5?) that the “discussions” may not even begin. However, supposing that representatives of Rome and of the Society sit down together on two sides of one table, what is to be hoped for?

Short of a stupendous miracle of God, there is, humanly speaking, no hope whatsoever of the Romans abandoning their devotion to Vatican II, that Council whose letter mixes the religions of God and man while its spirit is definitely the religion of man. For over 40 years the churchmen controlling Rome have been possessed by the conviction that God’s religion needs to be adapted to modern man, and nothing indicates that they are collectively about to abandon their deadly “combinazione,” on the contrary. See for instance the Pope’s latest Encyclical, “Charity in Truth.”

Therefore the most that can be hoped for on the side of the Romans is that to the Catholic Truth laid before them by the SSPX, a handful of them will react positively, most likely in private – may they save their souls! On the side of the SSPX, at best it will have witnessed to the Truth at the summit of the Church where it most matters, and even if on those heights it does little to no apparent good, still one may hope that an open account of the “discussions” presented afterwards to all Catholics of good will may reinforce their grasp of that doctrine by which Catholics are Catholics, and strengthen their Catholic common sense that, naturally and supernaturally, 2 and 2 make 4 and nothing else.

What we may fear on the contrary is that this primacy of doctrine may be blurred amidst the charms of the Roman autumn. "He who lies down with Roman dogs gets up with purple fleas," says a proverb (adapted by a friend). The temptation for the SSPX, especially if Rome waves both the stick of further condemnation as well as the carrot of recognition in front of the still scorned donkey's nose, will be to glide over the doctrinal gulf and settle for some kind of "practical agreement" whereby the SSPX, already being very nice to Benedict XVI, would, for instance, be granted juridical status within the mainstream Church in exchange for an at least tacit understanding to stop attacking its Conciliarism.

However, any such understanding would be the beginning of the end, not the end of the defence of the Faith but of the SSPX's defence of it, because as old-fashioned Communism knew, it should never fight Catholics over doctrine, where Catholics are strongest. Rather its strategy was to propose any kind of practical agreement whereby the Catholics would pass over the doctrine and just co-operate in action with the Communists. As Communists always knew, the rest would follow . . .

Kyrie eleison.