

Doctrine Again

August 18, 2012

The scorn of “doctrine” is an immense problem today. The “best” of Catholics in our 21st century pay lip-service to the importance of “doctrine,” but in their modern bones they feel instinctively that even Catholic doctrine is some kind of prison for their minds, and minds must not be imprisoned. In Washington, D.C., around the interior dome of the Jefferson Memorial, that quasi-religious temple of the United States’ champion of liberty, runs his quasi-religious quotation: *I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.* Surely he had Catholic doctrine in mind, amongst others. Modern man’s quasi-religion excludes having any fixed doctrine.

However, a sentence from the “Eleison Comments” of two weeks ago (EC 263, July 28) gives a different angle on the nature and importance of “doctrine.” It ran: *So long as Rome believes in its Conciliar doctrine, it is bound to use any such (“non-doctrinal”) agreement to pull the SSPX in the direction of the (Second Vatican) Council.* In other words what drives Rome supposedly to discount “doctrine” and at all costs to conciliarize the SSPX is their own belief in their own Conciliar doctrine. As Traditional Catholic doctrine is – one hopes – the driving force of the SSPX, so Conciliar doctrine is the driving force of Rome. The two doctrines clash, but each of them is a driving force.

In other words, “doctrine” is not just a set of ideas in a man’s head, or a mental prison. Whatever ideas a man chooses to hold in his head, his real doctrine is that set of ideas that drives his life. Now a man may change that set of ideas, but he cannot not have one. Here is how Aristotle put it: “If you want to philosophize, then you have to philosophize. If you don’t want to philosophize, you still have to

philosophize. In any case a man has to philosophize." Similarly, liberals may scorn any set of ideas as a tyranny, but to hold any set of ideas to be a tyranny is still a major idea, and it is the one idea that drives the lives of zillions of liberals today, and of all too many Catholics. These should know better, but all of us moderns have the worship of liberty in our bloodstream.

Thus doctrine in its real sense is not just an imprisoning set of ideas, but that central notion of God, man and life that directs the life of every man alive. Even if a man is committing suicide, he is being driven by the idea that life is too miserable to be worth continuing. A notion of life centred on money may drive a man to become rich; on pleasure to become a rake; on recognition to become famous, and so on. But however a man centrally conceives life, that concept is his real doctrine.

Thus conciliar Romans are driven by Vatican II as being their central notion to undo the SSPX that rejects Vatican II, and until they either succeed or change that central notion, they will continue to be driven to dissolve Archbishop Lefebvre's SSPX. On the contrary the central drive of clergy and laity of the SSPX should be to get to Heaven, the idea being that Heaven and Hell exist, and Jesus Christ and his true Church provide the one and only sure way of getting to Heaven. This driving doctrine they know to be no fanciful invention of their own, and that is why they do not want it to be undermined or subverted or corrupted by the wretched neo-modernists of the Newchurch, driven by their false conciliar notion of God, man and life. The clash is total.

Nor can it be avoided, as liberals dream it can. If falsehoods win, eventually even the stones of the street will cry out (Lk.XIX, 40). If Truth wins, still Satan will go on raising error after error, until the world ends. But "He that perseveres to the end will be saved," says Our Lord (Mt.XXIV, 13).

Kyrie eleison.