

Doctrine Underestimated

September 25, 2010

In a generally thoughtful magazine from the USA, "Culture Wars," the Editor recently took me personally to task, together with the Society of St Pius X as a whole, for wilfully cutting ourselves off from the mainstream Catholic Church. Let me present as briefly and as fairly as possible E. Michael Jones' argument, with its main steps lettered to facilitate the answer:-

His main point is that the problem of Vatican II is not doctrinal: "(A) The Council documents are not themselves responsible for any of the craziness following the Council in the name of its "spirit." As for the documents themselves, they are sometimes ambiguous, but (B) God is always with His Church, which is why (C) only something Catholic can gain the assent of the world's assembled bishops, as happened at Vatican II. (D) Therefore it can and must suffice to interpret the ambiguities in the light of Tradition, as Archbishop Lefebvre himself once proposed to do.

"Therefore (E) Vatican II is Traditional, and any problem between Rome and the SSPX cannot be doctrinal. (F) Therefore the SSPX's real problem is that it refuses communion out of a fear of contamination, (G) proceeding from its schismatic lack of charity. (H) The ensuing guilt they cover up by pretending that the Church is in an unprecedented emergency, brought on by the anti-doctrine of Vatican II. (I) Therefore the SSPX is saying that the Church has failed in its mission, and that the SSPX is the Church. Nonsense! SSPX bishops, sign over to Rome!"

REPLY: the problem of Vatican II is ESSENTIALLY doctrinal. (A) Alas, the Vatican II documents are indeed responsible for the "spirit" of Vatican II and its crazy aftermath. Their very ambiguity, recognized by E.M.J., let the craziness loose. (B)

God is indeed with His Church, but He leaves His churchmen free to choose to do it great, but never fatal, damage (cf. Lk. XVIII, 8). (C) Thus the mass of Catholic bishops He let fall in the appalling Arian crisis of the fourth century. What happened once is happening again, only worse. (D) At an early stage in the post-Conciliar fight for Tradition, it may have been reasonable to appeal for Vatican II to be interpreted in the light of Tradition, but that stage is long past. The ambiguity's bitter fruits have long since proved that the subtly poisoned Conciliar documents cannot be salvaged.

Thus (E) the Council is not Traditional, and the Rome-SSPX clash is ESSENTIALLY doctrinal, so (F) there is good reason to fear contamination, because of Vatican II's false doctrine – it is leading souls to Hell. (G) Nor is there a schismatic mentality amongst (non-sedevacantist) Traditionalists, even though (H) the Church is in the thick of the worst emergency of her entire history. (I) But just as in the Arian crisis the few bishops who kept the Faith proved that the Church had not absolutely failed, so today the SSPX belongs to the Church and is keeping the Faith, without remotely pretending to replace, or to be on its own, the Church.

Michael, when, in all Church history, were her assembled bishops deliberately ambiguous? You admit the ambiguity of Vatican II. When did churchmen ever resort to ambiguity unless it was to pave the way for heresy? In Our Lord's Church, yes is to be yes, and no is to be no (Mt.V, 37).

Kyrie eleison.