

Fiftiesism Observed

March 8, 2014

If there is, at least up till now, relatively little reaction from within the Society of St Pius X to its complete change of direction under Bishop Fellay, that is because of the desire to return to the Catholicism of the 1950's. So observes a Catholic attending Mass at an SSPX Chapel in the English-speaking world. She wrote to me recently:—

“Why is there no “Resistance” in our part of the world? I think I’ve figured it out. You’ve mentioned many times that most of the original leaders of the Society of St Pius X never really understood Archbishop Lefebvre. Locally, I think that that applies to many of our original chapel founders here, who are the ones clinging to the Society and to its present leaders. How come? Why don’t they take action, when what they fought so long and hard for is threatened with destruction from within?

“On Sunday, an elderly lady summed it up for me. As she and her husband see it, they strove valiantly through the 1970s into the early 80s, and the fruit of their labours is the chapel itself. The Mass with all the outward trappings, the property, the buildings, the pews, the statues, the vestments – this is what is threatened by the mere existence of the Resistance! They fought all those years to restore for themselves the Catholicism of their youth. For them, it’s NOT a question of doctrine at all. The woman is member of a Third Order, yet she believes doctrinal matters are for priests and bishops, not laity. For example, to study Papal encyclicals is meddling in affairs that God assigned to the hierarchy.

“I asked if they see a need to understand their Faith, if individual souls do not answer to God for knowing their Faith? Their response was sincere, I believe, but to me it was astonishing. They said, ‘No! The responsibility of the

Catholic is to obey his superiors.' And if the superiors are in error? 'Obey anyway! To do otherwise is rebellion.' It is for a Catholic 'a sign of rebellion' to even question his superiors 'in matters that do not concern him,' i.e. doctrine. If the superior is wrong, God will judge him – 'You will never go wrong obeying the priest.' So there you have it. The Resistantists are rebels, disobedient, disrespectful. How dare they question the superior? How dare they presume to study doctrine, to ask questions of their superiors about it? The Resistantists are evil, not because they are doctrinally wrong, but because their words and actions threaten the Catholicism of the 1950's.

"But blind obedience is ridiculous! What are we lambs to do when the Shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered? Pretend all is well. and let ourselves be devoured by wolves in the name of obedience? What can one say to such people? They are wilfully ignorant in the belief that wilful ignorance is a virtue! Where does such a mindset come from? What error crept into the Church to make Catholics switch off their minds? All I can say is that if the SSPX is left with flocks of lobotomised sheep, it will be easy for Rome to wipe out the last fortress of Tradition! The SSPX chapels need only to be handed over to the jurisdiction of the local bishop by formal agreement, or by de facto cooperation with Novus Ordo priests, which we have seen locally."

Notice her evocation of the possibility of Rome absorbing the SSPX no longer by any clear-cut agreement, but by a gradual merger. It is a real danger. I wonder if that is not what SSPX HQ is being advised to do by its "new friends" in Rome.

Kyrie eleison.