

General Chapter – III

August 11, 2018

When Catholic Truth and Catholic Authority move apart, as at Vatican II, it cannot be the Truth that is moving, because Catholic doctrine does not change. It can only be the Authority that has moved, and therefore the Church authorities can alone be to blame for the separation. All the more reason to treasure those authorities that did not betray the Truth, such as Archbishop Lefebvre and his Society of St Pius X. All the more reason to take at least one more look at what happened to it at its recent General Chapter – did the Society in fact get back on the Archbishop's track which it left in 2012, or did the French proverb apply, "the more things change, the more they stay the same"?

At the beginning of the Chapter three new men were elected to form the triumvirate (body of three men) ruling the Society, and many a good priest in the Society breathed a great sigh of relief and enjoyed a few days of real hope for the future. But then at the end of the Chapter there were voted onto the Society's General Council, where major decisions are taken, the previous Superior General together with his own predecessor as Superior General. This was by the creation of a novelty in the Society, a new post of "Counsellor." And many a good priest's heart must have sunk in his breast. What hope could there be now for a change of the Society's disastrous course from faithful Truth to faithless authorities when that course's two main architects were reinstated on the Society's General Council?

At least one participant in the Chapter was reassured that the two "Counsellors" will not be living in Society headquarters in Menzingen, Switzerland; that they will only be advising on questions of setting up or closing Society houses and admitting or expelling Society members; that creating the "Counsellors" was a clever move of the Chapter because it will

help to heal divisions in the Society. Does anyone feel reassured? Menzingen must win back the trust which its ambiguous politics for 20 years have lost. Here is one commentator among many who does not trust such recent soothing words of the Society's rulers:—

In reality the choice – fixed beforehand – of Fr Pagliarani for the new Superior General disguises the policy likewise fixed beforehand of confirming the status quo, as to the future direction of the Society. Shamelessly there were placed at the side of the New Superior two more Assistants, hardly outstanding for their resistance to modernist Rome. Moreover the Chapter had the nerve to invent the function of two “Counsellors,” unheard of in the Society’s Statutes, and to “choose” for the job the two characters most in favour of an agreement with Rome that the Society has ever had: Fr. Schmidberger, known for his friendship with Cardinal Ratzinger, and Bishop Fellay, known for his “new friends” in Rome and for his dedication to liquidating the Society, to be handed over bound hand and foot to the Roman apostates.

The picture that emerges is not necessarily one of unconditional surrender, but we catch a glimpse of a new way of getting closer to Rome, with a little more caution and a little more diplomacy towards the priests and laity of the Society. However, given that God both sees and foresees, and that while man proposes, it is God who disposes, then another possibility is that Our Lord intervenes and infuses in the relatively young Fr Pagliarani the Gifts of Counsel, Fortitude and Fear of God which he will need to straighten out the course of the Society lifeboat, and bring it safely to port. May that be God’s will!

In fairness, the Chapter did succeed in changing the Superior General, which was the most important thing that it had to do. Bishop Fellay and Fr Schmidberger as “Counsellors” may well go on scheming with the Romans on how to bring what remains of the Archbishop’s Society under the heel of Conciliar Rome, but

supreme power in the Society now belongs to Fr Pagliarani. Will he make good use of it? God only knows. "Charity believes all things, hopes all things" (I Cor. XIII, 7). We must pray for him.

Kyrie eleison.