

God Disposes

August 15, 2009

If it is true, as the proverb has it, that “Man proposes while God disposes,” then it can be wise to moderate in the light of God’s dispositions or Providence the fear one may have of men’s propositions or intentions. Even in this appalling crisis of Church and world, we need not panic, because in the words of another proverb, the lines of men may be crooked but with them the Lord God is still writing straight.

For instance, if the Church crisis, core of the world’s crisis, was let loose by Vatican II’s unprecedented split in all Church history between Catholic Truth and Catholic Authority, then Catholics clinging to Truth – broadly, “Traditionalists” – will be short on Authority, while Catholics clinging to Authority – broadly the mainstream Church – will be short on Truth. Do we not observe how “Traditionalists” who have not lost their sense of Catholic Authority are somehow or other proposing or intending to rejoin it, while mainstream Catholics who have not lost all sense of Catholic Truth (countless hordes have lost today all sense of any truth!) are somehow or other proposing or intending to recover it?

But both of these good intentions can become crooked. If on the one hand “Traditionalists” seek to please the world by using ambiguity, the classic start of abandoning Truth, they may please men (especially journalists) but they will certainly not please God, who “hates a double tongue” (Proverbs VIII, 13). On the other hand if Benedict XVI is seeking to re-incorporate the Society of St Pius X in the mainstream ecumenical Church as though Tradition were merely one option amongst many, then he too will be displeasing God by his refusal to see how absolute are the demands of Catholic Truth.

Yet even supposing such intentions are or become crooked, God can still be seen writing straight with them. For instance are not both "Traditionalists" who strive to maintain their sense of Catholic Authority and this Pope striving to maintain contact with Catholic Tradition, each in their own way serving God in His preparation of the future re-uniting of Truth and Authority? That re-uniting may not come as soon as we might like, but we need not panic. The Lord God is visibly at work, looking after His Church.

In the meantime, however, let no Catholic think there is equivalence between Tradition's pulling of Authority towards Truth and the Pope's pulling of Truth towards Authority. Truth has the absolute priority: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth," says the Incarnate Word (Jn. XVIII, 37). The highest Authority of all subordinated himself to Truth. Mistaken Authority must give way. As for Tradition, however truthful it may be, it must remain humble and charitable, always looking towards Authority, without any illusions but with an unshakeable hope.

Kyrie eleison.