

Living Popes

November 29, 2014

On January 29, 1949, Pope Pius XII made the following remarks about the importance of the Pope: *If ever one day – speaking purely hypothetically – material Rome were to collapse; if ever this Vatican basilica, symbol of the one and only victorious Catholic Church, were to bury beneath its ruins the historic treasures and sacred tombs which it encloses, even then the Church would be in no way demolished or split. Christ's promise to Peter would still hold true, the Papacy would last for ever, like the Church, one and indestructible, being founded on the Pope then living ."*

Since these words are classic Church doctrine (only the underlining has been added), resting as they do on Our Lord's own words (Mt. XVI, 16–18), then it is small wonder if, ever since 1962 when the living Popes became Conciliar, millions upon millions of Catholics have been driven to becoming likewise Conciliar and liberal. The only way out of the problem that sedevacantists can see is to deny that the Conciliar Popes have been Popes at all, which can seem to be common sense, but to most Catholics it seems even more to be common sense that the Church designed by God to rest upon the living Pope cannot have existed for the last half century (1962–2014) without one.

It is easy to see how the decline of Christian civilisation since the height of the Middle Ages has led to the present corruption of the living Popes. It is easy to see how God can have permitted this appalling corruption to punish that appalling decline. What is less easy to see is how the Church can still live when the living Popes on whom it is founded are convinced that liberalism, war on God, is Catholic. In Our Lord's own words, *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit and an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit* (Mt. VII, 18).

But a tree half good, half bad, can produce fruits half good, half bad. Now taken as a whole, a mixture of good and bad is bad, but that does not mean that taken part by part, the mixture's good parts are as bad as its bad parts. Cancer in the liver will kill me, but that does not mean that I have cancer in the lungs. Now no living churchman, any more than any man alive, is entirely good or entirely bad. We are all a fluctuating mixture until the day we die. So can there ever have been a living Pope whose fruits were entirely evil? The answer can only be, no. In which case the Catholic Church can have half-lived for the last 50 years on the half-good fruits of the Conciliar Popes, with a half-life permitted by God to purify his Church, but which he would never permit to go so far as to kill his Church.

Thus for example Paul VI wept for the lack of vocations. Benedict XVI hankered after Tradition. Even Pope Francis surely means to bring men to God when he drags God down to men. So, Conciliar Popes are dreadfully mistaken in their ideas, fatally ambiguous in the Faith where they need to be absolutely unambiguous. The Church has been and is dying beneath them, but whatever parts in them have still been good have enabled the Church to continue, and they have been needed as living heads to continue the body of the living Church, as Pius XII said. Then let us not fear that they will be allowed to kill off the Church, but let us for our part fight their liberalism tooth and nail and pray for their return to Catholic sanity, because we do need them for the life of our Church.

Kyrie eleison.