

Newsociety Thinking – I

February 7, 2015

Towards the end of last year, the second-in-command of the Newsociety of St Pius X, Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, gave an interview to a Newsociety magazine in Germany, *Der Gerade Weg*, in which he answered seven questions ranging over the Church, Tradition, the “Resistance” and the SSPX. Given his important position, his thinking cannot be without interest. Its main lines are presented here below, and then its main flaw.

The Catholic Church is broad, much broader than just the Traditional movement. This movement began in the 1970's as an understandable reaction of Catholics rendered homeless by the Conciliar revolution, but we will never make Tradition attractive or convincing if we remain mentally stuck in the 1950's or 1970's. Catholic Tradition is a vast treasure, not to be confined within the condemnations, which were routine in the 19th and 20th centuries, of modernism, liberalism and Freemasonry. In the 1970's and 1980's the SSPX did act as a lifeboat for souls drowning, but in 2014 “our time is different, we cannot stand still.” Church Tradition is one, but traditions are many, and much that is modern is not immoral.

So “we must continually re-position ourselves,” somewhere between denying that there is any crisis of modernism at all in the Church, and denying Church reality, as does the “Resistance.” They turn a purely practical problem of re-positioning into a question of faith, but that “faith” is a fabrication of their own, subjective, personal and in extreme denial of reality – how can Rome not be Catholic? How can Bishop Fellay be Enemy Number One? Ridiculous! The “Resistance” is sectarian, narrow-minded, evil-spirited and divisive.

As for SSPXHQ having betrayed Tradition in 2012, its actions

were attacked from both sides, so it acted with reasonable moderation. Its texts were not dogmatic, just responding to circumstances. It did depart from General Chapter decisions of 2006, but who back then could imagine how much less aggressive towards the SSPX Rome would become by 2012? In 2014 our three bishops could all celebrate public Masses in the Basilica of Lourdes!

In brief, the SSPX follows the Spirit, It draws on Tradition. It saved the liturgy (thanks to Archbishop Lefebvre). It is neither monopolistic, nor as disunited or defeated as it may seem. Storms in the Church do continue, but down with conspiracy theories and Apocalypticism, and up with faith, hope and a new youth! (See francefidele.org for the original in German, and a French translation; see ablefebvreforums or cathinfo.com for an English translation)

So where is the flaw in Fr Pfluger's thinking? It is most clearly seen in the first paragraph above, where he suggests that Tradition can thrive outside of the "19th and 20th century condemnations of modernism, liberalism and Freemasonry." For Fr Pfluger, as for all liberals, these condemnations are not integral to the Catholic Faith but merely "substantial anchorages" (Cardinal Ratzinger's own expression), which in a different age the ship of the Church can leave behind, as corresponding no longer to the different circumstances. Therefore if Fr Pfluger does not have a different faith from that of Archbishop Lefebvre, Pius IX, St Pius X, Pius XII, etc., he certainly has a different concept of that Faith, and that different concept underlies all his remarks in the interview quoted.

Thus the problem is much more than just "practical re-positioning." Today's Rome is indeed not Catholic. Bishop Fellay is a huge problem. The 2006 General Chapter was implicitly dogmatic. Tradition is not to be made attractive to men, but true to God (mentioned only once, passingly, in the

interview). The “Resistance” is far from creating its own
“faith.” And so on and so on.

Kyrie eleison.