

“Resistance” Acting?

October 20, 2018

This time it is a grandmother who writes to “Eleison Comments” with a concern which is widely shared among readers and friends who sympathise in general with the aims of the “Resistance” movement, but wonder what it is actually doing today to help their situation. Here is her plea, slightly summarised:—

I am very disappointed in the lack of leadership which is being shown today in the Society and the Resistance. We support the Resistance but we hear nothing about what it is doing. You have recently consecrated three Bishops but what is their function? What are they doing to give some comfort and hope to the faithful? We don't hear anything about them either. Can they not form some sort of opposition to the Society, together with some very solid priests that have left the Society? Surely God is looking for something more than just prayers. Years ago He raised up the Archbishop to protect His Church. Is He now going to leave us faithful followers in the lurch? I think many Traditional Catholics are desperately looking for some strong leadership today, whether in the Society or in the Resistance.

Dear Grandmother,

Let me begin to answer with a famous episode from Roman history before Christ. In 216 BC the Roman army, normally unbeatable, went to fight the Carthaginians led by Hannibal who had invaded Italy and were threatening the very city of Rome. But at the battle of Cannae in south Italy the Romans allowed themselves to be out-manoeuvred and surrounded by Hannibal, so that they were slaughtered by the Carthaginians. There was consternation in Rome. What should they do? Some Romans wanted to raise another army and go after Hannibal again, but the advice of the Consul Fabius was to avoid battle

if possible, and instead, while keeping a close watch on the enemy, nevertheless to wait until he would go home on his own. The advice was good, and it was followed. Eventually the Carthaginians went home, where their army was crushed by the Romans fourteen years later. "Fabius the Delayer" had won.

No comparisons work perfectly. So after the Church's crushing defeat at Vatican II (1962-1965), would anybody say that Archbishop Lefebvre was wrong to have raised a few years later what army he could to go on fighting the modernists? Surely not. But Vatican II was a major battle which left enough good soldiers scattered around for the Archbishop to be able to rally them together in a small army in the 1970's. On the contrary, the defeat of that army from 2012 onwards was a numerically small defeat, leaving far fewer scattered soldiers to fight. Could the strategy be the same as in the 1970's and 1980's? Surely not. For one thing, the soldiers this time round, often children of the revolutionary 1960's or later, had that much less sense of obedience or of an ordered Church or world than the scattered Catholics had had after the Council. For who can deny that the 2010's are far more disordered and undisciplined even than the 1970's? One may wonder if the Archbishop, with all his gifts, could or would have put together a "counter-Society" today. Perhaps, perhaps not...

As it is, the four bishops of the "Resistance" movement do what they can, each in his own part of the world, to provide the few Catholics wishing to keep the Faith with iron rations of sane doctrine and guidance available to all interested, together with the episcopal sacraments. That is a minimal achievement, neither glamorous nor sensational, but it may be the essential necessary. If it is, may God keep us faithful.

Kyrie eleison.