

Sarto, Siri?

September 29, 2012

In a sermon for the Feast of St Pius X I found myself uttering « almost a heresy »: I wondered aloud whether Giuseppe Sarto would have disobeyed Paul VI's destruction of the Church, if, instead of dying as Pope Pius X in 1914, he had died as a Cardinal in, say, 1974. Within the Society of St Pius X that must sound like a heresy because how can the wisdom of the heavenly patron of the SSPX be in any way flawed? Yet the question is not idle.

In the 1970's Archbishop Lefebvre made personal visits to a number of the Church's best cardinals and bishops in the hope of persuading a mere handful of them to offer public resistance to the Vatican II revolution. He used to say that just half a dozen bishops resisting together could have seriously obstructed the Conciliar devastation of the Church. Alas, not even Pius XII's choice of successor, Cardinal Siri of Genoa, would make a public move against the Church Establishment. Finally Bishop de Castro Mayer stepped forward, but only in the 1980's, by when the Conciliar Revolution was well ensconced at the top of the Church.

So how could the best of well-trained minds have been so darkened? How could so few of the best churchmen at that time not have seen what the Archbishop was seeing, for instance that the "law" establishing the Novus Ordo Mass was no law at all, because it belongs to the very nature of law to be an ordinance of reason for the common good? How could he have been so relatively alone in not letting such a basic principle of common sense be smothered by respect for authority, when the Church's very survival was being placed in peril by Vatican II and the New Mass? How can authority have so gained the upper hand on reality and truth?

My own answer is that for seven centuries Christendom has been

sliding into apostasy. For 700 years, with noble interruptions like the Counter-Reformation, the reality of Catholicism has been slowly eaten away by the cancerous fantasy of liberalism, which is the freeing of man from God by the freeing of nature from grace, of mind from objective truth and of will from objective right and wrong. For the longest time, 650 years, the Catholic churchmen clung to and defended reality, but finally enough of the engrossing fantasy of glamorous modernity worked its way into their bones for reality to lose its grip on their minds and wills. Lacking grace, as St Thomas More said of the English bishops in his time betraying the Catholic Church, the Conciliar bishops let men's fantasy take over from God's reality, and authority take over from truth. There are practical lessons for clergy and laity alike.

Colleagues inside and outside the SSPX, to serve God, let us beware of reacting like Giuseppe Siri when we need to be reacting like Giuseppe Sarto, with his magnificent denunciations of the modern errors in *Pascendi*, *Lamentabili* and the *Letter on the Sillon*. And to obtain the grace we need in this most tremendous crisis of all Church history, we need tremendously to pray.

Layfolk, if horrors of modern life make you "hunger and thirst after justice," rejoice if you can that the horrors are keeping you real, and do not doubt that if you persevere in your hunger, you will "have your fill" (Mt.V, 6). Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, and they that mourn, says Our Lord, in the same place. As for the surest protection against your minds and hearts being taken over by the fantasy, pray five, better fifteen, Mysteries a day of Our Lady's Holy Rosary.

Kyrie eleison.