

Sedevacantism Again – II

October 8, 2016

For any Catholic soul realizing today the gravity of the crisis in the Church and agonizing over it, the simplicity of sedevacantism dismissing as invalid the Church and Popes of Vatican II can become a serious temptation. Worse, the seeming logic of the ecclesiavacantists' and sedevacantists' arguments can turn that temptation into a mental trap which can at worst lead a Catholic to lose his faith altogether. That is why these "Comments" will return in more detail to the main argument of the scattershot of arguments laid out in the article by BpS from 1991 mentioned here last week. Here again is that argument:–

Major: the Catholic Church is absolutely indefectible (it has God's own guarantee that it will last to the end of the world – cf. Mt XXVIII, 20). Minor: But the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church, overwhelmed by neo-modernism and liberalism, represents an absolute defection. Conclusion: the Novus Ordo Church is absolutely not Catholic and its Popes are absolutely not Popes. In other words the Church is absolutely white while the Newchurch is absolutely black, so Church and Newchurch are absolutely different. To minds which like to think in black and white with nothing in between, this argument has much appeal. But to minds which recognize that in real life things are often grey, or a mixture of black and white (without black ceasing to be black or white ceasing to be white), the argument is too absolute to be true. Thus in the Major there is an exaggeration of the Church's indefectibility, and in the Minor there is an exaggeration of the Newchurch's defection. Theory can be absolute, but reality rarely is absolute. Let us look at indefectibility and the Conciliar defection as they are in reality.

As for the Major, sedevacantists frequently exaggerate the Church's indefectibility, just as they frequently exaggerate

the Popes' infallibility, because that is what they need to support their emotional horror at what has become of the Catholic Church since the Council. But in reality just as that infallibility does not exclude great errors of some Popes in Church history and only applies when the Pope is either, Ordinarily, saying what the Church has always said, or, Extraordinarily, is engaging all four conditions of the 1870 definition, so the Church's indefectibility does not absolutely exclude some huge defections at given moments of Church history, such as the triumphs of Islam or Protestantism or of the Antichrist (Lk. XVIII, 8), it only excludes absolutely a total defection, or total failure (Mt. XXVIII, 20). Thus indefectibility is not as absolute as BpS pretends.

As for the Minor, it is true that the defection of Conciliarism is considerably more grave than that of either Islam or Protestantism because it strikes at the head and heart of the Church in Rome, which they did not do. Nevertheless even half a century of Conciliarism (1965 to 2016) has not made the Church totally defect, or fail. For instance Archbishop Lefebvre – and he was not alone – held high the Faith from 1970 to 1991, his successors did the same, more or less, from 1991 to 2012, and the embattled “Resistance” upholds his line still, and before the Church humanly collapses in a not too distant future, unquestionably its indefectibility will be divinely saved, just as before world's end – Mt. XXIV, 21–22. Thus Conciliarism as a defection of the Church is not as absolute as BpS pretends, either.

So his syllogism needs to be recast – Major: the Church's indefectibility does not exclude huge defections but only a total defection. Minor: Vatican II was a huge but not total defection of the Church (even if Catholics aware of its danger must totally avoid it, for fear of contamination). Conclusion: the Church's indefectibility does not exclude Vatican II. In brief, God's own Church is bigger than all the wickedness of

Devil or man, even Vatican II. The Conciliar defection may well be of an unprecedented gravity in all Church history, but the Church's indefectibility and the Popes' infallibility come from God and not from men. Like liberals, the sedevacantists are thinking humanly, all too humanly.

Kyrie eleison.