

Truth and Authority – III

July 10, 2021

With regard to the crisis of the Church, the diagnosis of loyalty to Catholic Truth battling it out ever since Vatican II with loyalty to Catholic Authority (EC 726, June 12) throws much light (EC 728, June 26), but it may have yet more light to throw, on the vexed question of how far defenders of the true Catholic Faith need today to be structured. What one might call normal Catholics will argue that Authority is so intrinsic to the Church that defenders of the Truth with no structure of authority at all among them can only go nowhere, can only finish by dissolving in thin air. What one might call abnormal Catholics will reply, with these “Comments,” that since Catholic Truth is the purpose of Catholic Authority (EC 726), then those who truly possess Catholic Truth need, exceptionally, strictly speaking no further structure to hold them together. For if, as the saying goes, “The Truth is mighty and will prevail,” it will also unite.

Normally, ever since Our Lord founded His Church, it has had to make its way in hostile territory, namely a world of which the Devil is Prince (Jn. XIV, 30), because of original sin. In this world Jesus threw him out by the Cross (Jn. XII, 31), but He left man with the wounds of original sin, so that man continued to need all the Church’s Authority to protect the Church’s Truth (EC 726). But after 19 centuries Pope Leo XIII was given a vision of God allowing once more full freedom to Satan to attack the Church, so that abnormally, at Vatican II, one century later Satan effectively overwhelmed even Church Authority. How had God now foreseen to protect His Truth from anarchy in His Church? There was never any question of the Church not surviving (Mt. XXVIII, 20). What would God do to protect His Church? Deliberately He had allowed its normal Authority to be broken down. What would He abnormally resort to?

Surely we can see it all around us. Since 1965 when Vatican II came officially to an end, Catholics have had a half century in which to grow used to an Authority above them growing more and more empty of that Catholic Truth which it is their purpose and justification to teach. Have Catholics abandoned the Church accordingly? Yes, many have turned to false religions or given up religion altogether, but not all. Sheep that are keeping the Faith can be found scattered in all directions by their Shepherd the Pope having been struck, but they are to be found still all over the official Church, in what used to be *Ecclesia Dei* groups, in the Society of St Pius X, in St Peter's Fraternity, in the "Resistance," in sedevacantists and so on and so on. They are liable all to excommunicate one another, but that is not what matters. What matters is the Catholic Truth which they are all more or less hanging onto, unless and until they let go, but that Truth includes that they must all come back under Catholic Authority again as soon as it comes back itself under Catholic Truth, but not before. Anyone can foresee that not all the sheep now scattered will find it equally easy to submit to Authority, but it will be equally necessary if they are to remain Catholics.

Meanwhile who can say that God has abandoned His sheep? The golden rule is that He never abandons a soul that has not first abandoned Him. In fact many of us can tell of the remarkable ways by which He has individually enabled us to hold onto the Faith, or even return to it, and that includes the crisis of the Church itself. Without the madness of the modernists one might have gone on sleepwalking in the Faith until one died. One may now find it difficult to find a group to which one can attach oneself to live the Faith, but if one searches and keeps searching until one finds what one needs, it is not God who will fail to provide it. For some 40 years the Society of St Pius X was a real oasis in the desert, and still many souls find refuge there. It is being urged now by Archbishop Viganò to keep putting Truth before misguided

Authority, Faith before "obedience."

Therefore yesterday's theology manuals (strings of Catholic pearls) were right when they said things like, "No heresy can come from the Pope because then the situation of the Church would be hopeless." That situation is indeed now humanly hopeless, but the manuals must add in the "humanly," because they had forgotten that what may indeed be hopeless for men can be child's play for God.

Kyrie eleison.