

Undignified Dignity

March 16, 2013

A reader has argued in favour of the Vatican II teaching on religious liberty. Even if the subject has often come up in "Eleison Comments," her arguments are surely worth going through, because it is vital for Catholics today to grasp thoroughly the falsehood of that teaching. What the Council taught in paragraph #2 of its Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*), is that all men are to be free from all coercion by any other men or group of men when it comes to acting in private or in public in accordance with their beliefs. Moreover every human State must make this natural right into a constitutional or civil right.

On the contrary, all the way up to Vatican II the Catholic Church consistently taught that every State, as embodying God's civil authority over God's human creatures, is obliged as such to use that authority to protect and favour God's one true Church, the Catholic Church of the Incarnate God, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Obviously, non-Catholic States will be condemned rather for their lack of faith than for not giving civil protection to that faith. Likewise Catholic States may refrain from prohibiting the public practice of false religions where such prohibition will do more harm than good for the salvation of the citizens' souls. But the principle remains intact: God's States must protect God's true religion.

In fact the Conciliar teaching implies either that States are not from God, or that there is no one true religion of God. Either way it is implicitly liberating the State from God, and so putting the liberty of man above the rights of God, or, simply, man above God. That is why Archbishop Lefebvre said that the Conciliar teaching was blasphemy. And it is no use saying that the other paragraphs of *DH* contain good Catholic teaching. One gash by the iceberg was enough to sink the *Titanic*. *DH*#2 alone is enough to sink Catholic doctrine. But

let us see the arguments in defence of the Council's teaching.

1 *DH is part of the Church's Ordinary Magisterium, which must be taken seriously.* DH came from the Church's Magisters, or masters, yes, but not from the infallible Ordinary Magisterium, because DH contradicts the Church's traditional teaching, as shown above. 2 *DH merely makes clear human rights that are granted by natural law.* Natural law puts the rights of man below, and not above, the rights of God. 3 *DH does not negate the Catholic model for Church-State relations.* It most certainly does! Paragraph #2 liberates the State from its intrinsic obligation to the one true Church. 4 *DH is written in the context of the modern world where everybody believes in human rights.* Since when must the Church be adapted to the world, and not the world to the Church? 5 *DH does not teach that man has a right to error.* If God's State must grant a civil right to practise, in public, false religions, then God is being made to grant a right to error. 6 *DH is a plea to modern governments to grant half a loaf, which is better than no bread.* True Catholic doctrine is so logical and so coherent that to give away any of it is to give away all of it. And what sheep saved itself by offering itself to the wolf? 7 *Catholics must not retreat from the modern world into a doctrinal ghetto.* Catholics must do whatever they have to do, go wherever they have to go, in order not to give away the rights of God or compromise his honour. If that means martyrdom, so be it!

Kyrie eleison.