

>From Blue Paper Year 7 # 305

“Episcopal Grace”

“Even if at the moment He [the Blessed Lord] is keeping quiet, one or another of these bishops will receive from the Holy Ghost the courage needed to arise in his turn. If my work is of God, He will guard it and use it for the good of the Church. Our Lord has promised us, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.

“This is why I persist, and if you wish to know the real reason for my persistence, it is this. At the hour of my death, when Our Lord asks me: ‘What have you done with your episcopate, what have you done with your episcopal and priestly grace?’ I do not want to hear from His lips the terrible words ‘You have helped to destroy the Church along with the rest of them.’” (Open Letter, Arch. Marcel Lefebvre, p 163)

Indeed, Archbishop Lefebvre wrote his *Open Letter to Confused Catholics* displaying the core of today’s crisis within the Catholic Church: Bishops and Priests have lost their identity in the priesthood. Most of the Bishops are missing the point of their vocation because instead of being shepherds, they have become hirelings. The more Catholic Bishops are astray, the more the priesthood is ruined. Certainly, Bishops are being deprived of the Apostolic leadership by presumption or by omission.

As a matter of fact, a Bishop is an overseer. He acts as the Supreme ecclesiastical ruler of his diocese. He contributes - with others Bishops and the Pope - to the continuation of the Catholic Church until the end of the world. All of them have not only episcopal duties and obligations but also privileges, due to their divine mission instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Bishops are the successors of the Apostles; the Pope in his turn is the successor of Saint Peter, honored by the privilege of Primacy. Moreover, let’s not forget that Judas Iscariot was a bad Bishop. He betrayed his divine calling; he did not build the Church but tried to destroy It. At the end, he lost his soul, as Saint Augustine said.

In order to recognize His true Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ has enable us to find four distinctive marks: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. In reference to the Apostolic mark, Bishops must be successors of the Apostles, in such an extent that their episcopal consecration must be traced back under the law of grace for the validity of the sacraments.

In the context of valid sacraments, there are three necessary elements for their administration - matter, form and intention. These conditions run for all sacraments; they are more imperative for the sacrament of Holy Orders.

It follows that sacraments are invalid if the required matter is missing, as the water for Baptism or the holy chrism for Confirmation. In addition, the form -as verbal statement- signifies the application of the action unto that required matter. “The words” have also been defined by Catholic teaching: the form is so definite that any, even a casual deviation from it, renders the sacrament null, said the Council of Trent. Lastly, the intention is to do what the Catholic Church intends by performing the administration of the sacraments. In fact, if the minister voluntarily excludes some essential aspect of the sacrament, then the sacrament is invalid. Thence, a problem arises when there is a doubt in the performing of a sacrament using a doubtful matter or form, and applying them by a doubtful minister or intention.

For instance, in 1896 there was a doubt concerning the validity of the “priesthood and episcopacy” of the Anglican ministers. The Holy See was consulted to solve the debate, and Leo XIII declared and defined, denying the validity of the priesthood and episcopacy for Anglican ministry, because their leadership had interrupted the line of succession, and therefore they lack the Apostolic mark.

Nonetheless, a sacrament may be validly administered but it could be “no licit,” if a condition imposed by Canon Law was not observed - When a priest administers sacraments under the penalty of excommunication or suspension, or when an episcopal consecration is performed without a mandate from the Pope. [This was the case of the 1988 Episcopal Consecrations by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, cfr. *Is Tradition Excommunicated?* 1993].

In truth, the priestly Order is one alone as a sacrament, yet it has various degrees of dignity and power. Although the episcopate completes the priesthood and forms one Order with it, Bishops are by divine right superior to Priests both in the hierarchy of Orders and in that of jurisdiction, functioning as ordinary ministers of Confirmation and Holy Orders, so that they possess superior legislative, judiciary, and coercive powers.

Thus, Bishops - as ministers who govern members of the Catholic Church - must have an Apostolic succession for continuing the mission of Our Lord Jesus Christ, then a “Bishop” without Apostolic succession is not Catholic nor a Bishop. Therefore, we must avoid any liturgical or religious service in which he presides.

Consequently, as Catholics, we must avoid the “Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church,” and others alike. And we must be aware that there are societies or groups usurping to themselves the right of assuming episcopal powers, and by it deceiving the faithful. In one word, it is a fraud! Such groups or individuals must necessarily be sunk in a pernicious error, not only in the doctrinal domain by corrupted mind, but also in the moral domain by deceitful will.

Otherwise, under the pre-Vatican II directives, Bishops were responsible directly to the Pope. They governed their flocks in the name of God as representatives of Christ. They were not delegates of the Holy See, though they were subject to its authority, but exercised their own powers by virtue of their office. They did not enjoy personal infallibility, but collectively, in union with the Pope, they were infallible.

As result of the reforms imposed by the Vatican II Council, the democratization of government was followed quiet naturally by the democratization of the Magisterium, which took place through the driving force of “Collegiality and Religious Liberty.”

For the *Novus Ordo* Bishops evangelization is first, and then secondary is the sacrifice. Evangelization deprives of its purpose, and earnestly seeks for false “social justice” and a false “liberty,” in the same way that Pope Bergolio is portraying the New Evangelization disaster. It really is a serious error, which adulterates the definition of the priesthood - the priest is not longer one who goes up to the altar and offers up to God a sacrifice for the remission of sins. For the *Novus Ordo* priests it is much more important the “Liturgy of the word” than the propitiatory sacrifice.

In this perspective, the “Dogmatic” Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (CLG) does not present our Lord Jesus Christ any more as perpetuating in His Church, founded by Him upon Saint Peter, who was divinely appointed, **but instead as a mystery of the people of God.** During the presentation of the paragraph 25 of CLG, it provoked a heated controversy in such a manner that Paul VI had to insert some footnotes in the document: “&25. *Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to **the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra**; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will.*” (CLG November 21, 1964)

Thereafter, Paul VI has conveyed a note of explanation to the Council Fathers, as an authentic source of interpretation, it says: “[Episcopal] *College should not be understood in a strict juridical sense, that is, as a group of equals, but the power of the Bishops is inferior to that of the Pope. In virtue of a necessary hierarchical communion, “ex natura rei,” the Bishops are necessarily subordinate to the Pope, their Head, who, in the College, keeps the office of the Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the universal Church intact. Therefore, the power of the Episcopal College is only rarely exercised and has no value without the consent of the Pope.*”

Doubtless to say, this was the hatching of the democratization of the Magisterium. Some years later, it has been explained at the light of 1983 Code of Canon Law, by which it has permeated the meaning of the reforms under the terms of Religious Liberty, Collegiality, and Ecumenism. For example, “*Can. 336: The college of bishops, whose head is the Supreme Pontiff and whose members are bishops by virtue of sacramental consecration and hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college and in which the apostolic body continues, together with its head and never without this head, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church.*”

Hereafter, the Pope is described as the head of the College of Bishops. We did find such doctrine in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, according to which the College of Bishops together with the Pope, exercises supreme power in the Church in habitual and constant manner. However, without considering Paul VI’s note of explanation, this “doctrine of double supremacy” has become a sort of Vatican II Magisterium, which is contrary to the teachings and traditions of the Church [Dz. 3055], and as Pope Leo XIII has expressed in his encyclical *Satis Cognitum*. [June 29, 1896, On the Unity of the Church].

In consequence, we must be aware, and accordingly act to, that by omission a leadership can also be astray from the Apostolic mark in the domain of doctrine, as it was presented by Bishop Fellay’s declaration on April 15, 2012. In fact, after his declaration Catholic Tradition has crumbling down instead of building it up in today’s tragedy in the Church, by going astray three more episcopal graces...

Saint Marcel Martyr, pray for us.

Viva Cristo Rey!

Father Zendejas