

St. Dominic's Chapel

May 31st, 2015

Blue Paper # 267

“Pastoral versus Doctrinal Agreement!”

This is the reponse to the Three Bishops Letter given by the SSPX General Council. It was never retracted but always enforced. Let's read a second or more times so that we are able to perceive the spirit, which inspired the compromised guidance of the SSPX leadership within a frame of practical agreement with Rome. It is not what is coming about the shortcoming of Tradition but what Tradition is not holding any more from talking the same language with the “hermeneutic of continuity.”

Society of Saint Pius X

Your Excellencies,

Menzingen, April 14, 2012 The Most Reverend Tissier de Mallerais, Williamson, and De Galarreta

Your collective letter addressed to the members of the General Council received our full attention. We thank you for your solicitude and charity. Allow us in our turn, with the same concern for justice and charity, to make the following observations.

First of all, the letter indeed mentions the gravity of the crisis gripping the Church and precisely analyzes the nature of the ambient errors that pullulate in the Church. Nonetheless, the description is marred by two defects in relation to the reality in the Church: it is lacking in a supernatural spirit and at the same time it lacks realism.

The description lacks a supernatural spirit. To read your letter, one seriously wonders if you still believe that the visible Church whose seat is at Rome is indeed the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a Church horribly disfigured, to be sure, a planta pedis usque ad verticem capitis, but a Church that in spite of all still has as its head Our Lord Jesus Christ. One gets the impression that you have been so scandalized that you no longer accept that it can still be the true Church. For you, it would seem to be a question whether Benedict XVI is still the legitimate pope. And if he is, there is a question as to whether Jesus Christ can still speak through him. If the pope expresses a legitimate will concerning us which is good and which does not order anything contrary to the commandments of God, have we the right to neglect or to dismiss this will? Otherwise, on what principle do you base your actions? Do you not believe that if Our Lord commands us, He will also give us the means to carry on our work? Now, the pope has let us know that an abiding concern for the regularization of our situation for the good of the Church lies at the very heart of his pontificate, and also that he knew very well that it would be easier both for him and for us to leave things as they stand now. And so it is indeed a decided and legitimate will that he is expressing.

With the attitude you recommend, no room is left for the Gideons or the Davids or for those who count on the Lord's help. You reproach us with being naïve or fearful, but rather it is your vision of the Church that is too human, and even fatalistic. You see the dangers, the plots, the difficulties, but you no longer see the assistance of grace and of the Holy Ghost. If one grants that Divine Providence leads the affairs of men while safeguarding their liberty, it is also needful to admit that the gestures in our favor over the last several years are also under its guidance. Now, they trace a line-- not straight--but clearly in favor of Tradition. Why should this suddenly stop when we are doing our utmost to be faithful and to intensify our prayer? Will the good God let us fall at the most critical moment? That does not make a lot of sense, especially as we are not trying to impose on Him the least self-will, but are trying to examine events closely so as to discern what God wants, and being disposed to all that shall please Him. At the same time, your description is lacking in realism as regards both the degree of the errors and their extent.

Degree: Within the Society, some are making the conciliar errors into super heresies, absolute evil, worse than anything, in

the same way that the liberals have dogmatized this pastoral council. The evils are sufficiently dramatic; there is hardly any reason to exaggerate them further (cf. Roberto deMattei, Une histoire jamais écrite, p. 22; Mgr. Gherardini, Un débat à ouvrir, p. 53, etc.). Needful distinctions are not being made, whereas Mgr. Lefebvre did make the necessary distinctions on the subject of liberals several times.ⁱ This failure to distinguish is leading one or the other of you to a hardening of your position. This is a grave matter because this caricature no longer corresponds with reality and in future it will logically end in a real schism. And it may well be that this fact is one of the arguments that urges me to delay no longer in responding to the Roman authorities.

Extent: On the one hand, you saddle the current authorities with all the errors and evils to be found in the Church while leaving aside the fact that they are trying at least partly to disengage themselves from the most serious of them (the condemnation of the “hermeneutic of rupture” denounces real errors). On the other hand, you act as if ALL of them are implicated in this pertinacity (“they’re all modernists,” “all are rotten”). Now that is manifestly false. The great majority are still caught up in the movement, but not all. So that, coming to the most crucial question, the possibility of our surviving in the conditions of recognition of the Society by Rome, we do not reach the same conclusion as you do.

Let us note in passing that it was not we who were looking for a practical agreement. That is untrue. We have not refused a priori to consider, as you ask, the Pope’s offer. For the common good of the Society, we would prefer by far the current solution of an intermediary status quo, but clearly, Rome is not going to tolerate it any longer.

In itself, the solution of the proposed personal prelature is not a trap. This is apparent from the fact, first of all, that the present situation in April 2012 is quite different from that of 1988. To pretend that nothing has changed is an historical error. The same evils afflict the Church, the consequences are even worse and more obvious than before; but at the same time we have observed a change of attitude in the Church, helped by the gestures and acts of Benedict XVI toward Tradition. This new movement, which began at least ten years ago, has been growing. It has reached a good number (still a minority) of young priests, seminarians, and even includes a small number of young bishops who clearly stand out from their predecessors, who confide in us their sympathy and support, but who are still pretty well stifled by the dominant line in the hierarchy in favor of Vatican II. This hierarchy is losing speed. This perception is not an illusion, and it shows that it is no longer illusory for us to contemplate an “intramural” struggle, the difficulty of which we are not unaware. I have been able to observe at Rome that however much the talk about the glories of Vatican II we’ll be dinning with is still on the lips of many, it is no longer in people’s heads. Fewer and fewer believe it.

This concrete situation, with the canonical solution that has been proposed, is quite different from that of 1988. And when we compare the arguments that Archbishop Lefebvre made at the time, we conclude that he would not have hesitated to accept what is being proposed to us. Let us not lose our sense of the Church, which was so strong in our venerated founder.

The history of the Church shows that recovery from the conflicts that beset it usually occurs gradually, slowly. And once one problem is resolved, something else starts up—oportet haereses esse. To require that we wait until everything is regulated before reaching what you call a practical agreement is not realistic. Seeing how things happen, it is likely that it will take decades for this crisis to come to an end. But to refuse to work in the field because there are still weeds that may crowd out or hamper the good grain is a curious reading of the Biblical lesson: It is our Lord Himself who gave us to understand by the parable of the wheat and the cockle that there will always be, in one form or another, weeds to be uprooted and grappled with in His Church...

You cannot know how your attitude these last months--quite different for each one of you--has been hard on us. It has kept the Superior General from communicating and sharing with you these weighty matters, in which he would have so willingly involved you had he not found himself before such a strong and passionate incomprehension. How he would have liked to be able to count on you, on your advice and counsel at such a delicate passage in our history. It has been a great trial, perhaps the greatest of his superiorate. Our venerated founder gave the bishops of the Society a precise function and duties. He made it clear that the unifying principle of our society is the Superior General. But for some time now, you have tried, each in his own way, to impose on him your point of view, even in the form of threats, even publically. This dialectic between truth and faith on one side and authority on the other is contrary to the spirit of the priesthood. At least he might have hoped that you

would try to understand the arguments that have moved him to act as he has these last years, according to the will of Divine Providence.

We do pray for each one of you, that in this battle, which is far from being over we may find ourselves all together for the greater glory of God and for the love of our dear Society.

May our Risen Lord and our Lady deign to protect you and bless you,

+Bernard Fellay Niklaus Pfluger+ Alain-Marc Nély+

ⁱ “Just because a pope is liberal doesn’t mean he is not the pope. (...) We have to stay the course and not go astray in the difficult times we are living. We might very well be tempted by extreme solutions and start saying: “No, no, the pope is not just a liberal – the pope is a heretic! Probably the pope is even more than a heretic, and therefore there is no more pope!” That is not correct. Just because someone is liberal does not necessarily make him a heretic, and therefore it does not necessarily mean he is outside the Church. We have to know how to make the necessary distinctions. That is very important if we are going to remain on the right track and remain truly in the Church. Otherwise, where are we going to end up? There is no more pope, there are no more cardinals because if the pope was not the pope when he named the cardinals, those cardinals can no longer elect a pope because they are not cardinals... And then what? An angel from heaven is going to bring us a new pope? It’s absurd! Not only absurd, but dangerous! Because it might lead us toward solutions which really are schismatic.” (Conference at Angers, 1980.) See also *Fideliter* 57, p. 17, concerning the proper measure.