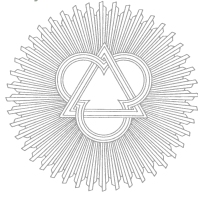

Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



JUNE 2014

Published by Most Holy Trinity Seminary, 1000 Spring Lake Highway, Brooksville, Florida 34602. This newsletter is sent free of charge to all Seminary benefactors who contribute \$75.00 or more annually. If you would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us by mail, or at piuspapax@gmail.com. Visit our website at mostholysanctityseminary.org

My dear Catholic people,

Archbishop Benelli, back in the 1970's, an awful man, coined the word "Conciliar Church" in the presence of Archbishop Lefebvre to describe the post-Vatican II condition of the Catholic Church.

Archbishop Lefebvre seized upon the phrase, since it fit his theological model perfectly. He held, and the Society of Saint Pius X continues to hold, that there are two churches, the Catholic Church and the Conciliar



Novus Ordo Archbishop Benelli (1921-1982) is in the center. At the right is none other than Ratzinger, at the left is an unidentified Novus Ordo prelate.

Church, and that the "Pope," in this case Francis, is the head of both churches. When he says or does orthodox things, he is acting as the head of the Catholic Church. When he says or does unorthodox things, he is acting as the head of the Conciliar Church.

Archbishop Lefebvre said that we have to "sift" the acts of the magisterium from Rome in order to determine from which church they proceed.

Bishop Williamson recently posted a defense of the Conciliar Church theory on his blog, and for this reason I wish to address the issue here.

The Conciliar Church explanation is false. Any church, whether the true Church or a false one, consists of two things: (1) a *material* element, which is the institution or *moral person*, something like a corporation; (2) a *formal* element, which is the complex of dogmas, moral teachings, rites, disciplines, and worship which constitute the very essence of a religion. These constitute the *formal* element, since they give form or *definition* to the moral person or institution with which they are associated. Hence the various religions take their names and characteristics from this formal element.

In the past, heretics and schismatics had at least the honesty to break from the institution of the Catholic Church when they broke from the formal element of the Catholic Church. The Greek schismatics broke from the papacy, and formed their own false church, their own false hierarchy, their own false institution. The Lutherans did the same, together with other protestants. The Old Catholics did the same in the 1870's.

The Modernists, however, who represent the synthesis of all heresies, as Saint Pius X said, decided to transform the institution of the Catholic Church by maintaining its structures and identical moral personality, but at the same time changing its content, that is, by altering what pertains to its form or definition. Put simply, they proposed to use the magnificent edifice of the Catholic Church as a vehicle to promote an entirely new religion.

It was an ingenious plan, and one which required an enormous patience. It is a plan hatched in hell, inspired by the devil, since only the devil himself could have urged such cunning and perseverance in human beings in order to accomplish such a task. The outcome of this plan was foreseeable: the prestige of the institution of the Catholic Church, as well as the obedience which Catholics gave to this institution, would be used to poison the true Faith on

a worldwide scale, to destroy Catholicism definitively, and fulfill the burning desire of Voltaire: "*Ecrasez l'infâme*," that is, "Crush the despicable thing." He was referring, of course, to the Catholic Church.

There is a great deal of evidence in support of the existence of this heinous plan. It is outside of the scope of this article, however, to present it now.

The Conciliar Church theory suits perfectly the ideas of Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X, since they desire to have the approval of the Modernist authorities but at the same to repudiate any doctrine or practice which they find to be contrary to Catholic tradition.

Whatever they deem acceptable, then, they assign to the "Catholic Church" and whatever they deem unacceptable, they assign to the "Conciliar Church." They then convince their people that they are "under the Pope" and are humbly obedient to the "Holy Father" – unlike those evil sedevacantists – but at the same time are free to reject whatever comes from the Conciliar Church, and have free rein to do whatever they please.

This is pure hokum and horsefeathers, but unfortunately most traditional Catholics have fallen for it, as readily as most Catholics fell for the Novus Ordo.

Why the term "Conciliar Church" ought to be rejected. There is no *Conciliar Church*, because the Modernists never founded a religious institution distinct from the Catholic Church. They succeeded in their purpose of rising to power by legitimate elections and appointments, and once in, used their *supposed* power to poison the Catholic Faith.

The true description of the current problem is this: the Modernists are occupying the institution of the Catholic Church and are **attempting** to use it for their own ends of destroying the Faith and replacing it with Modernism. According to the Thesis of Bishop Guérard des Lauriers, the Modernist hierarchs occupy posts of authority by legitimate election and designation, but at the same time lack the authority to rule the Church, and are therefore false popes and false bishops. According to the *totalist* position of sedevacantism, the Modernist hierarchs do not even enjoy a legitimate election or designation to these posts, but are merely occupying them physically, just like revolutionary thugs who have by force taken over a government building. Both explanations, however, agree on these points: (1) they are false popes and false bishops; (2) there is no new institution which the Modernists have founded that could be termed the "Conciliar Church."

Both explanations see a continuity of the institution of the Catholic Church, but in differing ways. Again, it is

not within the scope of the article to explain these differences.

The notion of a Conciliar Church is impossible, because the Modernist hierarchy has never broken from the Catholic Church. Nor has there ever been any declaratory sentence by a Catholic authority severing them from the Catholic Church. Hence there is no new institution or church body known as the "Conciliar Church." **This fact – that the Modernist hierarchy has never been legally cut off from the Catholic Church – is at the heart of the problem which we face today, and is the source of all of the confusion among traditionalists.**

There are only three possible ways of seeing this Novus Ordo hierarchy: (1) as the true hierarchy of the Catholic Church, having both legitimate election and designation *as well as* the power from Christ to teach, rule, and sanctify the Catholic Church; (2) as an utterly false hierarchy, which has no legitimate election or designation, something like the Greek Orthodox or Anglican hierarchy; (3) as a hierarchy which has legitimate election and designation, but has no power from Christ to teach, rule, or sanctify the Church.

There is no legitimate fourth way in which to see them. For the elements which constitute hierarchy are *material* and *formal*. The material element is their election and/or designation to receive the power from Christ to rule the Church. The formal element is the actual power to rule the Church, which power comes not from any purely human source, but from Christ as Head of the Catholic Church.

Hence the possibilities are these: (1) The Novus Ordo hierarchy possesses *both* the material *and* formal elements; (2) it possesses *neither* the material *nor* the formal element; (3) it possesses the material element, *but not* the formal element.¹

In none of these three theories, however, is there a question of a *new institution*, separate from the institution of the Catholic Church.

Therefore there is no "Conciliar Church." There is only a Modernist hierarchy *attempting* to use the Catholic institution for its own evil ends. For this reason it is *essential* that Catholics denounce it as a false hierarchy. For the crime of attempting to impose a new and false religion upon the Catholic Church severs the Modernist hierarchy *in reality* from the Catholic Church, even before any declaratory sentence from a Catholic pope. By analogy a murderer is a murderer *in reality* before he is condemned as such by a court of law.

Novus Ordo conservatives hold to continuity of both institution and of doctrine, worship and discipline. Observing the continuity of institution (the material aspect of the Church), Novus Ordo conservatives do

¹ The fourth possibility, that they possess the formal element, but not the material, is not legitimate, since it is impossible that someone in some way obtain papal power who is not elected or designated to receive the power. Otherwise anyone could stand up and say "I am the Pope." Those who have conducted little "conclaves" to elect "popes" have fallen into this absurdity. The very reason why they are absurd is that they lack a legitimate election to be the pope. Only lunatics take these "conclaves" seriously.



nakedness of the emperor – the apostasy of Francis – with bolts and bolts of cloth which they manufacture in their imagination. They spin and spin new theories which connect the new religion to the old. They are presently faced, however, with the insoluble problem of doctrinal continuity in Francis' approval of sodomy and adultery. Night and day will they toil on their looms in order to produce a thicker cloth which covers his nakedness more efficaciously.

But their system will eventually collapse, and it is already collapsing. Many of them are seeing the insanity of it.

Sedevacantists hold to continuity of institution but to discontinuity of doctrine, worship, and discipline. No Catholic could ever hold to the discontinuity of the institution of the Catholic Church. For the endurance of this institution until the end of the world is a matter of faith.

The two kinds of sedevacantists explain this continuity of institution in differing ways.

All sedevacantists, however, assign Vatican II's defection from the true faith, morals, and discipline to the only sources in which defection can happen, namely: (1) to the heresy, nay apostasy, of those human beings who are currently known as the Novus Ordo hierarchy, and (2) even more importantly, to their intention and practice of imposing their own apostasy upon the faithful and Catholic institutions, *with attempted force and authority, as if it were Catholicism itself.*

Consequently, sedevacantists in general explain the current situation in this manner: that although there is a continuity of the institution of the Catholic Church, this institution is presently occupied by Modernist apostates posing as the Catholic hierarchy, and who are **attempting** to use the institution of the Catholic Church for the spread of their apostasy. I emphasize the word *attempting*, since it is intrinsically impossible to use an institution

mental gymnastics in order to see continuity of doctrine, discipline, and worship. They descend into a religion of a naked emperor, that is, they make a groundless and truly insane act of faith, with absolutely no motives of credibility, believing Modernism to be actually Roman Catholicism. In their minds they cover the



The Modernists attempt to use the magnificent and strong institution of the Catholic Church — of which St. Peter's Basilica is a brilliant symbol — in order to spread their apostasy. It is an ingenious plan devised by the devil himself.

founded by Christ in a manner contrary to His will, that is, for the purpose of apostasy or anything false or evil. To even conceive of such a thing would be equivalent to imagining a devil possessing the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The very picture in our minds is grossly abhorrent: the Blessed Virgin Mary, possessed by a devil, screaming blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy.

I make this allusion to the Blessed Virgin Mary since in Sacred Theology she is the archetype of the Church, the Immaculate and ever-faithful Spouse of Christ.

Yet this very abhorrent image is the one proposed to us by the "Conciliar Church" theorists: a single legitimate Catholic hierarchy which now speaks like Christ and which now speaks like the devil.

This theory involves the Church in an essential defection from its God-given purpose: faithfully to communicate and teach Catholic doctrine, to establish disciplines which are consistent with Catholic doctrine, and to distribute true and valid Catholic sacraments, which are surrounded by sacred rites and ceremonies illustrative of Catholic doctrine. The Holy Ghost protects the Church from deviating from this purpose. This protection is known as the infallibility and indefectibility of the Church.

Stealing a car that will not start. Think of a group of hoodlums who stealthily obtain a key to someone's Rolls-Royce. They repeatedly try to start the car, but it will never start or move, because of very sophisticated anti-theft devices. And so the thugs just sit in the car which remains perfectly still.

This image illustrates, I believe, the present condition of the Catholic Church. Because the institution of the Catholic Church is something founded by God, and has all of the guarantees of protection from Him, it is impossible that it could respond to the promptings of thieves who are alien to it. Just as the car will not move, so the Church does not move under their influence, inasmuch as they lack the authority from God to teach, rule, or sanctify the Church. Because of the protection guaranteed by the Holy Ghost to the institution of the Catholic Church, the **only position consistent with the Catholic Faith** in this present crisis is that the Novus Ordo hierarchy is a false hierarchy inasmuch as it does not have the power to teach, rule, or sanctify the Church. Their teachings, laws, canonizations, marriage annulments, and liturgical rites do not proceed from the authority of the Catholic Church, and are not identified with it in any way.

The Novus Ordo religion is dying. Because the Catholic Church can never be the vehicle of error, heresy, and apostasy, the Novus Ordo religion is gradually dying, since it has no power to attract the human race, as the Catholic Faith does. It is true that it has managed to poison the minds of billions of Catholics, to destroy their faith, and to lead them to hell. But it is incapable of reproducing itself. It is shriveling up, unable to draw the young to itself. Despite the Novus Ordo religion's takeover of the Catholic institution, it has none of the force and vigor of the Catholic Faith. It has become a religion of old men and old women, who are ironically enthusiastic about the Novus Ordo. The young people have, overall, lost their faith, and are disillusioned by the emptiness, shallowness, and phoniness of the Novus Ordo. They show up occasionally for baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and may be found on the list of "parishioners," but they are, on the whole, absent from the pews on Sunday. All of the statistical life-signs of the Catholic Church are down miserably since the Novus Ordo takeover. What is yet worse, nearly all the people who are still in the Novus Ordo pews are heretics or apostates.

Why did God permit this takeover by Modernists?

This is a question which is constantly heard. It is a very good question.

Why did God permit so many souls be led astray by this phony hierarchy? Would it have not pertained more to His glory to have impeded the election of these faithless ecclesiastics, and to have let the Church continue on its normal path?

On the one hand, the answer is very simple. On the other hand, it is very mysterious.

The simple answer is this: **that God does not permit an evil except for a greater good.** The good is always His own glory. Therefore the glory must be as great or greater than the gravity of the evil which He permits.

The mysterious answer is this: **in some way the loss of so many souls and the utter confusion of Catholics pertains to His glory indirectly.** Obviously such things do not pertain to His glory *directly*, since God would never will these things in themselves. He would permit them for a proportionate reason, however.

The mystery lies in the proportionate reason. I think that one must tie the proportionate reason directly to the coming of the Antichrist. His coming is the third and last thing to happen before the end of the world and the judgement of all peoples. The Catechism of the Council of Trent mentions these three things which must happen before the end of the world: (1) the preaching of the gospel to the whole world; (2) the great apostasy from the Faith; (3) the coming of the Antichrist.

The first has taken place, and the second is taking place, and is virtually finished. The great apostasy from

the Faith would seem to be a preparation for the Antichrist, since otherwise he could never reign over the world.

Now we know that the reign of the Antichrist, the great apostasy, and the reduction of Catholic faithful to a very small number are predicted in Sacred Scripture. We therefore know that necessarily these things contribute in some way, indirectly, to the glory of God.

That said, I speculate this answer: *that a great apostasy from the Faith would have been impossible without the activity of a false hierarchy spreading error throughout the world.*

Had we continued with popes who defended the Catholic Faith, I do not see how there could have been a mass defection, since they would have striven strenuously to prevent such a defection.

The next question is, obviously: *how does a mass defection from the Faith pertain to the glory of God?* Saint Paul answers this: "For there must be also heresies: that they also, who are approved, may be made manifest among you." (I Cor. XI: 9) We therefore learn from Saint Paul that the purpose of the permission of heresy, and of all of the damage it does, is to prove the faith of those who truly have it. History has repeatedly shown that, when pressed by either the enticements or persecutions of heretics, *most* Catholics fall away. There are few exceptions to this phenomenon. Ireland is one glowing example.

This historical fact tells us that, although Catholics in easy times may profess with their tongues the Catholic Faith, *most of them* do not really believe in their hearts, or at best have a very weak faith. It is a frightful thought.

Hence God is glorified by the manifestation of the truly faithful. And this is precisely what is happening in this horrific moment of the Church's history: the manifestation of those who truly believe Catholic doctrine, and of those who do not. It is a great shaking of a tree from which much rotten fruit has fallen to the ground. No one would deny that a fruit tree is better off without its rotten fruit on it.

Although we tend to identify success with quantity and numbers, God is indifferent to these things. He looks at intensity, that is, the intensity of our faith and the intensity of our love of Him. He is far more honored by the death of one virgin martyr than he is dishonored by the apostasy of a thousand weak or lukewarm Catholics.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn
Rector

