



si si no no

"But let your speech be, 'Yes, yes,' 'No, no'; and whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)"

August 2005 Reprint #65

Reflections on the Responsibility of Individuals at the Present Hour

A Subversive Mentality

It is clear that, by rejecting the essential goods that give meaning to human existence, we humans automatically revert to a primitive and instinctual animal existence. All the police in the world will have great difficulty in preventing or repressing the consequences of such a transformation. The prisons are already filling up with the young people we have put out of balance. We should have understood that the human being is always tempted by the path of least resistance and by the satisfaction of his own passions. These eminently subversive foundations render the mediations of everyday life unbearable: natural law, the family, work, the most legitimate institutions come to be seen as so many useless, constraining and harmful barriers. Accordingly all manifestations of hostility towards them are permitted.

Collective Blindness

Every form of egocentric behavior provokes a kind of mental myopia which, becoming more and more widespread, degenerates into collective blindness. We become ridiculous when, despite our smallness in the immensity of the universe, we confer on ourselves a patent of absolute sovereignty over matter and spirit, over the present and the future. We even impose on the past, in accordance with our interests, the veil of oblivion or the obligation of memory!

This delirious pretense is not without hypocrisy, since man plays at imitating the divine without daring to come to grips with it. He asks only that the divine not intervene in his own affairs, which is a deceitful way of denying it. Man thus decides *motu proprio* that temporal goods and their immediate use belong to himself alone, without limits or constraints. The divine is conceded a paradise that everyone imagines in his own way, according to his own personal theism; some are inclined to see this paradise as open to everyone, others imagine it uninhabited, like hell itself.

A Corrupt and Corrupting Social Climate

It is a slippery slope from folly to sacrilege. It is hinted that it would be enough for the irony of the heavens to simply leave man, the “thinking reed,” in the power of his raving fancy, since he tends to bind himself in chains of his own making: anarchy alternating with totalitarianism, the unscrupulous use of mass media and technology for the sake of domination, *etc.*

The contemporary conjunction of secularism with erroneous beliefs can lead to nothing else. We perceive that a social climate of a new kind is gradually installing itself. This climate combines, in an apparently inextricable but doubtless intentional manner, counter-truths, subversive aims, and alluring prospects for the future. Each new generation receives its own obligatory dose of skillful manipulation. The masters of the game take care to solidify their position by obtaining the indispensable consent of the majority through the well-tested means that are habitually employed in this kind of undertaking: corruption, fear, dissimulated co-optation. The passivity of the moderates and the alignment of the ambitious do the rest.

The Role of Individuals in the Great Dramas of History

History in its broad outlines is made by the holders of power and by the intermittent outbursts of the masses. We cannot easily forget the hecatombs of the last century. But individuals taken in isolation also have their role to play in this drama of grand proportions. This means that individuals cannot be considered entirely innocent. We are so fragile in difficult situations, where fear makes even the haughtiest among us cowardly and silent!

Fortunately the concessions of the majority are redeemed-as a counterpoise-by the often unexpected heroism of those who, in terrible situations where their liberty is stifled, find the greatness of soul that enables them to emerge from desperate circumstances.

We should add, however, that exceptional suffering requires exceptional assistance. Only divine grace confers a supernatural and saving power of unlimited application in time and space.

Our incredulous moderns, often defiled by a voluntarism which serves as their supreme ideal, depreciate the attitude of the broken man who has recourse to God. He is accused of cowardice, and God Himself is thought vindictive. This accusation is doubly offensive: offensive to one’s neighbor who suffers, and offensive to Him who, even from the cross, pardons “those who know not what they do.” It is difficult for human excess to “kick against the goad” and deplore the consequences of its own continuous collusion with lies, injustice, or error.

A “Tremendous Mystery”

On this higher level we know that the essential abides whatever tribulations may come. Surrounded by disbelievers and nowadays rejected by so-called believers for “lack of fidelity,” we have at our disposal the infinite treasures of the Redemption. In the midst of world war our Mother in Heaven, in her apparition at Fatima on August 13, 1917, encouraged coming to the aid of souls in danger of being lost. The venerated Pope Pius XII, the unforgettable *pastor angelicus* of our youth, recalled this invitation with auspicious clarity in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis*:

A terrible mystery never sufficiently contemplated: the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penitence of the members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

We cannot, therefore, abstract ourselves from this obligation, nor can we limit its bearing on the whole of humanity, even if the effects of our intervention remain for now the secret of God.

There exists between us a very real invisible solidarity; contemplative souls know it well. We shall save ourselves more certainly if we contribute to the salvation of others. On the contrary, he who corrupts his neighbor runs the greater risk of being lost himself.

A Spectacle of Desolation: the Failures of Authority

Let us think of the firmness that was necessary for St. Peter in performing his duty of directing his flock to eternity, according to the express commandment of the Divine Word that he confirm his brothers in their faith in the living and true God.

In contradiction of this essential command, we observe today with dolorous stupefaction the persistence of an apparent impotence of Authority [*i.e.*, of Rome -*Ed.*] to escape from the mire in which it has been caught for four decades, as though the monarchical character of its functions had been dissolved in some unforeseen manner-after 20 centuries of affirming its own identity-into a nearly uncontrollable collegiality, itself extraneous to divine law. The principle of authority has been trampled down, replaced by a sort of pseudo-democratic imitation founded on the promotion of numbers as the principle of law.

This abnormality has been erected into a system since the Council. In the minds of the less diffident it has raised suspicions-largely borne out in practice-about the mysterious transfers of responsibility in ecclesiastical offices under the pretext of avoiding any return to autocratic practices. We think of the repeated capitulations of the Holy See and the bishops at the time when the new liturgy was launched. The result was an unrestrained emancipation of the clergy and the faithful in all directions, without any decisive body which could impose the least sense of *peccavi in Deum*-“I have sinned against God”-and *coram omnes*-“before all.”

Before such a spectacle of desolation, it is not surprising that grace seems to be distancing itself from nature, and even the stones would seem to cry out to supply the incredible deficiencies of Authority in its teaching and example. Let us pray all the angels and saints to come to our aid!

Pyrenaicus

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *SiSiNoNo* (Feb. 15, 2005).

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