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

February 2002 No. 45

What Should We Make of Assisi 2002?

Press Release from Bishop Bernard Fellay, Superior General of the Society of Saint Pius X, Concerning the Interreligious Day of Prayer in Assisi on January 24, 2002.

Pope John Paul II is inviting all the major religions of the world, the Moslems in particular, to a great prayer meeting in Assisi, in the same spirit of the first meeting for peace that took place there in 1986. We are deeply distressed by this event and condemn it totally.

- Because it offends God in His first commandment.
- Because it denies the unity of the Church and Her mission of saving souls.
- Because it can only lead the faithful into confusion and indifferentism.
- Because it deceives the unfortunate infidels and members of other religions.

The problem does not lie in the object of the prayers-peace. To pray for peace and to seek to establish and strengthen peace between peoples and nations is a good thing in itself. The Catholic liturgy is full of beautiful prayers for peace. We pray these prayers with all our hearts. Moreover, given the fact that the angels announced, on the birth of our Lord .Jesus Christ, peace on earth to men of good will, it is totally fitting to ask the faithful to implore the One True God to grant us a gift of such great value at this stage in the year.

The reason for our indignation lies in the confusion, scandal and blasphemy that result from an invitation from the Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ, sole mediator between God and man, to other religions to come to Assisi to pray for peace.

It has been stated that to avoid any syncretism, those attending will not be praying "together," but that each religion will pray in separate rooms in the Franciscan convent at Assisi. Cardinal Kasper went so far - and rightly so - to affirm that "Christians cannot pray with members of other religions." (*Osservatore Romano*, Jan. 5, 2002). However, this affirmation is not enough to dissipate the dreadful uneasiness and confusion caused by the event; it cannot be denied that all kinds of religions will be praying "*each in their own camp*" to obtain from these prayers said at the same time, but in different locations, the same result: peace. The fact that all have been invited to pray, at the same time and in the same town, for the same intention is clear proof of the desire for unity. On the other hand, the fact that the prayers will be offered in separate locations betrays the contradictory and impossible nature of the project. In reality, the distinction is false, even though, thanks be to God, it avoids a direct *communicatio in sacris*. However, the syncretic nature of the operation is obvious to all. Recourse to deceitful words has made it possible to deny the painfully obvious reality. But words do not mean anything any more: we will be going to Assisi, not to pray together, we are going there together to pray ...no syncretism, *etc.*

The establishment of civil (political) peace between nations by congresses, discussions, diplomacy, with the intervention of influential persons of different nations and religions, is one thing. It is another to claim to obtain the gift of peace from God by the prayer of all (false) religions. Such an initiative is completely inconsistent with the Catholic Faith and goes against the first commandment.

This is not a question of individual prayer, that of one man, in his own particular relationship with God, whether as Creator or Sanctifier, but the prayer of different religions, as such, with their own particular rite addressed to their own particular divinity. Holy Scripture, (both the Old and the New Testaments) teaches us that the only prayer pleasing to God is that of Him, whom He established as sole mediator between Himself and men, and that this prayer can only be found in the one true religion. God considers an abomination all other religions, especially idolatry, the *summum* of all superstitions.

Moreover, how can one hope to claim that religions that fail to recognize the one true God can possibly obtain anything from Him? St. Paul assures us that these false gods are fallen angels and demons.

But the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils. You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils (I Cor. 10: 20-21).

Inviting these religions to pray is inviting them to make an act that God reproves, that He condemns in the first commandment, one God alone shall you adore. It is leading the members of such religions into error and condoning their ignorance and misfortune.

Worse still: this invitation implies that their prayers might be useful, or even necessary, in order to obtain peace. Almighty God made it perfectly clear what He thinks of this, via the words of His apostle St. Paul:

Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God saith: "I will dwell in them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (II Cor. 6:14-16).

"We will never fully understand the struggle between the good and the wicked throughout history, as long as we do not see it as the personal and unyielding battle for all time between Satan and Jesus Christ" wrote Archbishop Lefebvre in all his wisdom (*Spiritual Journey*, p.37 [available from [Angelus Press](#), Price: \$7.95]). This fundamental truth, as far as war and peace are concerned, would appear to have been totally forgotten in the thinking behind the initiative in Assisi.

At one point during the day, everyone will be gathered together. When, then, will the participants hear the cry of the first Pope, St. Peter: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The same Jesus Christ, sole Savior, is also the sole author of peace. But will anyone dare point out these elementary truths to guests who are strangers to Christianity? Fear of hurting their feelings will mean that this absolutely essential condition for true peace will be overlooked or reduced to a purely subjective belief ("for us Christians, Jesus Christ is God," *etc.*)

As we have just pointed out: Not only is there only one true God and "so that they are inexcusable" (Rom. 1:20), but there is also only one mediator (I Tim. 2:5), one sole ambassador authorized by God, who intercedes ceaselessly on our behalf (Heb. 7:25). Religions which refuse to recognize His divinity explicitly, such as Judaism and Islam, have no chance of having their prayers answered, because of so fundamental an error.

Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. He that confesseth the Son, hath the Father also (I Jn. 2:22-23).

Despite monotheistic appearances, we do not have the same God, we do not have the same mediator. Only the mystical bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32) has the prerogative of obtaining from God, in the name of, and through, our Lord Jesus Christ, any favors, in particular that of peace. Such is the faith that the Church has taught and believed constantly, throughout the ages and from time immemorial. This is, by no means, a question of intolerance or of disdain for one's neighbor, it is a question of an unchangeable truth. "No one comes to the Father but through me" (Jn. 14:6).

To make gestures, or to get others to make them, that no longer express this, is to deceive oneself. It offends God, our Lord Jesus Christ in whom He is well pleased, and His Holy Church (Mt. 16:18). How can those who refuse this mediation - as do the Jews and Moslems explicitly, in refusing to recognize His divinity - possibly hope to have their prayers answered? The same goes for those who refuse to accept the Church's role as mediator.

John Paul II has attempted to justify the prayer meetings in Assisi on several occasions. In fact, one of his arguments is founded on the definition of prayer. "All authentic prayer comes from the Holy Ghost, who dwells mysteriously in every soul." Inasmuch as one attributes the correct meaning to the word "authentic," one could accept the first part of the sentence. But it is obvious that one cannot say that the prayer of a Buddhist, before an idol of Buddha, or that of a witchdoctor smoking the peace pipe, or that of an animist, is authentic.

The only authentic prayer is true prayer addressed to the true God. It is totally wrong to qualify a prayer addressed to the devil as authentic. Can the prayer of a fanatical terrorist, before crashing into the Manhattan tower, "Allah is great," be called authentic?

Wasn't he convinced that he was doing the right thing, doesn't that make him sincere? It is clear that a purely subjective way of looking at things is not sufficient to make a prayer authentic.

The second part of the sentence: "the Holy Ghost dwells mysteriously in every soul," or in every man, is certainly false. The word "mysteriously" can be misleading: in Catholic theology, as in Holy Scripture, the dwelling of the Holy Ghost is directly linked to the presence of sanctifying grace. One of the first formulae used in baptism consists of commanding the devil to leave the soul in order to let the Holy Ghost enter it. This demonstrates quite clearly that the Holy Ghost did not dwell in the soul before baptism. And so, the justification for the interdenominational day of prayer at Assisi is based on a false premise.

Those wishing to promote dialogue, which requires considering the other party in a highly positive light, argue that there is much good in other religions, and, given that God is the sole source of good, God is at work in other religions. This is pure sophistry, based on the lack of distinction between natural order and supernatural order. It goes without saying that, when one speaks of the action of God in a religion, one implies a work of salvation. This means God who saves by His grace. His supernatural grace. On the other hand, the good referred to in other religions, (non-Christian ones at any rate) is merely natural; in such cases, God is acting as Creator, who gives being to all things, and not as savior. The determination of the Vatican II Council to dispense with the distinction between the order of grace and natural order bears, in this respect, its most poisonous fruits. The result is the worst sort of confusion, that which leads people to think that any religion can finally obtain the greatest favors from God. This is a huge fraud, a ridiculous error.

It is in keeping with the Masonic plot to establish a grand temple of universal brotherhood above all religions and beliefs, "Unity in diversity," a concept so dear to the New Age and to globalization.

We were excommunicated by Clement XI in 1738 because of our interdenominational principles. But the Church was definitely in error, if it is true that, on October 27, 1986, the present Pope gathered together men of all religious confessions in Assisi to pray for peace. What else are our brothers looking for when they gather together in temples, than love between men, tolerance, solidarity, defense of the dignity of the human being, considering themselves equal, above political and religious beliefs and the color of their skin? (Grand Master Armando Corona, of the Grand Lodge of the Spring Equinox, *Hiram- Voice of the Grand Orient of Italy*, April 1987)

One thing is certain: there is no better way to provoke the anger of God.

This is why, despite our strong desire for the peace of God, we will have absolutely nothing to do with this day of prayer on January 24th, in Assisi. *Nullam partem.*

+ Bernard Fellay

January 21, 2002

What should we make of Assisi 1986? <<[first article](#)
[Index](#)