



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)"

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The Ambiguous Accord Of Campos

A reader writes to us:

Dear Editor,

I am sending you a photocopy of the article, "The Schism of the Brazilians Has Been Wiped Clean" (*Il Giornale*, Jan. 15, 2002). May we hope that it will be "wiped clean" everywhere else, and not only in Brazil?

We have such a great need to rediscover tradition. We need "dignity" in our parish liturgies: we need the Lord, and not the priest to be central: we need music that is appropriate to the place and the worship, and not a noisy racket. There is so much that needs to be restored in all areas, even the knowledge of the Ten Commandments. Can we hope for this?

With thanks,
[signed letter]

In answer, not only *can* we hope, but we *must* hope, with firm certitude, that this long and stormy night which the Church is currently experiencing will pass.

To doubt this would be to doubt the almighty power and promises of Our Lord Jesus Christ who, even if He seems to be asleep, will not allow the bark of Peter, which is His Church, to flounder.

However, what we hope for cannot come about by means of the type of accord signed between Rome and the Priestly Union of St. John Baptist Mary Vianney "which does not envisage any doctrinal recantations, but is basically practical and pragmatic" (*Il Giornale*, op.cit), because the question is first and foremost a question of doctrine and of the Faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not found the Church on a "practical and pragmatic type of accord," but on an accord that is essentially doctrinal, namely, on unity of faith.

But He, indeed, Who made this one Church, also gave it unity, that is, He made such that all who are to belong to it must be united by the closest bonds, so as to form one society, one kingdom, one body-"one body and one spirit as you are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). Jesus Christ, when His death was nigh at hand, declared His will in this matter, and solemnly offered it up, thus addressing His Father: "Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me...that they also may be one in Us... that they may be made perfect in one" Qn. 17:20,21). Yea, He commanded that this unity should be so closely knit and so perfect amongst His followers that it might, in some measure, shadow forth the union between Himself and His Father: "I pray that they all may be one as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee" (*ibid.* 21).

Agreement and union of minds is the necessary foundation of this perfect concord amongst men, from which concurrence of wills and similarity of action are the natural results. Wherefore, in His divine wisdom, He ordained in His Church *Unity of Faith*; a virtue which is the first of those bonds which unite man to God, and whence we receive the name of the *faithful*-"*one* Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). That is, as there is one Lord and one baptism, so should all Christians, without exception, have but one faith. (Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*)

First we have unity of faith, and then, on that basis, we have unity in charity, in communion. This is Christ's wish. This is the constant teaching of the Church.

Pope Pius X taught that charity without faith-*i.e.*, a union in "charity," a "communion" independent of unity in faith-is a pernicious invention of the Modernists who, following a false philosophy, deny that truth (even revealed truth) is one and unchangeable. "They pervert the eternal notion of truth" (Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Gregis*, §13).

So the problem must be posed and then solved in a very different way. It must first of all be posed at the doctrinal level, and then solved in the light of divine and apostolic Tradition, in which there is no *ambiguity*. In fact the conscience of every Catholic, and pre-eminently the members of the hierarchy, is bound to this Tradition under pain of everlasting damnation (Mt. 16:17). Any other "practical and pragmatic" kind of accord is perfectly useless and fleeting, quite apart from the fact that it is a trap for both parties.

In the case of Campos, the day after it was signed with Rome, the accord's inconsistency was shown by the Dominican "theologian of the papal household," Fr. Georges Cottier, in his interview by *Avvenire* (Jan. 19, 2002). He was delighted with this "step forward" for the Second Vatican Council. He admitted, "There is much more [than the rite of Mass of St. Pius V-*Ed.*] behind Lefebvre's schism: There is a rejection of the Council, of ecumenism, of the principle of religious liberty-__"

Here the "pope's theologian" has grasped the critical point of the entire question.

Consequently, Fr. Cottier goes on:

Since the rupture [in 1988] until today, other followers of [Lefebvre] have already returned to full communion with the Catholic Church. However, the principal condition has always been the full recognition of the authority of Vatican Council II. And this is what the principal group, the one of Ecône, has never accepted.

According to Fr. Cottier, *this* is what the Brazilians have accepted, and it swells the heart of the "pope's theologian" with hope. The Campos priests have accepted the Council, which is far more than a particular rite: "Little by little we must expect other steps: for example, that they also participate in the reformed rite. However, we must not be in a hurry."

Therefore, the accord signed with the Brazilian priests of Campos is only *superficially* "practical and pragmatic." For the Vatican, at least, it is *essentially* "practical and pragmatic," because it implies, along with the "full recognition of the Council," the acceptance of ecumenism, all the heretical and schismatic sects, and false religions. It also implies the acceptance of the false "religious liberty"-in reality, "liberty of religion"-which consequently involves the abandonment of the Church's perennial teaching on true religious liberty.

This is not all. This "practical and pragmatic" accord envisages future doctrinal concessions which include "concelebration," opposed by the entire tradition of the Church because it diminishes the number of Masses celebrated (cf. Joseph de Sainte Marie, O.C.D., *Eucharistie et salut du monde*). It envisages the future acceptance by the Brazilian priests of Pope Paul VI's "reformed" (or rather, "protestantized") rite. But there is no need to be "in a hurry." Says Fr. Cottier. Things will "mature" of themselves (*Avvenire*, op. cit). Fr. Cottier knows from experience that they have "matured," in a manner of speaking, to the Vatican's favor. Too many former companions-in-arms of the sons of Archbishop Lefebvre have concluded their own versions of a "practical and pragmatic type of accord," putting aside questions of doctrine and thinking that they will be able to carry on the good fight for the faith under better conditions. "But let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: and that which is over and above these, is of evil" (Mt. 5:37), as the Lord taught us.

There is the sad conversion of the monastery of Le Barroux which today defends the false religious liberty it attacked yesterday; the story of the Fraternity of St. Peter, many of whose members are today fighting to celebrate according to the rite of Paul VI while yesterday they fought against it. These instances go to show that genuine unity is founded solely on truth, and any other accord that is *not* founded on truth "is of evil."

Perhaps the Campos priests believed themselves safe when they declared acceptance of Vatican II "in the light of Tradition." Are they not aware that the conciliar Church imagines a new concept of "Tradition?" That is to say, it believes in an ambiguous "living Tradition" which gives rights of citizenship in the Church even to things that are manifestly opposed to the Church's traditional doctrine. On the basis of this new concept of "Tradition," the plague of religious indifferentism (a.k.a. "religious liberty") and all of ecumenism's ecclesiological heresies are presented as normal doctrinal "developments" in perfect continuity with sacred Tradition even if they affirm the *opposite* of what the documents of the Magisterium taught up to the time of Vatican II. It is legitimate for us, therefore, to ask what is the point of an "accord" in which the two give different meanings to the same terms, and in which one of the parties must *accept* "in the light of Tradition" what the other party thinks it must, in conscience, *reject* "in the (same) light of Tradition?" Indeed, as far as Fr. Georges Cottier is concerned, the explicit reservation of the Campos priests regarding the Council has no value. They have accepted the Council. One point gains all. Fundamental doctrinal problems arise here; specifically, the Catholic notions of "Tradition" and "doctrinal development" already defined by the Councils of Trent and Vatican I. Upon *these* there should be an authentic accord making any other "practical and pragmatic" accord entirely superfluous.

It is to be understood that people become weary of combat, and that to be marginalized, even if undeserved, is humiliating. Most of all, it is painful and even traumatizing for some to have to oppose an Authority which they love and would wish to be able to obey. All the same, if we remember that we are not defending our personal opinions but, on the contrary, our duty to remain faithful to the Church's eternal teaching and to transmit the Faith as we have received it, we can raise our eyes to our invisible Head, Jesus Christ, whom his Vicar must represent on earth, and with St. Hilary say:

A soldier defends his king even at the risk of his life....A dog barks at the least sound and rushes out at the first suspicion. But you, on the contrary, when you hear someone say that Christ, the true Son of God, is not God, you keep silence, and your silence implies consent to this blasphemy! What can I say? You protest against those who protest, you add your voice to those who want to stifle the truth!¹

Not only do we hear people denying the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the basis of the "new theology" (cf. the *book, Jesus the Christ*, by Walter Cardinal Kasper of Germany), but we hear denials, on the basis of ecumenism, of many other truths of Faith which it is our duty to profess at the cost of martyrdom. We hear being said that "salvation can be found even outside the Church" (Cardinal Kasper); that the heretical and schismatic sects are no longer heretical and schismatic sects but "true particular churches" (*Dominus/Jesus*), and that the true Church of Christ no longer "is" the Catholic Church but only "subsists" in it (*Unitatis Redintegratio*). It is said that unity of the Faith is no longer the necessary foundation for the Church's unity, but, on the contrary, we must work for "unity in diversity" (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger), where "diversity" presupposes inclusion of the heresies and schisms previously condemned by Holy Mother Church. It is said that the Catholic Church must re-examine the way papal primacy is exercised and this be done together with the heretics and schismatics, who are the traditional enemies of papal primacy, *etc....*

The Church, however, is Christ *himself*. The Church is Christ "extended and communicated." She is Christ who "in His Church lives, teaches, governs, and communicates holiness" (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*).

We know, and history confirms it, that "faith in Jesus will not remain pure and intact unless it is upheld and defended by faith in the Church, the pillar and foundation of truth" (Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge*): so we cannot adhere to ecumenism's heretical ecclesiological aberrations because it is a matter of our faith, and we cannot keep silent either, because it concerns the faith of our neighbor. Silence, in this case, would be to support error. As always, then, in extreme cases "the only way open to the believer is the path of generous heroism" (Pius XI, *ibid.*).

We must not allow ourselves to be upset by the fact that those involved are churchmen and members of the hierarchy to whom Christ Himself has given authority in the Church. It is true, alas, that they are churchmen. But churchmen are given authority for building *up* the Church, not for *pulling it down*. They are given all their authority in favor of the truth and none for against it: "For we can do nothing against the truth; but for the truth" (II Cor. 13:8). Therefore, when, in the Church, churchmen raise a platform of personal views against the doctrine of the one Teacher of Truth that has resounded for 2000 years, the duty of the faithful is to resist it, because there is only one Master, and "we must obey God rather than men" (St. Peter).

Nor must we be disheartened to find ourselves unjustly labelled as separated from the pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, with whom it is necessary to be in "communion." It is true, we have the duty of being in communion with the pope, but the pope, in his turn, has the duty of being in communion with his predecessors, with Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles. There is no doubt about this in the *ex cathedra* declarations of the pope and in the ordinary infallible pontifical magisterium. But this security is lacking when the pope imposes simply his personal opinions or Utopian ideas.

"Communion" in the Catholic Church is always based on unity in the Faith. That is why, in the history of the Church, we see not only popes, but also bishops, priests, and simple faithful refusing to be in "communion" with those who no longer have, or are suspected of no longer having, the Catholic Faith transmitted by the Apostles.

When a simple lector, St. Basil publicly broke "communion" with his bishop who had compromised with the Arians (Ep. 51). St. Jerome was an ordinary priest-monk when he refused to be in communion with John, Bishop of Jerusalem, until he had clarified his position on Origenism. The African bishops suspended their communion with Pope Vigilius when he, by approving the "Three Chapters," seemed to be rejecting the dogmatic Council of Chalcedon. St. Bernard, the defender of the Roman primacy, who had once said, "He who resists this power resists the command of God," did not hesitate to write to Pope Innocent II:

It is for you, the successor of Peter, to judge whether those who attack the faith of Peter have a right to asylum in Peter's see. Remind yourself of the duties of your office....You must seize the foxes which sow ruin in the Lord's vineyard while they are still small. (Epist. 189)

Indeed, the pope has "the fullness of power over all the churches" (Epist. 131), but this is for confirming and defending the "faith of Peter," not for altering it or encouraging those who would alter it. This is the limit, set from on high, to the power of Peter's successors; otherwise, it would be purely arbitrary. Pope Innocent III, who was one of those who implemented the Roman "centralization," regarded himself as a "prisoner" of the divine law.

These examples, which could be multiplied, show that "communion," even with the pope, has an indispensable condition, namely, unity in the Catholic faith transmitted by the Apostles. They show that when scandal is given to the Faith, subjects are not only obliged to reject the erroneous teaching, but they are obliged to resist their superiors, even publicly, as St. Paul resisted St. Peter, " *in facie Ecclesiae* " (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologically* Q.33, Art.4, ad 2).

Pope Pius XII reminds us, the faithful have the authentic right to receive intact from their pastors, and most of all from the Successor of Peter, the Truth taught by Jesus Christ and infallibly transmitted by the Church. This right arises from our duty to believe in order to be saved (Mt. 16:17). Hence our duty and right to refuse the sophisms which are corrupting the Faith today and which are the result of a false philosophy and a false theology, against which Pope Pius XII puts us on our guard in *Humani Generis*.

Consequently, while it is true that the pope has only God above him, it is also true that when the pope's actions threaten the Faith or even gravely threaten the good of the Church, it is permitted for his subjects-even as their *duty-to* show disapproval and resist his directives. For example, this is what the bishops, cardinals, canon lawyers, and polemical writers did when, without denying his papacy, they showed their disapproval of Pope Pascal II (1099-1118), who had just subordinated the Holy See to the German Emperor. By their resistance, they saved the work of Church reform undertaken by Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) from destruction. This meritorious resistance is admired by all authorized Church historians: "It is imperative to resist a pope who is openly destroying the Church" (Cajetan).² Our duty does not change, so it does not matter to us whether this destructive action arises from the "ecumenical" daydream or any other cause.

It may be objected that we are few and isolated.

We are not "few." But even if we were, what would that matter? Truth doesn't depend on numbers and the Faith even less so. Pope St. Liberius (352-66), before his resistance weakened, replied to the Emperor Constans, the promoter of the Arian heresy who jeered at him for being one man against the whole world: "It does not matter that I am on my own. The Faith loses nothing by it. In ancient times only three men [*i.e.*, the young men of the fiery furnace-*Ed.*] were found to resist."³ Our being "isolated" is more apparent than real. Much of it has been artificially created by unjust labelling. Many are with us because they think as we do, even if they do not have the courage to join with us openly. In any case, Catholics who resist publicly for the sake of the Faith of All Time are a reference point-both *positive* and *negative*-for everyone. This is very important.

We agree with what our letter-writer said: it is necessary for everyone to return to Tradition, without which there is no orthodoxy. We need "dignity" in the liturgy; we need a restoration in all fields, including morality, which inevitably sinks along with faith. But such restoration is bound up with the preservation of the Catholic Faith of All Time. It will not come about through imprudent "practical and pragmatic" accords such as the one signed between Rome and the Priestly Union of St. John Baptist Mary Vianney. If *everyone* were to keep quiet (and keeping quiet in such a grave matter constitutes very serious complicity); if there were *no one* to remind the "innovators" in the hierarchy that their "dogmatic developments" are really dogmatic corruptions (because they contradict the constant faith of the Church), then, indeed, we might fear for the Catholic Church's future. But this will not happen. As Pope Paul VI himself remarked (to Jean Guittou, *Paul VI secret*), there will always be a "small remnant" which will confess the Church's eternal Faith. That is why we do not put our hope in our numbers, nor in numbers of "accords," nor yet in our diplomatic efforts, but in the goodness of the cause in which we are resisting because it is the cause of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. In spite of "labels," our duty is to remain faithful and to help our brothers to remain faithful, too. In any case, it is up to God to show us the first glimmers of the dawn of the Church's rebirth, and the Immaculate One to speed this hour of mercy.

Hirpinus

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1. Fragg.Histor. X, 2-4, *cit.* in Fliche & Martin, *L'Histoire de l'Eglise*.

2. *De comparatae auctoritate Papae et Concilia*.

3. Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. II, XVI (cf. *L'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tit.).

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