



RES

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Pope Paul VI

Next issue of *Res Novæ* due to be published this September. We wish you a good summertime.

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THE ÉDITORIAL

About the Bergoglian pontificate Part I - The Council, at full speed

“Moderate the Council or implement it : » it was the great debate within the Church governing body since immediately after the Council. But, after the failure of the first option, the moderate one, with the resignation of Pope Ratzinger, are we not now seeing the failure of the second one ?

Initially, a dual between Ratzinger and Martini

K. Schelkens and J. Mettepenningen's book titled *Gottfried Danneels* (Anvers, Polis, 2015) revealed that a number of cardinals (Lehman, Kasper, Silvestrini, Hume, Danneels), were holding informal meetings in Saint-Gall, Switzerland, from 1996 to 2006, and were preparing an alternance to the Wojtylan pontificate, with the election of Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan. The group around Martini, supported a full implementation of the spirit of Vatican II, in opposition to the moderate option chosen by John-Paul II, characterised as a « restoration » by its main author Cardinal Ratzinger in the book *The Ratzinger report* (1985). Symbolically, the moderate interpretation of Vatican II was associated with the discipline of *Humanae vitae*. Thus, the liberal opposition criticised this option arguing it prevented the Church to position Herself in a way they, themselves, considered suitable for the third millenium and opposed this moral « rigidity ». During the October 1999 Assembly of the Synod on Europe, Cardinal Martini had presented a full-fledged program listing all the « knotts » that needed attention for the future of the Church. It especially concerned Moral. First, reconsidering the problem having to do with sexuality, in particular with the « discipline » of marriage ; second, the problem of the « serious lack of ordained ministers » and the « place of women in the Church. »

Reform of the Curia

But, during the 2005 conclave, Carlo Maria Martini, who had retired in 2002, was ill with Parkinson's disease and could no longer fit in a pontifical position. The cardinals of the liberal wing then carried their hope over to the Archbishop of Buenos-Aires, Cardinal Bergoglio. Truthfully, the debate had eventually evolved : Cardinal Ratzinger won, but more like a candidate who was going to purify rather than restore. In Rimini, Italy, on 1 September 1990, in front of his friends from *Comunione e Liberazione*, he had given an indication : « the essence of the true reform » will consist in an ablatio of all the debris which tarnish the image of the Church, every one understood he was primarily speaking of the Curia. But, his eight years on the throne of Peter were marked by the failing of the moderate interpretation of Vatican II, first of all because he did not succeed in governing the Curia he wanted to purify. As a result, when in 2013 Jorge Bergoglio was elected, it was more with the idea of governing the Curia than liberalising the Church. But, the liberalisation of the Church remained in Martini's program, and he intended to imme-

diately put it back on track. Without being initially a progressist nor a convert to the « conservative » line, J. Bergoglio had kept from the Peronist era a strong political will, specially being able to adapt to today's relativism and considering his little interest in doctrine. He presented his general intention in a thirty page interview given to Fr. Spadaro, director of the *Civita Cattolica*, published simultaneously in the cultural jesuit publications of sixteen countries in Europe and in America. In this interview, one can see that the main point is a loosening of Moral in the name of mercy. Francis explains that he believes pastoral ministry must not be « *obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed* » and that « *we cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, homosexual marriage and the use of contraceptive methods.* » Thus, he advocates for the openness, the mercy and the accompaniment by the Catholic Church of divorcees and homosexuals, as well as of women who have had an abortion which is clearly evangelical but, he forgets the part that says : « *Go, and sin no more !* » that Christ said to the adulterous woman he saved from lapidation. Because, according to Francis still, « *it is not possible to interfere spiritually in the life of a person.* »

At the same time, the doctrinal formulation of the message is pushed aside. The Church which can be compared to a « *field hospital after a battle* », is expected to heal the wounds before engaging in any other actions. With a call to a more decentralised church, theoretically at least, inviting local churches to play a larger role and to find inspiration in the Orthodox churches in matter of collegiality and synodality.

Never mind the reform

It would be exaggerated to say that the reform of the Curia is only an appearance. It is of a symbolic significance, mainly in the fact that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, now « Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith », loses its primacy. Indeed, the Dicastery for Evangelisation which includes the New Evangelisation and the *Propaganda Fide* is now put ahead of doctrine. But the constitution *Prædicare Evangelium* to be published (1), despite the fact it resembles an encyclical proclaiming a new era of synodality and the promotion of the laity, fundamentally it will change nothing in the life of the Church, as the perception of the pontifical function by the current pontiff, following all the popes since Vatican II, remains in substance identical.

To undertake, with a trumpeted start, what will only be but a simple restructuration of some offices of the Curia - one will note that the organisation of the Secretariat of State remains unchanged - as soon as the election of Pope Francis, a work group of nine cardinals (today six) was formed to replace the apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus* of John Paul II ; a council coordinated by Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, from Honduras, and Mons. Semeraro, Bishop of Albano, as Secretary, a very close

relation to the all powerful Cardinal Stella, Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, all three belonging to the first circle of government. The project had two directions :

1) Budgetary consolidation

If it had been implemented to the end, it would have been the most notable part of the restructuration. On 26 June, 2013, was created a consultative Commission over the Institute for the Works of Religion, the Vatican Bank, to regulate its functioning according to international anti-money laundering regulations : more than 4,000 of the 19,000 accounts open at the IOR have been closed. Now, only religious congregations, dioceses, institutions, employees and diplomatic personnels of the Holy See are able to have an account there.

Moreover, on 24 February, 2014, by the motu proprio *Fidelis dispensator et prudens*, was formed a Council for the Economy, the financial control agency of the Holy See, and a Secretariat for the Economy, equivalent to a Department of Finance, a dicastery of the Curia of its own, whose Prefect, until 2019, was Cardinal Georges Pell who is now on leave. Last, on 8 July, 2014, by a new motu proprio, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See saw the largest part of its responsibilities transferred to the Secretariat for the Economy.

This program of budgetary consolidation sadly was impeded by resounding resignations and disastrous quarrels over responsibilities. Specially, in June 2016, the Secretary of State, Pietro Parolin, had the Secretariat of State excluded from the audit organised for all the financial entities of the Vatican. Despite these set backs, the reorganisation has made noticeable progress.

2) The reorganisation of the agencies of the Curia
Soon, we will realise that it essentially consisted in regrouping agencies. On 15 August, 2016, was created the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life which, as we will see, gathers the Council for the Laity and the Council for the Family. On 31 August, 2016, a dicastery was instituted for Promoting Integral Human Development which gathers the responsibilities of the Council for Justice and Peace, the Council « *Cor Unum* », the Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and the Council for the Pastoral Care of Health Care Workers. *Prædicare Evangelium* will also announce that the current Office of Papal Charities will become the Dicastery for Charity, and that the Dicastery for Education and Culture will now gather the Congregation for Education and the Council for Culture.

But, the most important is to notice the creation, in the sensitive sector of information, of a Dicastery for Communications, which took place on 21 June, 2015. Its first Prefect was Monsignor Dario Edoardo Viganó, succeeded by Paolo Ruffini, a laity. The Dicastery gathers and supervises all the communication offices of the Holy See (Press Office, Vatican Publishing House, Vatican In-

1. *L'Homme Nouveau* Blog, 23 May 2019, « Le contenu du projet de la réforme de la Curie. Une ecclésiologie revisitée ».

ternet Services, Vatican Press, Vatican Television Center, *L'Osservatore Romano*). At the Vatican daily, the Editor in Chief Giovanni Maria Vian was replaced in 2018 by a close relation of Fr. Spadaro, Andrea Monda. It should be noted that the Press Office as well as *L'Osservatore Romano* were before under the Secretariat of State. They now find themselves under the command of the pontifical communication.

Thus, the two creations of truly new entities concerned the strategic areas of finance and communication, both supervised by the pope and without the buffer that was the Secretariat of State.

A Moral of « mercy »

The great goal of the Bergoglian pontificate concerned, very logically, Moral. Rapidly, a small number of efficacious developers was deployed, Fr. Spadaro, sj, Monsignor Victor Emmanuel Fernandez, now Archbishop of La Plata, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod, Archbishop Bruno Forte, Monsignor Marcello Semeraro, Bishop of Albano, head of the episcopal commission for the doctrine of the faith at the Italian Bishops Conference.

On 8 September, 2015, Pope Francis published two motu proprio, *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus et Mitis et misericors Iesus*, making the process of a possible declaration of nullity easier.

Then, two assemblies of the Synod, extraordinary and ordinary, in 2014 and 2015, under the leadership of Cardinal Baldisseri, have prepared an evolution on the question of the remarried divorcees. It was done with perfection, worthy of parliamentary debates. These assemblies were then followed by the apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, dated 19 March, 2016. This document aims to define the present position of the Catholic Church on questions regarding family and marital life, as well as to discern access to the sacraments for remarried divorcees.

It is very well possible that in the mind of Pope Francis, initially it was only about conceding a « pastoral » and « merciful » give way. But, forcibly it became necessary to give the principles justifying such decision in conscience of persons living in public adultery to approach the sacraments. This is the explanation found in n. 301 of the exhortation : « *it can no longer simply be said that all those in any "irregular" situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace. More is involved here than mere ignorance of the rule. A subject may know full well the rule, yet have great difficulty in understanding "its inherent values", or be in a concrete situation which does not allow him or her to act differently and decide otherwise without further sin.* » From which it resulted that, in certain circumstances, adultery was no longer a sin.

It was in blatant conflict with the doctrine expressed earlier by John-Paul II in *Familiaris consortio*, n. 84 : when serious reasons the « remarried » spouses cannot satisfy

the obligation to separate, they take on themselves the duty to live in perfect continence in order to be granted access to the sacraments of the Church. This desire to take into consideration the contemporary weaknesses of marriage is of considerable consequences. Hence the procedure of the *dubia* engaged by four cardinals (six, in reality, or so it is said), an indication of grave differences within the cardinalice college.

The doctrinal recomposition has been accompanied by a modification of the personnel in charge of conjugal morality in Rome. The Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life was created in connection with the Pontifical Academy for Life and the John-Paul II pontifical Institute, moral centers faithful to pope wojtyła's teachings. But, the new statutes for the Academy for Life state that members are appointed for a five year renewable mandate. This has allowed the removal of members closest to pope wojtyła's teaching on Moral, such as philosopher Robert Spæmann, now deceased, American theologian John Finnis and Austrian Josef Maria Seifert, strong defender of traditional moral. However, the following persons were appointed : Mons. Chomali Garib, Archbishop of Concepción, Chile ; Mauricio Chiodi, professor at the school of Theology in Milan, very anti *Humanæ vitæ* ; non-Christians such as Jews and Muslims. Mons. Livio Melina, President of the John-Paul II Institute, was replaced by Mons. Pierangelo Sequeri. Mons. Vincenzo Paglia, formerly Head of the Council for the Family (appointed by Benedict XVI), was to become Head of the Pontifical Academy for Life and Grand Chancellor of the John Paul II Pontifical Institute. Mons. Kevin Farrell, cardinal a few months later, was to become Prefect of the new Dicastery.

This fundamental novation in terms of Moral is quite similar from an ecclesiological perspective (notably ecumenism) to the one that took place at the last council. The relativist effect in regards to the evangelisation of the principals of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue (there is some ecclesiality outside the Church), today finds its complement in the relativist effect in regards to the moral discipline of marriage.

Except that this martinian « progressivism », now bergoglian, as we pointed out in a previous issue, is overcome by the state of Catholicism in Europe, or rather what is left of it. In this post-modern Catholicism, as theorised in France for exemple by Fr. Theobald, sj, not only doctrines and norms, but also End times, sacramental confession, refusal of contraception and abortion, rejection of homosexuality are all peacefully set aside. For this kind of catholicism which, by the way, vanishes as it meets ultra-modernity, Pope Francis' attempt is already as obsolete as was, then, the conciliar attempt to adapt to the world of our times. ◆

Father Claude Barthe

In next month issue : The bergoglian pontificate, Part II. Expected failure.

DOCUMENTS

Church crisis : the oblivion of the Word Part One

With the cordial permission of *Politique Magazine*, we publish this article which appeared in the April 2019 issue of the magazine with the title « The oblivion of the Word » (« L'oubli du Verbe »).

Rev. Fr. Jean-François Thomas, sj

There are numerous Political and sociological analysis of the Church crisis. Some of them are quite pertinent, but none of them can really pinpoint the supernatural mystery of this institution which is of divine decision and, as such, Body of Christ, thus holy despite the sinners that comprise her. Indeed, we are at a stage where the risk of internal perversion of the Church has never been so great and concerning. Even those of us who are not so very old have seen in the last decades a terrifying acceleration of what can only be called but decadence. There has always been times of upheavals at regular intervals. Heresies have lead to schisms, to wars, to violent internal purges, and yet, the driving force of these rifts always remained the love of the Word incarnate, even by those who, taken by their erroneous opinions, participated in tearing apart Christ's Tunic.

A doctrinal void

The situation in our time is very different. The crisis is not only doctrinal. It would be beneficial if truly theological controversies took place in the Church. In fact, the crisis is a crisis of a doctrinal void since, in lieu of dogmatic argumentations and intellectual oppositions, only worldly relativisms now oppose each other. What strikes is this impoverishment, this swept aside of all that made the true richness of the Church : a doctrine, giving way to a liturgy, its perfect expression, and offering a moral rooted in the teaching of Christ. In this way, thanks to this three elements, a christian, catholic, spiritual life was built with harmony. The three pillars now down or seriously shaken, the palace has crumbled down the heads of the foolish Samson that we are. Here is the oblivion of the Word, when This Word should be the blood, the flesh of each baptised persons to whom He gives eternal life.

It is not about saying that all components or members of the Church are now rotten, but underlining that the common

dynamic, once a reality in all, is slowed down in its energy because of this magisterial oblivion. The evil concerns any part of the Church, including the head which in different times, and even in moments of moral errancy in the practice, had always remained doctrinally and liturgically sound.

When the driving force was no longer the love of the Word but the pursuit of change only for the sake of change to built a new Church, -and not to purify the existing Church with the help of spiritual tools-, falling in a rut but also in the abyss was inevitable. The myth of never ending progress had succeeded to the attachment to an apostolic tradition constantly recovered and studied in more depth. A typical example is found in the disuse of liturgical Latin in the practice, whereas theoretically, including in the liturgical reform following the Vatican II Council, there was no such intention. Paul VI, on 26 December, 1969, proclaiming the instauration of the reformed rite starting the First Sunday in Advent, is a perfect example of this total change mixed with a sort of nostalgia, quickly repressed by what they call the « *necessity*. » He actually uses several times the term of « *novelty* » which is not a neutral term, as if this should be the criteria, the measure to judge all things and to decide of changes : « *We must prepare for this many-sided inconvenience. It is the kind of upset caused by every novelty that breaks in on our habits.* » Giving details of all the necessary sacrifices to accept this revolution, the pope concludes in a strange and very illogical manner in regards to all that preceded. He says : « *Finally, if we look at the matter properly we shall see that the fundamental outline of the Mass is still the traditional one not only theoretically but also spiritually.* » If in the end it is all the same, why then change everything ? Facing the « *loftiest values* » of the Church, the choice of response was an answer « *banal and prosaic* » (exact terms used by Paul VI) seen then as of a value more precious than anything else.

Setting its pace to the pace of the world

In the course of the centuries, the Church had never settled for banal and prosaic responses. She had always fought against innovative heresies by recalling its loftiest values and, in the modern era, as soon as the first signs of this modernist ideology appeared which were to hit Her like a tidal wave, « in stages », She had never embraced the utopia of constant progress to defend the faith. Suddenly, She announces that we must set our pace to the pace of the world, that we must go forward in the company of all the adventurers and all the poisoners of the human race, all this like an invitation to close our eyes over the errancy of the modern world and to reduce the sacred to a sort of social contract where everyone plays a role and participate. The salt of the Gospel is crushed in the sugar factories and surround mawkishness. The guideline is not longer to become an other Christ by letting the Word invade us, but to disappear in the grey sky of the landscape offering a hand to anything that passes. ◆