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## PRÉSENTATION

In an ever changing world and in a Church constantly in the spotlights, the important informations and the meaning to give them may be buried under a mass of commentaries, opinions and fake news. At a time when it is urgent to restore the magistrum and pontifical authority so that the Church may continue its mission received from Christ, *Res Novae* intends to be an informational and analysis tool at the service of the petrinian power. By subscribing now you will help with the start of *Res Novae* and its development.

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## L'ÉDITORIAL

# A Church in a state of permanent Conclave

One of the fashionable themes after the second Vatican Council was to say that the Church is – or should be – in a state of permanent Council. But, as the post-Council makes its way, more precisely since the last part of John Paul II's pontificate, in the final years of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the Church finds herself rather in a state of permanent conclave. The reason is first and simply the age of the pontiffs. John Paul II, as he neared eighty years old, was weakened (Parkinson's disease, tumours, falls) to the point that from 1996 he no longer governed but by procuration, so much that speculations of his death did not stop. His successor, Benedict XVI, was elevated to the sovereign pontificate as he just celebrated his 78<sup>th</sup> birthday. As to pope Francis, he was 77 years old, at the time of his election, in 2013. But, this conclavist atmosphere, of perpetual wait for the next election in the Sistine Chapel, finds an explanation in, most of all, in this domain and in many more, an impregnation in the Church of the democratic model, and very precisely by this model in its actual phase. Certainly, fights between divergent forces and parties have always existed in the Church. They became more apparent in the course of the XIX<sup>th</sup> and XX<sup>th</sup> centuries, liberals against *zelanti*, result of a clash between the Church and the modern world. And, to say the truth, the wait for a pope of a different party than the reigning pope by a number of catholics is not a new thing : « Leo XIII died yesterday, at 4 o'clock this afternoon, wrote Leon Bloy on July 21st 1903. I have been waiting more than twenty years (that is since the encyclical on the allegiance to the Republic) for his successor. » (*Œuvres de Leo Bloy*, Mercure de France, 1953, t. 12, p. 184). But, the Council has opened a totally different era. The members of the conciliar minority being almost eliminated, a sort of bipolar regime has surged from the interior of what had constituted the majority at Vatican II. Two parties, that one would call in secular politics, party of government, have formed. They recognised themselves respectively in the two postconciliar reviews *Communio* and *Concilium*. These two parties, if we consent to call them this way, approximately correspond today to the two interpretations of Vatican II, as defined by Benedict XVI in his address to the Roman Curia on 22 December 2005 : « the hermeneutic of renewal in the continuity » and « the hermeneutic of discontinuity and of rupture. » And if we wanted to add to this analogy, one would say that these two parties are flanked of two forces more distant, external to the conciliar world in the strict sense, but with which they have respectively great porosities, they are : the traditionalist force and a more radical progressivism.

Still, it remains that the pope is not elected by popular vote as in a universal suffrage ! And yet polls and petitions become more common in the Church addressing matters most important. Including matters of its governance and the people who govern.

At the time of the speculations about the succession of John-Paul II, Henri Tincq wrote in French daily *Le Monde* : « There is a strong probability for the next conclave to happen in favour or against Martini ; in favour or against a new council ; in favour or against a reform of the papacy. » (27 october 1999) For, at each conclave, the same scenario comes into play of the interpretation of Vatican II and of its posterity between the two conciliar poles.

Despite the pronostics pro-Martini (who was actually sick with Parkinson's disease), there were to be no alternance : to this pope of « continuity » that was John Paul II, succeeded an other on the same line, better or worst depen-

ding on the point of view, Benedict XVI. But he was himself followed by a pope of the « discontinuity ». And today, we see that the scenario about the 2005 interpretation, and then the 2013 interpretation, is ready to happen again. Unless the Church, miraculously – but the charism of Peter is miraculous – comes out of this democratic play. It is to be added that in western democracies in their actual phase of development, or if preferred of disintegration, the chief of State or of the executive branch, elected *in fine* with a little bit more than half of the ballots, is morally rejected by the other half of the opinion which rises against the elected candidate in a radical opposition, considering him almost as illegitimate, as it is seen in the United States and in France as well. Wasn't this masked procedure of impeachment started in the Church with Benedict XVI, when « progressives » publicly exhaled their disappointment the day of his election, and against whom they carried a latent war with the expressive intention to push him towards resignation, as eventually the pope started leaning towards from 2010 on ? In the same way, today, a « Ratzingerian » opposition to pope Francis, bearing the character of delegitimation manifests itself stronger all the more since Francis has deliberately chosen to take a liberal stand with *Amoris lætitia*, opening the way to immense consequences, including positive ones considering the fact that the text of the encyclical causes a reassessment of the post-council's premises. The swinging is obviously very detrimental for the very life of the Church, the sanctification of the souls and the expansion of its mission to spread the gospel. Detrimental indeed, in a far worst manner than any of the violent crisis and open schisms of previous times which, as dramatic as have been their consequences for the life of the souls, though did not go as far as eroding inside the Church the perception of its common good organised around the bond of faith. In the same way, in the human Cities, traditional common good has largely been forgotten by lack of knowledge regarding its connection to natural law, likewise a clear disinterest for the authority of the word of the Church as invested by the word of the teaching Christ has erased its supernatural action. The Church is not experiencing a crisis of the faith, rather she is experiencing a crisis of the expression, by herself, of the faith. Her supernatural common good supposes a teaching that refers, for the bishops, to the phrase : *He that heareth you, heareth me* of saint Luke 10, 16. But, for the pope, first among bishops, Successor of Peter, to whom Christ has promised he will not fail, it supposes a teaching that refers to the phrase : *Confirm thy brethren*, of Luke 22, 32. The pope is only that : one, mandated by Christ, to confirm his brethren in the faith. ◆

Father Claude Barthe

### ► Conclaves and the dread of blocking minority

We know, since the Third Council of Lateran in the XII<sup>th</sup> century, the pope is elected with two-thirds of the votes of the conclave. We have known in history some conclaves which because of this rule went on for a long time, especially when one third of the electors were firmly decided to stop a candidate. The fixation of one third of the porporati electors on one name is enough to burry the greatest hopes : for in this manner they prevent the election of a cardinal they wanted under no circumstances. It is the famous blocking minority.

Actually, the recent conclaves were all quite short : four days for the election of John XXIII, three days for Paul VI, practically one day only for John-Paul I, three days for John-Paul II, two for Benedict XVI, finally, two days for the election of Francis. The number of daily scrutines has been doubled, carrying it to four per day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon (there were even five on the day of the election of Pope Francis, the fourth vote, because an extra ballot was found, was declared null and void

which is juridically quite arguable). But, don't think because they were short conclaves, the elections went without trouble. Notably, the election of Paul VI, in June 1963, saw rising up the spectrum of the blocking minority, even though the flatterers talked about a vote « by acclamation » (a method of election consisting in all the electors present unanimously proclaiming one of the candidates Supreme Pontiff, without the formality of casting votes. This method is no longer a valid form). In reality, the election was most likely won only by a handful of ballots and in the 6<sup>th</sup> round of scrutiny. The state of play during the conclave summoned following the death of John XXIII was as follow : the conservative papabile, Antoniutti, supported by cardinals Ruffini, Ottaviani, and most of all Siri, Archbishop of Genoa, could not expect victory, despite receiving the votes directed by the leader of the liberal wing, Cardinal Lercaro, Archbishop of Bologna. But, Antoniutti could still block the election of Montini, Archbishop of Milan. There was then, under the leadership of Cardinal Siri, a tentative to block Montini.

Had it succeeded, it would have led to negotiations, and Cardinal Montini now set aside, the conservative could have hoped for the election of a candidate who would have been capable of bogging down the Council. But, Siri did not succeed in imposing to his friends, till the end, such candidate, amid a very tense and dramatic climate, according to the cardinal's confidences.

In the latter part of John-Paul II pontificate, it's the « right » wing who dreaded to see unfolding the likely scenario. The Roman Curia, because of the nominations made by this pope, was then largely dominated by conservatives, divided themselves in several groups, but together they all feared Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan, leader of the progressive wing. Although unable to gather the two-thirds super majority, he was still able to gather a third of the votes. It seems it is for that reason that Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State, took the rather astonishing decision to modify the rule of Lateran III, by the constitution *Universi Dominici gregis*, of 1996, signed by John-Paul II. Its article Seventy-five allows for a

Pope to be elected with a simple majority if the usual requirement of a two-thirds super majority cannot be reached after thirty-three ballots and ballots at a rate of four per day. In this regard, close to the sacristy of Saint Peter, the remodelling of old Saint Martha Hospice now offered very comfortable lodging for the cardinals, furthermore allowing, without any problems, the prolongation of a conclave, even in the hottest temperature of the Roman summer.

But, the new rule strayed so much from tradition that, on 11 June 2007, Benedict XVI, by the *motu proprio De Aliquibus Mutationibus in Normis de Electione Romani Pontifici*, reversed or modified some of the innovations. The bet of Sodano's team was in fact high risk because, as we know, often the modification of electoral laws backfires on the very author of the law, and here this could have actually happened, leading, in the case, to the election of Bergoglio right from 2005. **Pio Pace**

### ► The violation of secrecy in the 2005 conclave

Among the manoeuvres of the liberal wing destined to morally delegitimize Benedict XVI, there was one which consisted in letting the world know he had had a serious competitor, in the person of Jorge Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires. A cardinal, who remained anonymous – the name

of Cardinal Pompedda was often mentioned although he had not participated in the conclave since he was over the age limit, but he would have received the confidences of his elector friends – was supposed to have written a « Secret journal of the conclave ». The only thing really certain is that one participant in the April 18 and 19, 2005 conclave had deliberately violated the secrecy rule and incurred (the end justifies the means !) excommunication.

The supposed « Journal » was entrusted to Lucio Brunelli, a vaticanist of channel news TG2 (it is the name of the news reports on the second public television channel *Rai Due*). Brunelli published it on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in the geo-political review *Limes* – from the leftist media group *L'espresso* – under the title : « *Così eleggemmo papa Ratzinger* », How we have elected pope Ratzinger. Something never seen before : Brunelli, and the cardinal who had confided in him, revealed the results of the votes which were as follows (knowing seventy-seven votes were needed to meet the two-thirds majority required to be elected) :

– First ballot, Monday 18 April : Ratzinger 47 ; Bergoglio 10 ; Martini 8 ; plus some scattered votes.

– Second ballot, Tuesday 19 April, at half past nine : Ratzinger 65, Bergoglio 35.

– Third ballot, Tuesday 19 April, at 11 o'clock : Ratzinger 72, Bergoglio 40.

In the morning of April 19<sup>th</sup>, Bergoglio had therefore gathered the famous blocking minority : « Bergoglio rises from thirty-five to forty, says Brunelli in its article. He is slightly above the mark that makes mathematically impossible the election of Ratzinger. Had the supporters of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires decided to resist to the extreme, by rising to the blocking mark of forty, the German cardinal could have only received a maximum of seventy-five votes. »

In reality, all the experts on conclaves know that with such a lead obtained so quickly on a name \_the one of Joseph Ratzinger\_ no blocking minority is capable of holding up against it for a very long time. And actually, had the blocking worked, it would have ended in a transaction on an other name than the one of the two cardinals. Bergoglio was smart for humbly withdrawing. At half past four in the afternoon, Bergoglio failed back down to twenty-six votes and Ratzinger was then elected with eighty-four votes.

The cardinal who confided in Brunelli let the Primate of Belgium deliver the moral of the story : « This conclave shows that the Church is not yet ready for a Latin-American pope », commented laconically Belge Cardinal Danneels. Something that would eventually happen eight years later. **P.P.**

## DOCUMENTS

# «An authority which serves truth is an authority which obeys » Critic of the lutheran conception of authority by Joseph Ratzinger

Fr. Ralph Weimann, doctor in Theology and in Bioethics, who teaches at the Pontifical universities Angelicum and Regina Apostolorum, undertook a

thorough study of the writing of Joseph Ratzinger concerning dialogue with protestantism. The reflections that follow below are excerpts from a conference given by Ralph Weimann on 5 April 2017, at the University Regina Apostolorum.

### Fr. Ralph Weimann

The so-called Reformer had preceded René Descartes and his famous expression : *Cogito ergo sum*. In 1920 already, Max Scheler wrote that Luther had done for religion what Descartes had done for philosophy. Paul Hacker analysed and explained this affirmation in a book which can be resumed in this way : Luther laid the foundations of Christianity and the personal certainty of salvation on the « self » of the believer (1). This specialist of indian literature has analysed all of Luther's writings and has clearly established this analogy with the famous French philosopher Descartes that, nevertheless, Luther had anticipated a century.

With Luther, the concept of faith is reflexive (2). Because the *sola fide* (« by faith alone ») has become the exclusive measure of all other reality, the oblation of love, that is to say the gift of oneself, loses then its profound signification. The personal conviction of the subject which he raises in certitude, by emphasising the « self », constitutes, thus, the essential criteria, whereas one can acknowledge an alteration of the three theological virtues. Later, Ratzinger put his finger on the problem when he declared :

« To the catholic, the certainty of faith refers to that which God has wrought, to which the Church witnesses. The certainty of hope refers to the salvation of individuals and among them, of oneself. Yet, to Luther, the latter represented the crux without which nothing else really mattered. That is why love, which lies at the center of the Catholic faith, is dropped from the concept of faith ; Luther goes so far as to formulate this polemically in his large commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians : *maledicta sit caritas*, down with love ! Luther's insistence on "by faith alone" clearly and exactly excludes love from the question of salvation. Love belongs to the realm of "works" and, thus, becomes "profane". » (3)

The lutheran exaltation of the subject, that is the « self », had completely changed the way the Church was perceived. From now on, she exercised a function of organisation adapted to a necessarily changing situation by resting on the political structure, on its principles as much as on its rulers. In this way, the Church was no longer considered as a sacramental reality, as described in the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, but it was preferred that its purely functional character be emphasised. Thus, she had become an entity with organisational capacity, guided by the criteria of its own « self », hence the decisive importance of the majority in the decisions she had to make. In this way, the regional Church (Landeskirchen) which came together in confederations, supported a political structure which granted them precedence. Joseph Ratzinger points out that such a conception of the Church bears a very different signification than the one of the catholic Church (4). For Luther, « Regional churches are not the "Church" in a theological sense but are, rather, ways in which Christians congregations organize themselves ; they can be empirically useful, indeed necessary, but they are also just as well interchangeable under different circumstances. » (5)

By contrast, for catholics, the Church is a sacramental reality. « It is exactly this visible sacramental nature which is central to the concept of the Catholic Church that at the same time elevates the visible to a symbol of something greater. The trans-temporal unity is as much a feature of this function as it is a symbol of the transcendence of the various political and cultural realms in the communion with the *Body* of Christ, which turns out to be the communion of his body in the very reality of the community of bishops everywhere and at all times. » (6)

In this context, it is good to mention one aspect which is tightly connected to this new conception of the Church, where the singular receives an important role : it is about the reference to the so-called « Basis » concept. The command-

ment of the Lord is clear ; before his Ascension, he had said : « Going therefore, teach ye all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Mt. 28, 19-20). » The lutheran principle makes a reversal of this commandment and changes it proposing to take on the contrary into consideration the existential realities, life realities, of what one calls the « Basis ». Cardinal Ratzinger affirms that the discussions on the « Basis » have for premisses a philosophical and social conception which has often turned into an ideology. The idea of community suffers a mutation now presenting the Church as a reality doted with a structure in which the majority shows the way that is to be followed, letting themselves be guided, sooner or later, by politics or the spirit of the time (*Zeitgeist*), whereas the Gospel is deprived of any normative character.

This path stops any progress and constitutes an obstacle to true ecumenical dialogue, since true progress in the Church depends on three factors : « reflection on and study of holy words (Holy Scripture), insight based on experience in spiritual matters, and the teachings by the bishops. » (7) The catholic conception is totally opposed to Luther's. Indeed, in the Catholic Church, the subject (the « self ») is part of the *anima ecclesiastica* (the soul of the Church), of the Church community, from which comes its strength. The subject becomes, thus, a new « self » by receiving a new subjectivity in the community of the mystical Body of Christ.

Following the various stands, and the diverse controversies that followed, Cardinal Ratzinger felt obliged to add an appendix to his original text. It contains, among other things, a fundamental critic of Karl Rahner. Also, in the end, he makes references to the concept of authority in the Church, ever so criticised by Luther. Starting from the presupposition that the Church is not primarily an administrative entity, one can easily understand that the fundamental values « escape our votes because they constitute for those an orientation norm that we did not invent ourselves. » (8) He, then, explains that the principle of authority cannot be founded on doubt, scepticism or subjective knowledge because if it did it would be « the capitulation before the possibility to draw us closer within the truth. » (9) Cardinal Ratzinger concludes with this profound explanation : « An authority which serves truth, as the ecclesiastical authority should, founded on the sacrament, is an obedient authority. An authority founded on scepticism becomes autocratic (*selbstherrlich*). And, we should add that, precisely, those who consider themselves at the forefront of progress after the council, despite all their own criticism of obedience, often presuppose and employ unscrupulously the obedience of the faithful in order to do with the Church whatever they consider useful ? » (10) ◆

1. Cf. Paul Hacker, *Das Ich im Glauben bei Martin Luther. Der Ursprung der anthropozentrischen Religion* [Faith in Luther : Martin Luther and the Origin of Anthropocentric Religion], Bonn, 2002, p. 12. 2. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-33. 3. Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics : New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2008, pp. 110-111. 4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 111. 5. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 114. 7. *Ibid.*, p. 115. 8. *Ibid.* 9. *Ibid.* 10. *Ibid.*