



RES

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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 magisterium 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

# Who killed catholicism in Belgium?

The reform pushed forth by Yves Congar in his 1950 book, *True and False Reform in the Church*, has today all the appearances of a false reform. This is what comes out of Guillaume Cuchet's book, a professor at the Institut catholique in Paris, *How our world ceased to be christian, Anatomy of a collapse* (Seuil, 2018). The author explains the spectacular collapse of Sunday attendance since 1965 in France (25 % in the beginning of the 1960's, today they are only 1.8 %) : after 1965, the young generations of catholics no longer profited from the transmission of the heritage and have fallen out en masse.

All the western european countries have experience this dechristianisation, but in Belgium the collapse was astonishing. In 1962, in Flanders, Sunday attendance was over sixty per cent of the population, and in Wallonia thirty per cent which was considered « low », while at the time its eight dioceses had a total of ten thousand priests. Today, attendance reaches a low three per cent, with three thousand six hundred priests, with an average age of seventy three, without any hope of a renewal : seventy seminarians, of which only twenty five in Flanders, once a haven for priestly vocations.

One must admit their pastors as Conciliar Fathers were rather of an “opened mind”. Cardinal Leo-Joseph Suenens (1961-1979), one of Vatican II strategist, incidentally deeply marian, exercised a true authority within the assembly to which he was one of the four moderators, notably in the battle on collegiality. Although very trusted by Paul VI, yet he would not succeed in convincing the pope about the legitimacy of contraception.

Suenens begot Danneels, to speak like the gospel genealogies. Cardinal Godfried Danneels (1979-2010), although himself not a one way mind either (his remarks on the liturgy being non-manipulable and a place of silence, could have been also assumed by a Cardinal Sarah), took over carrying the torch. Later, he would recall having been part of a « St. Gallen Group », whose foil figure was Cardinal Ratzinger and the reference Cardinal Martini, archbishop of Milan. Like Martini, Danneels was favorable to some moral openness (declaration on the symbolic questions on condoms, and on homosexual tendencies), and to institutional openness as well (maximum synodality). Danneels' spiritual son, following the inconclusive restoration lead by Msg. André-Joseph Léonard (2010-2015), today is found in Jozef De Kesel.

But this set course followed by the archbishops of Mechelen is not the only explanation to the social disappearance of catholicism in Belgium. If, for example, institutions as eminent as Maredsous Abbey and the Catholic University in Leuven, were able to go astray, one in regards to religious life under Abbot du Roy, the other in regards to moral teaching, it is because belgian catholicity, during the time of cardinals Mercier and Van Roey, certainly rich in all respects, was nonetheless undermined : the common culture in which it seemed well anchored would become more and more fragile within the structures of democratic modernity, specially since the end of the last war. Instead of the true reform, which would have stimulated belgian catholicity, came the false reform : suddenly it was infused with an ecclesial decal of this modernity, inspired, more importantly, in a maximalist way, by Suenens and his sons. Of this catholicity, there is nothing left.

Abbé Claude Barthe ◆

## ► The St. Gallen Group and the « Martini hypothesis »

K. Schelkens and J. Mettepenning's book *Gottfried Danneels* (Antwerp, Polis, 2015) revealed what the Cardinal of Mechelen later confirmed : he had participated, from 1996 to 2006, with Cardinals Martini, Lehmann, Kasper, Silvestrini, and Hume, in informal meetings in St. Gallen, Switzerland, with the purpose to organise the resistance against the restoration movement of John Paul II's pontificate and to prevent Cardinal Ratzinger to succeed him. Their hopes laid up with Jesuit Cardinal Martini, archbishop of Milan. It happens that up until 1993 he had presided over the Council of Bishops' Conferences

of Europe which gathered in St. Gallen, Council previously presided by Cardinals Etchegaray and Hume successively. But Martini, who had retired in 2002, was now ill with Parkinson's disease. So, during the 2005 conclave, the group had laid up its hopes with Cardinal Bergoglio, Jesuit archbishop of Buenos Aires. Bergoglio received its maximum votes in the third round, on 19 April 2005. Rather than attempting unreliable blocking, he asked for electors to stop voting for him. In the fourth round, Ratzinger was elected with eighty four votes. Disappointed, the Group members, now greatly augmented, immediately started to prepare a future pontificate. Let us recall the first act of this

tampering activity : on 20 September, 2005, the Italian review *Limes*, in an article from L. Brunelli (« Così eleggemmo papa Ratzinger »), published the « secret journal of the conclave » that he claims he obtained from a cardinal, in which we find out that Jorge Bergoglio had, nonetheless, obtained forty votes, to Ratzinger, seventy two. And to show that the fight went on, Cardinal Silvestrini had had published the picture of a « secret » meeting held at the Villa Nazareth, the house an educational charity to which he was the patron. On the picture, Silvestrini appeared with Cardinals Danneels, Backis from Vilnius, Kasper, Lehmann, Martini, Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster, and French Cardinal Tauran. The latter who, as first Cardinal-Deacon, would have to announce, on 13 March 2013, the election of Martini *redivivus*. **P.P.**

## CARDINAL JOZEF DE KESEL : SECULARISATION AS GRACE

Jozef De Kesel, an intelligent and courteous man, was born in Ghent in 1947. First a teacher, he was later appointed auxiliary Bishop of Mechelen-Brussel in 2002.

In the old debate on re-married divorces, he gave his support to Fr. Herman Cosijns, who had become Secretary to the Bishops' conference, who believes « for a Christian, a second marriage (after a divorce) should be considered as an opportunity to grow in the love of God [...] The second marriage thus acquiring a religious dimension and being able to be experienced as a way of sanctification, a path suggested by God. »

The same Fr. Cosijns thinks homosexual persons can find the way of God by living their relation (*Pastoralia*, review of the archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussel, May 1996).

Johan Bonny, Bishop of Antwerp, added : « We must search within the Church a formal acknowledgement of the relationality which is also present in many bisexual and homosexual couples » (*De Morgen*, 27 December, 2014). And J. De Kesel, after becoming a cardinal, declared himself favorable to the celebration of a ceremony for homosexual unions (*La Croix*, 5 June, 2018).

In the mean time, in 2010, it is Msg. Leonard, Bishop of Namur, that Benedict XVI had appointed archbishop of Mechelen, so to respect the informal principle of linguistic changeover. But pope Ratzinger nevertheless set De Kesel on its way to success, by appointing him Bishop of Bruges. While there, De Kesel raised the sempiternal question of the ordination of married men : the « persons for whom celibacy is humanly impossible should also have the opportunity to become priest » (a demand that his auxiliary in Brussel Msg. Kockerols just put forward at the Synod on Youth). As to the ordination of women, he said it could be addressed. And Msg. Bonny to only push the matter further.

The church is disappearing ? Godfried Danneels finds consolation : « What the Church has lost in quantity, she made it up in quality ». And Jozef De Kesel takes on : « on condition of staying humble, in a secularised society, the church will represent « like a point of view and a possibility among others » (16 September, 2016). A way, a truth, a life among others.

**Pio Pace**

## ► Brussel churches opened

Opened to gay pride participants : on May 27th, 2006, as part of the Gay pride festivities, Our Lady of Good Help parish had organised a mass celebrated with the Community of Christ Liberator, announced through a poster campaign. The altar cloth was in the colours of the rainbow.

Opened to Muslims : All Saints day 2006, at the fourth congress for a New Evangelisation, after Paris, Lisbon and Vienna, an inter-religious concert was given in the church of Our Lady Immaculate, with the muslim chorus Rafik El Maai, and most of all, in the church of Saint-Roch, took place an inter-religious vigil with readings and prayers taken from the Bible and the Koran.

Opened to neo-moral justifications : on March 17th, 2007, in Brussel's cathedral, Jozef De Kesel pronounced a funeral oration for Canon Pierre de Loch, strong supporter of Planned Parenthood, advocate for selective abortion, member of the Right to Die Association. « Pierre de Loch, said De Kesel, remained faithful to the Gospel, and I can say, and I must say, faithful to that same Church, People of God. » **P.P.**