

On the Crisis in the Church

By Dorothea Ludwig-Wang, 22 April 2018

The maxim that he who is silent is taken to agree shows that remaining indifferent to the current crisis in the Church is not an option for the faithful Catholic: “He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth” (Matt. 12:30). If we choose our own comfort above what is truly righteous by ignoring unpleasant realities, then we are not worthy to be called disciples of Christ. It is morally unacceptable to turn a blind eye, and anyone who chooses to do this to avoid disturbing his comfortable world will be accountable before the Righteous Judge on the Last Day.

What has happened to the Bride of Christ? Evil men seeking their own personal gain above the salvation of souls have attempted to corrupt the faith and the liturgy, to the spiritual detriment of many. One soul lost is one soul too many, for each is precious in the eyes of Our Lord: “If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray: doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go to seek that which is gone astray?” (Matt. 18:12). How many souls have been lost due to the pernicious errors of the past several decades? Woe be to him who scandalizes the little ones; in Our Lord’s own words: “...it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

Catechesis for the lay faithful is in a truly deplorable state, and it is evident that this has the effect of keeping most people in the dark regarding Church teaching. Many Catholics today unknowingly hold beliefs which were condemned by Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors*, among other papal documents. They are so poorly catechized that they have no choice but to submit in false obedience, even when some leaders are misguided, and the faithful must wait for their errors to be corrected. False obedience consists of deferring to an authority even when that authority exceeds its purview by issuing a command contrary to the will of God, as revealed through natural law and Church teaching. Obedience of this sort is only obedience so-called and has always been reprobated by the Church.¹

Thus, most remain ignorant of what Bp. Athanasius Schneider refers to as the “fourth great crisis” in the Church. It is, by nature, a doctrinal crisis. What is being taught to the faithful generally consists of, at best, watered-down theology, and at worst, manifest heresy. Few receive an orthodox formation or hear solid Catholic teaching. To add to the problem, the innovation of the *Novus Ordo Missae* and the unprecedented amounts of liturgical abuse that accompany it all too often have caused many of the faithful to unknowingly acquire a Protestant spirit.

The modernists at the Second Vatican Council promoted ideas alien to perennial Catholic teaching: religious liberty, false ecumenism, and collegiality. Few are aware, for example, that it was Fr. Gregory Baum, sodomite and dissenter from Church teaching, who wrote *Nostra aetate*, or that it was Fr. John Murray’s writings, which were suppressed on account of their heterodoxy in the 1950s, that became the basis of *Dignitatis humanae*. So pernicious were the tactics of these unsavory characters that they did not teach these heresies directly: rather, through the clever use

¹ *Summa Theologiae II-II*, q. 104, art. 5, co.

of ambiguity, they placed these heterodox lines among orthodox ones to avoid shocking the ear of the listener with blatant error. When questioned, they ensured that they could provide a denial of those false beliefs which they professed, by which they would have stood condemned.

These same characters were also responsible for the liturgical destruction that culminated in the introduction of the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The Catholic Mass was given to us by God and handed down through the ages by the Apostles and their successors, and therefore, it belongs to Apostolic Tradition and not merely to liturgical discipline. The Mass of All Time was codified by St. Pius V in 1570 and cannot be abrogated. All Catholic priests have the right to celebrate the traditional Latin Mass, as Benedict XVI's *Summorum Pontificum* reiterated, and so bishops, under pain of mortal sin, cannot restrict the use of the 1962 Missal in their dioceses. Changes to the Missal may legitimately be made by the Supreme Pontiff if he deems it necessary and appropriate, but this is not what happened with the introduction of the *Novus Ordo Missae*; rather, it was the arbitrary fabrication of a completely new liturgical rite, which cannot be done.

The innovators, going against the law of organic development, attempted to undermine Tradition by substantially altering the received and approved Roman rite. Paul VI never gave the new rite the force of law with his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, despite the attempts of the translators to make it appear to be the case. The original text stated: "*Ad extremum, ex iis quae hactenus de novo Missali Romano exposuimus quiddam nunc cogere et efficere placet,*"² which simply means to sum things up and draw a conclusion. Something certainly cannot be considered promulgated when it merely appears to have the force of law due to an error in translation. Therefore, the Catholic who seeks to worship according to the mind of the Church *must* prefer the traditional Latin Mass, which remains the normative Mass of the Latin Church, notwithstanding the liturgy that Paul VI introduced but did not impose upon the Church.

We can see clearly that these despicable innovations have compromised the faith of many. Gone is the widespread use of the beautiful liturgy of the Latin Church; gone is the pristine and crystal-clear presentation of Catholic doctrine. The actions of the innovators must be condemned, but nevertheless there is a line, and if we are to truly be faithful, we must take care not to cross it. We must continue to affirm the *validity* of the Second Vatican Council, that it was a legitimate council convened by a legitimate pope. The truly pious and devout soul recognizes that although the power of the pope is supreme, it is not absolute—he, too, is subject to a higher authority, God Himself. When questionable things are being promoted by the non-infallible authentic Magisterium, we must always give precedence to Tradition, to earlier teachings of the infallible Magisterium, and most importantly, to do what is pleasing to the Lord and to obey His will.

When the battle-lines are officially and definitively drawn, Catholics will have to choose between truth and heresy, between good and evil. Perhaps a new council will need to be called sometime in the future to restore Catholic Tradition. If the Second Vatican Council did not succeed in its objective to renew and reinvigorate the Church, then the new council needs to bring the Church back to her roots. It must be renewal in conformity with the Tradition of the Church, which will bring her out of this desolate winter and usher in a new springtime, bearing with it an abundant harvest of fruits. For this the Lord has promised infallibly: they who abide in

2 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 30 April 1969. Vol. 61, No. 4. pp. 221- 22.

Him and keep His Commandments have the assurance that they will bring forth much fruit and labor for the Father's glory (Jn. 15:8-10).

With the grace of God, through Whom we can do all things, we are assured that the Church was founded on a promise of indefectibility, and that the gates of hell will never prevail. Beginning with the Apostles, when all but one fled during Our Lord's Passion, the Church has faced many struggles throughout the centuries, both from without and within. Many of those closest to Christ apostatized during a time of trouble and difficulty, but if we are to be faithful, we must follow the example of none other than the Blessed Virgin Mary, the one who believed, and as such, is the perfect disciple and exemplary model of faithfulness. As faithful Catholics, we cannot abandon Christ during the suffering of His Mystical Body!