

Sì sì no no

THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • January 2007
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"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me....He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him" (Jn. 7:16, 18). Behold the sublime synthesis of the person of the divine Word: He has received everything from the Father, and He communicates what He has received.

St. Augustine writes:

For He says not, This doctrine is not mine; but, "My doctrine is not mine." If not Thine, how Thine? If Thine, how not Thine?...If we carefully look at what the holy evangelist himself says in the beginning of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; thence hangs the solution of this question. What then is the doctrine of the Father, but the Father's Word? Therefore, Christ Himself is the doctrine of the Father, if He is the Word of the Father. But since the Word cannot be of none, but of some one, He said both "His doctrine," namely, Himself, and also, "not His own," because He is the Word of the Father. For what is so much "Thine" as Thyself? And what so much not Thine as Thyself, if that Thou art is of another?¹

As a true disciple of Jesus Christ, St. Paul also glories in possessing nothing and in handing down nothing but that which he himself has received: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you..." (I Cor. 11:23). And the same should be true of every true pastor of the Church, and even of every true Christian: to glory in transmitting nothing but what he has received from the constant teaching of the Church;

¹ In *Joan.*, Tractate XXIX [English version from the Catholic Classics Ethereal Library: www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf107.txt].

The Good Shepherd, the Wolves, and the Mercenaries



Marini

Daneels

Ruini

Sodano

to invent nothing, to change nothing, but to rejoice in receiving everything and in handing it on. Such is the voice of the good Shepherd; such must be the voice of the true pastors.

It is up to you, dear readers, to judge whether, in the voices of the pastors below, the voice of Christ can be recognized, or else the growl of the wolf in sheep's clothing.

The Spirit of the Liturgy?

Msgr. Marini,² on the occasion of presenting to the Catholic University of Milan his latest book, *Liturgy and Beauty (Nobilis Pulchritudo): Memoirs of a Lived Experience in the Liturgical Celebrations of the Holy Father*, granted an interview to the online daily *Affari Italiani* of March 20, 2006. To the question "What do you think of the Lefebvrists," Marini, reacting like someone bitten by a tarantula, replied: "Let it be clear once and for all: they must accept what Vatican II has decided or else no reconciliation will be possible." Perhaps someone should let Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos know that obviously the Holy Father must have replaced him by Msgr. Marini...; or else, given the peremptory nature of his reply, the Pope himself must fear being supplanted by this same monsignor.

Here is the rest of his answer:

What do these people want? The majority of the faithful have adjusted; without the new rite, which was not an offspring of the Curia but a work of international inspiration, the celebrations and trips abroad of Pope Wojtyla would have been impossible. So why don't they adapt; what's the difference?

"These people," as Msgr. Marini calls them, in addition to the fact that his answer makes no mention of the significant opposition that the liturgical reform quickly encountered, and not only among the "Lefebvrists," would also like to point out that at the time of Arius, too, the majority of the faithful had adapted... But perhaps it is too much to expect Archbishop Marini to adopt as a criterion something more profound than mere consensus. After all, he is a liturgist, not a theologian!

But some legitimate doubts could be raised about his liturgical competence too, since to prove the goodness of the new rite he can find nothing better to say than that it enabled Pope Wojtyla to travel all over the world. With all due respect, this does not seem very convincing to us. If Pope Ratzinger is a little more sedentary than his predecessor, will it be necessary to create a rite *ad hoc* for him too?

And then, hear ye! Hear ye! Marini confides a detail to his interviewer:

I want to tell you an anecdote. A few years ago, [some Lefebvrists] came to see me and I received them. One of them spoke up and said: "Excellency, the new rite is a heresy."

"Why," I asked.

"Because," the Lefebvrist replied, "in the old rite the celebrant genuflected, he adored the host, he rose, he showed it to the people, then he genuflected again to adore it."

"Ah," I said, "so then..."

"So then it is a heresy because by not genuflecting until after the elevation the celebrant is in reality asking the consent of the faithful before proceeding to the consecration."

What did I do? Really, now; we simply wanted to suppress a duplicate, and he speaks to me of heresy! "Here, take my telephone number," I told him, "call me when you need to."

What conclusions can we draw from Marini's Hemingwayesque tale? First of all, he evidently desires to portray all these "Lefebvrists"—as he calls them—as a mass of imbeciles who must be affected by mental problems since they reduce the liturgical reform to a simple question of genuflection. Second, Marini's reply to this "Lefebvrist" confirms our suspicion about his liturgical competence and his ignorance of the spiritual life. The liturgy is made up of signs, gestures. Now, it is clear, even to a child, that it is the repetition of these gestures that forms interior dispositions. Thus the Church, like a good mother, has established that the gesture that expresses more than any other reverence, adoration, the awe of the creature in the presence of its Creator, of the vassal before his Lord, is genuflection. As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced, the genuflection unequivocally expresses that at that precise moment the God-Man is there, present on the altar in the state of Victim offered to the Father for our redemption. An instant before He was not present in this manner, and it is only by the power of the sacerdotal mediation that this was made possible. Msgr. Gaume well described this solemn moment: "'This is my Body.' The miracle is accomplished. The priest falls to his knee, the acolytes bow, and the bell, that noble messenger of the Church militant, calls the faithful to adore."³ After the elevation of the consecrated host, the same gesture is repeated, and will be repeated for the consecration of the chalice.

To state that the criterion that led to the suppression of this genuflection (like many others) was "the suppression of a duplicate" is tantamount to confusing the liturgy with a mathematical proof. What would Msgr. Marini do if he were charged with the reform of the holy Rosary, since this prayer is nothing but the repetition of the same prayers and the proposition of the same mysteries? He would

² Archbishop Piero Marini (b. 1942), Titular Archbishop of Martirano and Master of Pontifical Ceremonies. He was the personal secretary of Archbishop Anibale Bugnini. He has been the master of papal liturgical celebrations since 1987.—Ed.

³ G. Gaume, *Catéchisme de persévérance*, Part IV, Lesson 21 (Milan, 1860), Vol. 7, p.286.

probably just eliminate it; then he would grant an interview and tell the Blessed Virgin Mary that she has no grounds for complaint since it was just a matter of suppressing duplications; finally...he would leave her his telephone number, saying "Call me when you need to!"

Dom Guéranger wrote:

According to the enlightened judgment of pious and knowledgeable priests who use the Roman rite, a hidden unction is concealed within this liturgy that one will look for in vain in the other improvised liturgies of our day. Who cares about the superficial judgment of those who, in practice not knowing anything except the modern liturgies, should wish to give their opinions about the Roman books that they have simply perused or even critically examined....More than intellectual acuity is required to weigh in on this subject.⁴

It is neither erudition nor an analytical mind that makes it possible to savor and to comprehend the liturgy, but rather a genuine piety exempt from worldly taint, a spirit steeped in tradition, a profound love, and a sincere fidelity to the Church.

Marini himself proves how far he is from having this spirit when he says:

We then had a long-term objective in mind that we wanted to reach—the complete reform of the liturgy. We worked in the optic of renewal and return to the Church of the Fathers, suppressing the incrustation of time from the Roman liturgy.

Whoever acts with the intellectualist perspective of completely reforming the liturgy whatever the cost; whoever works in an archaeological optic, forgetting that between the "golden" era of the Fathers and the present lie 1500 years during which the Holy Spirit led His Church; whoever dares depreciate this work of the Divine Spirit, labeling "incrustation of time" what actually was, on the contrary, a marvelous development, without discontinuity or rupture, of the prayer of the Spouse; such a one is not worthy of the name Catholic, still less that of member of the pontifical household.

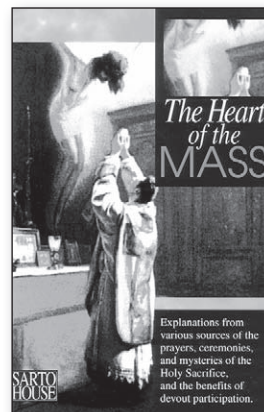
In the rest of the interview, Marini does not cease to show that he is a total stranger to the spirit of the Church:

The enthusiasm has certainly degenerated somewhat... But I fear the return to neo-ritualism, that is to say, to the priest who celebrates the Mass with the thought that, Well, I've said my Mass by following the rite to the letter, so all is well. But all is not well; celebration does not mean a mere servile respect for liturgical norms; there is always a little space for the celebrant.

No, dear Monsignor! The Mass is not space for the celebrant, nor for the People of God, nor for whomever! The Mass is the unbloody immolation of Jesus Christ: that is why the priest must disappear behind the liturgical rubrics, not out of formalism, of course (how can Marini say that previously all the

priests reasoned that way: has he perhaps the gift of reading minds?), but out of reverence towards God. Such is the spirit in which the Church established the rubrics and requires that they be followed precisely; that is the virtue of religion, of which St. Thomas Aquinas spoke, a virtue that pushes one "to do certain things out of reverence towards God."⁵ And submission out of reverence towards God gives the merit of obedience, assures true devotion, helps the priest and the faithful to a state of recollection and respect, and impresses upon the soul the best interior dispositions. To the contrary, creativity deprives the soul of all these benefits and favors the spirit of independence, son of pride, generator of disobedience and anarchy, as the facts amply show.

How much longer must the ears of the faithful support such foolishness? How much longer will the blind lead the blind? Decidedly, what we have heard is not the voice of the good Shepherd, but the voice of "one who speaks of himself or seeks his own glory"; the good Shepherd, to the contrary, takes pleasure in repeating: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."



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Shakespearean Shenanigans

While Msgr. Marini pontificates...Cardinal Sodano acts.

On February 19, Cardinal Camillo Ruini turned 75; according to regulations, he had to submit to the Pope his letter of resignation, which the Holy Father can decide to accept or not. Moreover, a few days later, March 6, his mandate as president of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) expired.

At the end of Ruini's preceding mandates as president of the Italian Episcopal Conference (1991, 1996, 2001), John Paul II sought the advice of the

⁵ *Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q.81, art. 2.

⁴ *L'esprit de la liturgie catholique* (Ed. Servir, 2000), p.87.

presidents of the regions into which the Italian episcopacy is divided. "But this time," writes Sandro Magister, in his newsletter of March 2, 2006,⁶

rather than the pope, the secretariat of state extended the consultation to all of the 226 bishops in office. To each one, the nuncio in Italy Paolo Romeo sent a letter under the seal of pontifical secrecy, asking the recipient to "indicate...the prelate that you would like to suggest."

Here is the complete text of the letter sent to the Italian bishops without the Pope's knowledge:

Most Reverend Excellency,

As you know, next March 6 the mandate of the Most Eminent Cardinal Camillo Ruini as president of the CEI will come to a conclusion.

The Holy Father, who has always appreciated very much the service rendered by the Most Eminent Cardinal to the Italian Church, thinks nonetheless that, in part because of his upcoming seventy-fifth birthday, a change in the office of the presidency is in order.

To this end it is my duty and privilege to address Your Excellency, asking you to indicate to me, coram Domino and with courteous solicitude, the Prelate that you intend to suggest for the aforementioned office.

This consultation, in consideration of its importance and delicacy, is subject to the pontifical seal of secrecy, which requires the utmost caution with all persons.

Finally, I would ask you to return this letter together with your response, without keeping copies of anything.

Until then, I warmly thank you for the help that you, through the agency of this Apostolic Nunciature, shall desire to give the Successor of Peter in such an important and delicate matter.

Paolo Romeo, Apostolic Nuncio
Rome, January 26, 2006

But why the hush-hush "C.I.A." approach to express a simple preference? The answer is simple: neither the Pope nor Ruini knew anything about Cardinal Sodano's initiative! Magister reports:

The letter bears the date of January 26, and the only one to whom it was not sent was Ruini. But he was immediately made aware of it. And Benedict XVI was also informed, and discovered that it said the opposite of what he was planning to do.

On February 6, the nuncio who signed the letter, Romeo, was called by Benedict XVI for an audience. The pope asked him how and why this initiative came about. Romeo left the audience in shambles, but Sodano was the one who was really trembling.

On February 9, Benedict XVI received Ruini together with his right hand man, the secretary general of the CEI, bishop Giuseppe Betori. They both received the pope's reassurances. News of the letter had not yet leaked to the outside.

But a few days later, the news agencies and newspapers were writing about it, attributing the idea for the letter to

the pope and to his desire to decide "more collegially" on a replacement for Ruini. And in fact, on the morning of February 14, as soon as he saw the complete text of the letter published in two newspapers, a very irritated Benedict XVI picked up the telephone and ordered that his confirmation of Ruini as president of the CEI be made public immediately. The pope's order was so peremptory that the Vatican press office released the news before any of the other communications of the day.

By confirming Ruini, the pope invalidated the letter of Romeo, alias Sodano, which had pegged Ruini as a has-been.

Had Shakespeare known of the affair, he wouldn't have hesitated to rebaptize his most famous work *Romeo and ...Sodano!* Pleasantries aside, the deed is serious: the Cardinal Secretary of State circulated a misleading letter with the intention of "ridding himself" of an Eminence and of making a fool of the Pope. Can this mendacious voice be the voice of the Good Shepherd?

But more than a wolf, Sodano appears to be a mercenary. Indeed, we learn in *Il Foglio* of March 15, 2006, of

the involvement of a nephew (Andrea) of Cardinal Secretary of State Sodano in the affairs of a real estate development company, the Follieri Group, which is doing business worth hundreds of millions of dollars with American dioceses and religious orders....

The news was reported in the *National Catholic Reporter* on March 3, 2006, and by *Adista* on March 11, 2006. We also happened to read in the archives of the *Erre News* that the lawyer Pasquale Follieri, president of the group of the same name for which the engineer Andrea Sodano was named vice president, was the object of an inquiry (since dismissed by the judge for preliminary hearings of the Foggia court) for violating the Anselmi Law on secret societies. It seems, moreover, that just three years before the Follieris were experiencing serious economic problems until the General Gianalfonso d'Avossa, investigated for ties to the Russian Mafia and for other "trifles" of this sort, "introduced the Follieris to Sodano, who would have put them in touch, fairly recently, then, with his nephew Andrea, head of a big civil engineering firm at Asti. Whence the vice-presidency of the Follieri Group given to the nephew of Cardinal Sodano. Whence also, probably, with Vatican letters of credit of this level, the rapid rise of the Group in the American real estate market" (*Adista*, March 11, 2006). A group which—as if by chance—focuses on the acquisition of properties of dioceses and religious orders in the US.⁷ What is there to say? After Marini's Hemingwayesque tale and the story of "Romeo and Sodano" worthy of

⁷ It seems that equally implicated in this business is Msgr. Tomecek, currently residing in a Philadelphia parish, who was personally called upon to work with the Follieri Group by Pope John Paul II's secretary, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz.

⁶ Online at www.chiesa.espressonline.it/printDettaglio.jsp?id=46410&eng=y.

Shakespeare, we have a a detective story plot *à la* Agatha Christie!

Dubious Distinctions, Doubtful Doctrines

Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Brussels and president of the Belgian Episcopal Conference, granted an interview to the national daily newspaper *La Dernière Heure/Les Sports* ([/www.dhnet.be](http://www.dhnet.be)) of March 9, 2006. Well, evidently, when Danneels opens his mouth to speak, it would be better for the faithful to close their ears.

To the question “Is it possible to consider the marriage of priests?” the Cardinal gives a reply “worthy” of a treatise on the metaphysical basis of canon law: “Its prohibition flows from what is called a ‘positive’ law of the Church, which means that it can be changed.” A curious equivalence made by His Eminence: a positive law = a law that can be changed, that is to say, pure jurispositivism! It is futile to search the interview granted by Danneels for the reason why the Church laid down this law. On the contrary, the Cardinal has nothing better to say than “Is celibacy an outmoded concept? Well, the future will tell us. We shall see if they get back to it, but I do not believe so.” And he winds up the discussion: “The greatest obstacle for a priest is not celibacy, but the difficulty of giving one’s life for invisible causes.” What can these invisible causes be? Is Cardinal Danneels speaking about extraterrestrials or phantoms? And besides, you know, it makes a bad impression to name Jesus Christ in the columns of a secular daily...

Although we are already used to the “sorties” of Cardinal Danneels, we cannot fail to be staggered to observe that the idea of a normative Tradition should be completely absent from a Cardinal’s thinking. From the beginning, in fact,

despite the pressures which arise often within the Church itself, the Church has never called in question the foundation nor the applications of the law of celibacy, and it has never allowed the discipline to be relaxed on the essential points; it has never tolerated marriage after the reception of major orders; to candidates already married, it has forbidden the continuation of conjugal life after ordination. Through the centuries, the discipline became more severe: the nullity of marriage contracted by clerics having received major orders was proclaimed, and the ordination of married men fell more and more out of favor. It was considered that these ordinations created an ambiguity, that they did not favor the appreciation of celibacy, endangering the conviction of the close affinity between the vocation to the priesthood and the vocation to virginity.⁸

Now, if the Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has always maintained this direction, it certainly

has not done so on a whim, nor from contempt of marriage, nor for any other fleeting or futile reason. It has wanted to manifest the “close affinity” that exists between the priest, who is the man of the altar and of sacrifice, and celibacy, which disposes the soul to that which is like its seal. If, at the beginning, the discipline was not as rigorous as today, that is because these convictions still had to mature, not in the Church, but in the candidates for the priesthood. Thus it is not possible to go back, since the law of priestly celibacy is not a transitory element nor is it subject to free will, which could, as the Cardinal says, “be changed.” On the contrary, it is the ripe fruit that manifests the “physiognomy” of the Catholic priesthood.

Another hot topic: “And the priesthood of women?” Once again, the Cardinal gives a free interpretation of the laws of the Church: “People always say that the Catholic Church does not want women to become priests. That is not exact. The Church has said that it does not feel itself to be authorized to do it since Jesus only chose men for His Apostles. That said, I think that it is necessary to grant high responsibilities to women in the Church. From this perspective, there is a need to make up for lost time.” In other words, it is not the Church’s fault, but Jesus Christ’s. The Church, if it could, would grant the priesthood to women right away. But since things are this way, at least they will arrange things so that women have “high responsibilities” (?) in the Church!

And yet St. Thomas explains very well⁹ that women cannot receive sacerdotal ordination because the priesthood requires not only the *res*, but also what it signifies. He gives an example: just as for extreme unction it is necessary that the person who receives it be sick in such a way as to manifest the signification of healing (of the soul and often of the body, too) of this sacrament, so the one who is ordained receives the power to act *in persona Christi*. His person thus must indicate Christ Himself, who was a man and not a woman. Moreover, explains St. Thomas, the ordination of a woman is not possible in the measure that the latter is called to be subject to the man, while the priesthood must on the contrary also manifest the power and the authority of Christ. And it is for this last reason that the woman cannot be part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; she can, however, lend her aid, not only by prayer and sacrifice, but also by her precious and laborious collaboration.

But the spectacle given by Danneels really takes off when the interviewer asks him, “Are you for or

⁹ Cf. *Super IV Libros Sententiarum*, IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 2.

⁸ A. M. Stickler, “Evolution de la discipline du célibat dans l’Eglise d’Occident de la fin de l’âge patristique au Concile de Trente,” in AA. VV., *Sacerdoce et célibat* (Milan, 1975), p.598.

against the use of the condom?” Answer: “First of all, the Pope has never employed the term *condom*—still less to condemn it—in any of his speeches. As for me, I do not say that the use of the condom is acceptable. But if for example a man infected with AIDS obliges his wife to have conjugal relations, she must be able to oblige him to use a condom. Otherwise, another sin is added, that of homicide. I have always said it: the condom, insofar as it allows the protection of life, does not belong to the purely sexual domain.”

First of all, what can he mean by the statement “the Pope has never employed the term *condom*—still less to condemn it”? The Church has exposed in detail its thinking, generically as regards the onanist use of marriage and specifically as regards contraception. And the use of the condom would not fall into this category? It is unworthy to try to evade the Church’s systematic prohibition in this matter by playing with words! It is equally unworthy to try by using “tear-jerking” examples to justify the unjustifiable. Indeed, in the situation envisaged by the Cardinal, the woman would commit a grave sin insofar as recourse to the condom is an intrinsically evil act. The Church has declared itself clearly on this point.¹⁰ Consequently, in the case where a sick man would oblige his wife to have marital relations while making use of a condom, she would be obliged to resist him as one resists a rapist,¹¹ even at the risk of her own life, precisely because the usage of these means is inherently gravely sinful. The “advice” given by the Cardinal would perhaps allow the woman to save her life (if indeed the condom is really effective against the transmission of the HIV virus), but certainly not her soul. Good counsel from a “good Shepherd”!

The Cardinal’s folly is given full rein when it comes to the marriage of homosexuals: “In my opinion, the heart of the debate is elsewhere. I can accept that civil legislation determine the conditions of cohabitation and the rights of homosexual couples, but I cannot agree to call that marriage.” He concludes: “It is normal that civil legislation—which I respect—not be totally in conformity with my ethical judgment.” Once again, it is only a matter of words: if these are free unions then it is okay, but if they call it marriage, it is not okay. We do hope that the civil law not conform to the “ethical judgment” of the Cardinal!

The levity with which Cardinal Danneels broaches this question is truly incredible. First, he does not seem to have the least suspicion that there might exist a natural law and a magisterial teaching which no one has the right to disregard, especially

the civil law—with the benediction of the partisans of the secular State—because the only *auctoritas* he mentions is the “ethical judgment.” Then his relativism, already in evidence in the statements just quoted, becomes even more explicit when he says about homosexuality *per se*:

You know the Church’s doctrine on this subject: it does not involve a normal situation, in our eyes. Still, it is not a matter of condemnation or of discrimination. Once again, it is necessary to make a distinction between an ethical judgment and the laws regulating life in society.

The presumed doctrine of the Church “according to Godfried” would consider homosexuality to be “not normal,” while the true doctrine according to Jesus Christ defines it, in keeping with all of holy Scripture, as “an abominable sin [that] is intrinsically repugnant to nature and to the first end of the sexual act: it is the impurity against nature.”¹² And the simple “abnormality” of homosexuality, says Cardinal Danneels in the Church’s name, only would involve an abnormality “in our eyes”!

The distinction the Cardinal proposes between ethical rules and the laws of society is incredible, as if the latter were independent of the former. It is not surprising, then, that earlier in the interview Cardinal Danneels—from the perspective of pure judicial positivism—would have offhandedly envisaged the possibility that the law of ecclesiastical celibacy be abolished.

This perspective leads him to discount without any difficulty the recent Instruction concerning the admission of homosexuals to the priesthood:

Whether he is heterosexual or homosexual, the priest has taken a vow of celibacy. I do not make any difference between the two. If a priest does not remain celibate, I will call him on it and then we’ll see what can be done [that is to say, nothing!]. But the fact of a priest’s being homosexual does not constitute, for me, a reason to intervene.

Which is likely to happen first: Cardinal Danneels will be punished for his statements, or he will be received with honor by the European Parliament “for signal merits in defense of homosexuals” ...?

But we should after all point out that Danneels was outdone by one of his “colleagues,” the president of an episcopal conference—in Brazil, this time. It was the Archbishop of Bahia, His Excellency Geraldo Majello Agnelo, who received the “Pink Triangle Trophy,” the symbolic Oscar of the Bahia Gay Group, for the following reason: “The homage to Archbishop Agnelo must serve to open a more effective channel of communication with the Catholic Church and to encourage the creation of a pastoral ministry exclusively devoted to homosexuals.” Indeed, the Archbishop had affirmed: “It is legitimate for homosexuals to demand to be able to live in a society where their differences are respected without

¹⁰ Cf. Response of the Sacred Penitentiaria, June 3, 1916.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Dictionary of Moral Theology* (Rome, 1957), p.1369.

discrimination or persecution.” Has the Archbishop of Bahia ever heard of the chastisement of Sodom and Gomorrah? We have. Run for your life!

Not to be excluded from this survey of outrage and delirium is the president of the Pontifical Council *Justitia et Pax* and president as well of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People since Cardinal Fumio Hamao exceeded the age limit for this charge. We speak of Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, who has worthily inaugurated the month of March.

Having praised Fidel Castro’s tolerance (stating that he has a knowledge of the Church’s social teaching and that he did not persecute Cuba’s Catholics), on Thursday, March 9, during a press conference, Cardinal Martino took a position on the teaching of Islam in the schools: “If there are a

which is now considered as a despotic and obscurantist stance. It involves a vast current of ante-Christian thought, even if on certain points it shares some points in common with Catholicism, whose exigencies and [doctrinal] systems it rejects. Once considered obsolete and thus no longer worthy of consideration, the Gospel as objective Truth, the sense of the universality of Divine Revelation, falls....

That is the crux of the problem: one has the impression of reliving, moment by moment, the dialectic between Christ and the Jews as it is admirably described by St. John. While our Lord refers to the signs He has worked, signs which are observable by all and which attest without the least possible doubt His divinity, the Jews close their eyes and try to eliminate Him by every means, since His conduct and teaching reproach their own conduct and “ruin” their proud designs. Catholicism, and it alone, can show the proofs of its truth, its divine origin, and its superiority, proofs which are visible to all; and people decide, on the contrary, to act as if these proofs did not exist in order to respect the so-called rights of man and tread on the rights of God. Professor Mancini goes on:

From this arrogant secularism arises the emphatic valorization of the experiences and cultures of other peoples, with which they pretend to render to each the personal freedom to make his own determination of their worth. Against the exclusivity of the Word they now oppose the subjective experiences of these revalorized cultures....Even the Pastors of the holy Roman Church have apparently not escaped this process. Such are probably the reasons that impel a Vatican authority like Cardinal Martino to express a favorable opinion on the triumphal entry of the Koran into the public school, where the Crucifix and the Infant Jesus disturb these selfsame Muslims whose sensibility we are expected to respect.... Has Cardinal Martino reflected well about the fact that by placing the teaching of the Koran on a footing of equality with that of the Catholic religion, he could form children whose conscience is indifferent towards the Catholic faith? After the Imams on the altars, the multireligious meetings and Buddha on the tabernacle, some initiatives seem to be the crowning of apostasy! “It is necessary that scandals arise...”

That is true, but “woe to them by whom they come.”

The “moderating” intervention of Cardinal Ruini does not break out of the relativist spiral. According to an article in the *Il Giornale* of March 21, signed by Tornielli, the President of the CEI declared that the teaching of the Koran in the schools “does not seem to be impossible as a matter of principle.” The only conditions would be the following: that in the content there not be “opposition to our constitution [which evidently counts more than the Gospel-*Ed.*], for example regarding civil rights, beginning with religious liberty, the equality of men and women, marriage,” and, moreover, “it would be necessary

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AND
HILAIRE BELLOC

hundred children of Islamic religion in a school, I do not see why one would not teach them their religion.” The democratic “iron logic” of Martino is disarming; the State must no longer, contrary to the unanimous teaching of the Magisterium, recognize the truth and Divine origin of the Catholic religion alone, but it must simply recognize the so-called rights of minorities. The laicity of the State shows its true, relativist face, incapable of having recourse to any other criterion than that of pressure groups.

Let us hearken to the fine reflection of a celebrated Christian, Professor Pia Mancini, written in reply¹³ to Martino’s interview:

The modern concept of transcendence [which is the opposite of true transcendence-*Ed.*] seeks to escape “dogmatic strictures” in order to favor the opening to the world and thus to be able to allow an unprejudiced participation in the life of the world. Indeed, a sort of revulsion towards the faith of the Fathers has spread, the faith of the fathers

¹³ The text was disseminated by the newsletter of the Catholic Parents Association.

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to guarantee that the teaching of the Islamic religion does not give rise to a socially dangerous indoctrination.” That is all! No duty of the State to recognize the true religion, no rights of our Lord, no defense of the Catholic faith.

The Voice of a True Good Shepherd

After the hellish stink emanating from the indifferentist State, it is good to breathe some fresh air, so well distilled by Cardinal (then Msgr.) Pie, when he stood up to Napoleon III for the rights of Jesus Christ over civil society:

It is God’s right to rule over States as over individuals. It was for this alone that our Lord came upon the earth. He ought to reign here by inspiring our laws, sanctifying our morals, enlightening our teaching, directing our counsel, and ordering the actions of governments as of the governed. It is my duty to tell you that He does not reign among us and that our Constitution is not that of a Christian and a Catholic State—far from it. Our public law establishes that the Catholic religion is that of the majority of the French people, but it adds that all other religions have a right to an equal protection. Is that not tantamount to proclaiming that the Constitution equally protects truth and error?¹⁴

When Napoleon III objected that the time was not right for understanding and accepting this vision of things, Msgr. Pie replied:

Sire, when great men of politics like Your Majesty object that the moment has not come, I can only bow before their judgment, because I am not a great man of politics. But I

am a bishop, and as a bishop, I answer you: The time has not yet come for our Lord to reign? Well, then! The time has not yet come for governments to last.

Now, that is the voice of the good Shepherd: the others we do not recognize and we will not follow them. Let us pray to God that He give us Shepherds who desire to conform their life to that of our Lord: “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me....He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him” (Jn. 7:16, 18).

Lanterius

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¹⁴ *Histoire du Cardinal Pie*, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp.698-99.

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