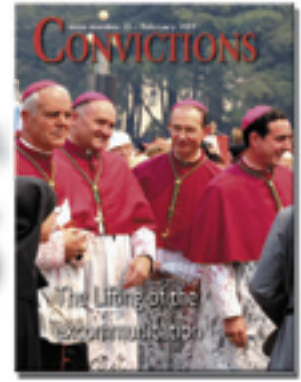


# What is happening in the Church?

CONVICTIONS  
nr 15



Rev. Fr. Peter Scott

## But an act of tolerance

Pope Benedict XVI's understanding that in interpreting all the changes in Vatican II, the principle of continuity must be accepted, namely that there is no rupture, no opposition, no contradiction, but simply development in the same direction, is confirmed by his statement that the 2007 Motu proprio is but an "act of tolerance". As everyone knows, tolerance does not reflect a right, but simply an act of prudence by authority in allowing something it does not like, in order to avoid a greater evil. In order to calm down the French bishops, Benedict XVI declared that this is his attitude towards the traditional Mass. We have to believe that he really means what he says. The consequence is that he does not accept that there is a right to the traditional Mass guaranteed by Quo Primum, for it is of the nature of an act of tolerance that it can be withdrawn. A second consequence is that if the Motu proprio was only an act of tolerance, then it follows that it can be done away with, and that the traditional Mass could now be abrogated: - although he admitted in 2007 that after nearly 40 years of suppression it had never really been abrogated.

Do not believe, then, that Benedict XVI believes that the traditional Mass is the building block for rebuilding Christendom in the 21st century, nor that it is the basis for restoring all things in Christ. This was confirmed by Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, President of the Ec-

clesia Dei Commission in a September 16, 2008, conference marking the first anniversary of Summorum Pontificum. In this conference he refused any kind of opposition between the traditional Mass and the new Mass: "The Eucharist should never become a point of contrast and a point of separation. What is more important: the mystery of God who becomes bread or the language by which we celebrate the mystery?...When we are before the greatest expression of love for humanity - the Eucharist - how can we fight?" (catholicnews.com). He has missed the whole point of how the New Mass corrupts the Faith and undermines the supernatural interior life of grace. It is precisely because we love the Holy Eucharist and we love the souls who strive to nourish themselves with It for eternity

that we must fight against error, heresy, and naturalism.

The logical consequence of this position is that the use of the Motu proprio is only to be considered for exceptional celebrations, and not all the time. That is why this Cardinal, who is responsible for drawing up the Vatican's rules for the implementation of the Motu proprio, attacks those groups, communities and individuals who have applied to his Commission for authorization to have not just one Mass a week, but every Mass in the traditional rite, and not just at one church in a town, but at every church. He says of such people, always asking for more, that they are "insatiable, incredible...they do not know the harm they are doing" (op. cit.). Can Tradition expect any real help from such officials?

## Salvation of Humanity

In an address given on October 28, 2008, on "The Second Vatican Council in the pontificate of John Paul II", Pope Benedict XVI reiterated some fundamental statements concerning the Papacy of his predecessor, pointing out how profoundly and entirely he was a man of Vatican II: "In practically all his documents, and especially in his decisions and his behavior as Pontiff, John Paul II accepted the fundamental petitions of the Second Vatican Council, thus becoming a qualified interpreter and coherent witness of it. His constant concern was to make known to all the advantages that could stem from acceptance of the Conciliar vision..."

Of what is he the qualified witness and interpreter, then? What is this specifically conciliar vision? It is found a few lines afterwards: "the anxiety for humanity's salvation which motivated the Council Fathers, guiding their commitment in the search for solutions to the numerous problems of the day". What a precise and accurate summary! The attempted parallel to St. Bonaventure's work "Itinerary of the soul to God", on the sanctification of the soul, does not change the reality. Notice the focus on the salvation of souls, and not on the salvation of hu-

manity, for they are not at all the same thing. Improving the lot of humanity, the rights of man, religious freedom, social justice, was indeed the focus of the new humanism of Vatican II, which Paul VI rightly called “the cult of man” (Dec. 7, 1965).

This address rather reminds one of the September 2008, letter that Pope Benedict XVI wrote for the 30th anniversary of the death of Pope Paul VI, the Pope who appointed him as archbishop and elevated him as a Cardinal. For in this letter Benedict XVI praises Paul VI



not for his contribution to the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, but for his contribution to humanity. “This Pontiff’s name remains linked above all to Vatican Council II... With the

passage of years the importance of his pontificate for the Church and for the world is becoming ever clearer, as is the priceless heritage of teaching and virtue which he left to believers and to all humanity” (CNA website). These very true words describe well the humanism of both Paul VI and Vatican II. The heritage is not that of Catholic doctrine and supernatural virtue, but the teaching of universal human rights and freedom, that made him “so close to the hopes and expectations of men and women of his time” (Ib.)

### Former Redemptorists receive faculties

In a statement made on their blogspot on November 22, the former Redemptorists from Papa Stronsay Island (Scotland) announced that, on October 31, the local Ordinary, Bishop Peter Moran of Aberdeen, had granted faculties to two of their four priests.

It is not explained why it took more than five months since their so-called “reconciliation” for these faculties to be granted, nor why it was that the other two priests of the community did not receive faculties as well. It was not explained whether or not the priests of the community had abstained from hearing confessions during those five months without faculties, nor was it explained whether the brothers went to Confession to Novus Ordo priests during these five months, or not at all! It was not explained, either, how Bishop Moran has resolved the differences of ecclesiology with them that the Bishop had feared might be an obstacle to granting faculties. It is, however, stated that the jurisdiction to hear Confessions was only granted for the island of Papa Stronsay and for the monastery chapel on the island of Stronsay.

It is, however, stated that they are still a community that is not incardinated anywhere in the Church structures, either individually as priests or collectively as a community, and that these are only interim faculties. It is certainly unusual to grant faculties without any canonical situation within the Church: in fact it is an entire anomaly. Such faculties are but a favor that can be removed at any time. For a priest has normally to be under a superior (either a Bishop or a religious superior) to receive faculties, but a priest who is not incardinated into a diocese or religious order is not under any such superior. These non-Redemptorists are still not incardinated as priests of the diocese, and their community is not recognized either, either of diocesan right (under

the bishop) or of pontifical right (under Rome). They consequently have no rights that are recognized as such in Canon Law. Yet they claim: “we are being supported and accommodated without anybody asking us to compromise anything”.

But if they had not compromised, why would they write: “Surely since the Motu proprio of July 7, 2007 there should be forgiveness and a return to trust in the Church. This is what we have done. We trust the Church. We trust the Holy Father.” (Ib.) It does not take much experience with conciliar Rome to understand that this begging for forgiveness for the past is the admission that they were wrong for 20 years. It does not take much history to see that saying that one who trusts the authorities of the conciliar church and of the Pope, is entrusting oneself to those who are destroying the Church from within. How can you trust in one who admits after forty years that the traditional Mass was never abrogated, but does not regret that it was in fact illicitly and illegally forbidden for those forty years? How can this not be a compromise?



## Catholic school system in Ontario under fire

On September 28, 2008, Bishop Durocher of the Alexandria-Cornwall diocese defended the Catholic school system against the new aggressiveness of secularism, that has become a direct challenge to the existence of publicly funded Catholic schools in Ontario. The move to eliminate all public funding of Catholic schools would be devastating to the Catholic school system. If Bishop Durocher's argument was interesting, it was not only because he argued from the principle of protection of minority religious education guaranteed by the Constitution. The Catholic Register of October 12, 2008, reports him as saying: "that false notions of the separation of church and state are gaining favor in public opinion.

Increasingly, many are beginning to believe this separation means that no religious arguments should be present in public debate and there should be no sign of any religion in any public institutions. This is a far cry from the origins of the idea of the separation of church and state."

It is certainly refreshing that a Bishop identifies the crux of the problem of the Church and the modern world: the refusal of the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the union between life and religion so necessary to the integrity of both. If there is and has always been a Catholic education system, it is to apply the principles of Catholic Faith to all life and learning, it is precisely that the Faith might influence public life and the state.

The bishop certainly appreciates that there are degrees of separation and that, namely, the US model of no one religion being favored above the others "was never a part of our institutional history, as church and state often collaborated on the creation of schools and

social services" (Ib.). The problem, Your Lordship, is that now the Church Herself has requested separation of Church and State, in particular in the Vatican II decree on Religious Liberty, so ruthlessly applied by Rome ever since. The Church has requested that the secular state eliminate religious teachings from the public domain, as in Spain and in Paraguay. As soon as one accepts the principle of separation of Church and State, and consequently of equal liber-

ty of all religions and equal expression of all opinions, as the Second Vatican Council teaches, the Catholic Church has no right to insist on any special consideration. If the Catholic school system were not already dead, due to immorality, lack of religious practice, failure to frequent the sacrament of Penance, absence of any real catechetical instruction, and low standards, it would certainly die thanks to the conciliar principle of Religious Liberty.

## Morality of organ harvesting

A very interesting contribution to the whole consideration of the morality of the removal of organs from person said to be brain dead has come from an unexpected source. It is the New England Journal of Medicine that published last August 14 an article that demonstrates beyond all serious doubt that the harvesting of organs is done from persons that truly are living, and that in point of fact it is the harvesting of the organs necessary for life, such as lungs, heart, two kidneys, complete liver and pancreas, that is actually the cause of death. The authors do not conclude that organ transplantation ought not therefore to be done, but to the contrary justify it on the purely utilitarian non-principle that the person was going to die in any case. This we cannot accept, for the end does not justify the means, and you cannot kill a person on account of the good that can come to another person. Nevertheless, the passage below illustrates the principle that the donor of the organs is indeed a living person, and hence that the act of taking the organs is the deliberately termination of life, and that organ transplantation can only be justified as the taking of one life to save or prolong another life - that is, by playing God. The title of the article is "The dead donor rule and organ transplantation" and it was written by Dr. Truong & Professor Miller.

"Since its inception, organ transplantation has been guided by the overarching ethical requirement known as the dead donor rule, which simply states that patients must be declared dead before the removal of any vital organs for transplantation. Before the development of modern critical care, the diagnosis of death was relatively straightforward: patients were dead when they were cold, blue, and stiff. Unfortunately, organs from these traditional cadavers cannot be used for transplantation. Forty years ago, an ad hoc committee at Harvard Medical School, chaired by Henry Beecher, suggested revising the definition of death in a way that would make some patients with devastating neurologic injury suitable for organ transplantation under the dead donor rule.

The concept of brain death has served us well and has been the ethical and legal justification for thousands of lifesaving donations and transplantations. Even so, there have been persistent questions about whether patients with massive brain injury, apnea, and loss of brain-stem reflexes are really dead. After all, when the injury is entirely intracranial, these patients look very much alive: they are warm and pink; they digest and metabolize food, excrete waste, undergo sexual maturation, and can even reproduce. To a casual observer, they look just like patients who are receiving long-term artificial ventilation and are asleep.



The arguments about why these patients should be considered dead have never been fully convincing. The definition of brain death requires the complete absence of all functions of the entire brain, yet many of these patients retain essential neurologic function, such as the regulated secretion of hypothalamic hormones. Some have argued that these patients are dead because they are permanently unconscious (which is true), but if this is the justification, then patients in a permanent vegetative state, who breathe spontaneously, should also be diagnosed as dead, a characterization that most regard as implausible. Others have claimed that "brain-dead" patients are dead because their brain damage has led to the "permanent cessation of functioning of the organism as a whole." Yet evidence shows that if these patients are supported beyond the acute phase of their illness (which is rarely done), they can survive for many years. The uncomfortable conclusion to be drawn from this literature is that although it may be perfectly ethical to remove vital organs for transplantation from patients who satisfy the diagnostic criteria of brain death, the reason it is ethical cannot be that we are convinced they are really dead.

Over the past few years, our reliance on the dead donor rule has again been challenged, this time by the emergence of donation after cardiac death as a pathway for organ donation. Under

protocols for this type of donation, patients who are not brain-dead but who are undergoing an orchestrated withdrawal of life support are monitored for the onset of cardiac arrest. In typical protocols, patients are pronounced dead 2 to 5 minutes after the onset of asystole, on the basis of cardiac criteria (See footnote), and their organs are expeditiously removed for transplan-



tation. Although everyone agrees that many patients could be resuscitated after an interval of 2 to 5 minutes, advocates of this approach to donation say that these patients can be regarded as dead because a decision has been made not to attempt resuscitation.

This understanding of death is problematic at several levels. The cardiac definition of death requires the irreversible cessation of cardiac function. Whereas the common understanding of "irreversible" is "impossible to reverse," in this context irreversibility is interpreted as the result of a choice not to reverse. This interpretation creates the paradox that the hearts of patients who have been declared dead on the basis of

the irreversible loss of cardiac function have in fact been transplanted and have successfully functioned in the chest of another. Again, although it may be ethical to remove vital organs from these patients, we believe that the reason it is ethical cannot convincingly be that the donors are dead.

At the dawn of organ transplantation, the dead donor rule was accepted as an ethical premise that did not require reflection or justification, presumably because it appeared to be necessary as a safeguard against the unethical removal of vital organs from vulnerable patients. In retrospect, however, it appears that reliance on the dead donor rule has greater potential to undermine trust in the transplantation enterprise than to preserve it. At worst, this ongoing reliance suggests that the medical profession has been gerrymandering the definition of death to carefully conform with conditions that are most favorable for transplantation. At best, the rule has provided misleading ethical cover that cannot withstand careful scrutiny. A better approach to procuring vital organs while protecting vulnerable patients against abuse would be to emphasize the importance of obtaining valid informed consent for organ donation from patients or surrogates before the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment in situations of devastating and irreversible neurologic injury..."

**Note: Asystole: Insufficiency of heart contractions, producing a drop in heartbeat rate.**



## Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy

Announces that it will be opening for its second year of operation on Tuesday, September 1st, 2009. It will be adding a Kindergarten grade, and so the elementary school for boys and girls will be grades K - 8. Our Lady of Mount Carmel also operates a high school for boys, grades 9 - 12. It takes boys as boarders from fifth grade upwards, provided the family background is stable. It is now open for inscriptions for the next school year. Contact the school office for

the package of information. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy is also seeking additional high school and elementary school teachers for this coming school year. Ontario certification is not required. Please apply to the Principal, Father Peter Scott, 2483 Bleams Road, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3J2, or call (519) 634 4932 or e-mail [olmc@sspx.ca](mailto:olmc@sspx.ca).