

What is happening in the Church?

This column strives to keep the reader up to date with some of the more important statements, events, challenges that confront the Church in Canada, Rome and the world. Keeping in mind the fact that the Church militant does not just consist in the works of Tradition, but in all those who keep the true Faith, even if they do not love and defend it as they ought, it hopes to keep Catholics aware of good and positive developments, as well as the betrayals of modernism, in order to understand the situation of the Church in all the complexity of its reality.

Rev. Fr. Peter Scott

Papal ecumenism in the Holy Land

Nobody questions the openly political nature of the Pope's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as an attempt to build bridges with Muslims, offended by his 2006 Regensburg speech, quoting from a medieval author who stated that Islam is a religion of violence (!). It is likewise an attempt to build bridges with Jews, who continue to falsely attack Pope Pius XII for supporting the Nazi regime, and also Benedict XVI for allowing his cause of beatification to be introduced, and for lifting the excommunication of the Society's bishops. Hence the constant preoccupation with interreligious dialogue, paradoxically interspersed with a fervent defense of the rights of women, so opposed by Islam.

He had this to say to King Abdullah II of Jordan: "My visit to Jordan gives me a welcome opportunity to speak of my deep respect for the Muslim community, and to pay tribute to the leadership shown by His Majesty the King in promoting a better understanding of the virtues proclaimed by Islam... the central role played in our respective religious traditions by the commandment of love. I hope very much that this visit, and indeed all the initiatives designed to foster good relations between Christians and Muslims, will help us to grow in love for the Almighty and Merciful God, and fraternal love for one another." Of what virtues and of what love is he speaking? Clearly not the supernatural virtues and love that Christ Our Lord showed us by his sacrifice on the Cross, for there is no mention either of Christ or of the Cross. It is not the bond of charity that unites the Church, the Mystical Body. He is only speaking of some vague, natural, philanthropic do-good feeling, confused with the supernatural charity that the Catholic Church has the mission to infuse through the sacraments.

The Pope then visited Jordan's state mosque, and although reports differ as to whether or not he prayed there, he certainly did deliver a discourse, in which he maintained that religion is "by nature, a builder of unity and harmony, an expression of communion between persons and with God", as if he had not heard of Our Lord's words: "Think ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no; but

separation." (Lk 12:51), or again: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (Jn 15:20), and "He that hateth me, hateth my Father also" (Jn 15:23). He went on to add that "Muslims and Christians... must today strive to be known and recognized as worshippers of God faithful to prayer, eager to uphold and live by the Almighty's decrees, merciful and compassionate, consistent in bearing witness to all that is true and good (but not to Christ, so it seems!) and ever mindful of the common origin and dignity of all human persons..." The least that could be said of such a discourse is that it is pure naturalism, allowing no place for revelation, grace, the distinction between the true supernatural Faith in Christ that saves from sin, and the false belief in a human system. More realistically, though, it promotes a grievous form of indifferentism, namely the belief that it does not matter what religion a man embraces, for if Muslims truly are worshippers of God, faithful to prayer, eager to live by God's decrees, merciful and compassionate, why on earth would anyone need or want to believe in Christ and become a Catholic?

The same sirene was heard with respect to the Jews once the Pope crossed into Israel. This is illustrated by the text of the prayer that Benedict XVI placed in one of the cracks of the Wailing Wall, the remnant of the foundation of the west wall of the temple, where Jews lament the destruction of their temple. This is a prayer that mentions neither the Trinity nor Christ, neither the Holy Ghost nor the Virgin Mary, neither the Redemption nor the Incarnation, nor any other Catholic doctrine for that matter. Carefully phrased that every element might be acceptable to Jews and Muslims alike, it was addressed to the "God of all the ages... God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and simply requests "peace ... upon the entire human family", as if St. Paul had never written that it is Christ who is our peace, having brought us near to God by his blood (Eph 2:13 & 14).

The Pope continued his prayer to ask that God "stir the hearts of all who call upon your name, to walk humbly in the path of justice and compassion", as if this were in the

power of man to do without Christ and His Cross (=naturalism), as if Christ had not given us the most solemn command to ask all things in His Name, the only Mediator between heaven and earth: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive; that your joy may be full" (Jn 16:23 & 24). For a Catholic, this can be no more than an expression of a natural desire, rather than a prayer to the Triune God, through Christ Our Lord. It is consequently not capable of supernatural fulfillment, and is a grave scandal, leading souls away from true prayer. The explanation given of this "prayer" in the official commentary of Father Caesar Atoire, delegate administrator of Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, who accompanied the Holy Father on his pilgrimage, confirms this: "to go and pray precisely before the Western Wall is a way of saying that all of us are children of the one God and we try to follow what this God teaches us and thus we can find the way to live together, in harmony and peace". It is not a prayer at all, but a natural striving for a human understanding.

The logical conclusion of this striving for dialogue and reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity is the renouncement to all missionary work among the Jews. The Pope did not draw this conclusion publicly, but when welcomed by Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger, he did not contradict or correct him in the slightest, although the Rabbi thanked the Pope for his "historic agreement and the commitment given by the Vatican that the Church will henceforth desist from all missionary and conversion activities amongst our people. This is for us an immensely important

message". (Jerusalem Post). The Pope, who spoke immediately afterwards, could have contradicted a statement essential to Metzger's discourse, but did not. Moreover, even if the statement is not true, the fact of allowing it to pass without comment is a grave scandal, reminiscent of the agreement of Balamand of 1993, promising to the Eastern Orthodox that in future there would be no proselytism.

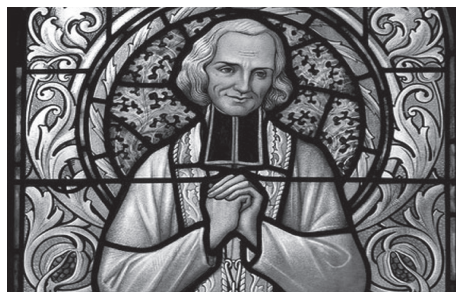
In order that Ecumenism be complete, it must include the other christian denominations; - and so it did, in the Pope's discourse to Holy Land Ordinaries, of all places, in the Upper Room, where the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, efficacious sign of unity, was instituted. "The different christian churches found here represent a rich and varied spiritual patrimony and are a sign of the multiple forms of interaction between the Gospel and different cultures. (Is this the main difference between the different churches?) They also remind us that the mission of the Church is to preach the universal love of God and to gather, from far and near, all who are called by him, in such a way that, with their traditions and their talents, they form the one family of God. (Obviously this family is now something much broader than the Catholic Church!). A new spiritual impulse towards communion in diversity within the Catholic Church and a new ecumenical awareness have marked our times, especially since the Second Vatican Council..." Such is the Pope's pilgrimage of dialogue that can only result in a further weakening of all influence of Catholic doctrine and morality, replaced by the freemasonic politics of universal tolerance and the dignity of man.

Pope promulgates "Year for Priests"

We thank God for the May 12 decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary of a "Year for Priests", to mark the 150th anniversary of the death, or rather heavenly birthday, of the Curé of Ars, St. Jean-Marie Vianney. It will begin on the feast of the Sacred Heart, June 19, and will last one year. The stated goal is for priests "to lead a saintly life and to carry out the duties entrusted to them".

The decree announces a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions that can be gained by priests, by praying Lauds or Vespers before the Blessed Sacrament for this intention, and who "offer themselves with a ready and generous heart for the celebration of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of penance." A plenary indulgence can likewise be gained by the faithful, under the usual

conditions, on the opening and closing days of the Year for Priests, on the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean-Marie Vianney (August 4) and on the First Thursday of every month, under the condition that the faithful assist at Mass and offer prayers to "Jesus Christ, supreme and eternal Priest, for the priests of the Church".



We are grateful to the Pope for opening the spiritual treasures of the Church

and encouraging prayers for the sanctification of priests, although we might regret the present lack of precise indications as to in what precisely that sanctity consists. Let us make a special effort to observe the First Thursdays for priests and vocations, as the Church has encouraged us to do since 1936, when the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved the Votive Mass of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Sovereign High Priest, for the First Thursdays of the month, along with special exercises of piety for the sanctification of priests (the exact nature of which is not determined). Indeed, in many of the churches of the Society of Saint Pius X the Third Order members gather for a First Thursday Holy Hour, thus fulfilling their Third Order obligation of praying for priests and vocations.

Pope attacked on AIDS comments

It was on March 17, on the airplane on the way to Cameroon at the beginning of his first African voyage, that Pope Benedict XVI sparked a world-wide controversy. The strange thing is that controversy was engendered not by some new, unusual, surprising or unlikely comments, but by the very simple reiteration that the use of condoms is immoral, and cannot be the solution to the problem of AIDS - a most obvious and constant teaching of the Catholic Church.

Here is the offending text, in response to an interviewer: "It is my belief that the most effective presence on the front in the battle against HIV/AIDS is precisely the Catholic Church and her institutions. I would say that this problem of AIDS cannot be overcome with advertising slogans. If the soul is lacking, if Africans do not help one another, the scourge cannot be resolved by distributing condoms; quite the contrary, we risk worsening the problem."

"The solution can only come through a twofold commitment: firstly, the humanization of sexuality, in other words a spiritual and human renewal bringing a new way of behaving towards one another; and secondly, true friendship, above all with those who are suffering, a readiness - even through personal sacrifice - to be present with those who suffer. And these are the factors that help and bring visible progress."

The evidence for the truth of his statement is overwhelming, not only as a principle of Catholic morality, that condemns all forms of artificial birth control as a mortal sin, but also as an experiential fact. The only country that has succeeded in battling AIDS is Uganda, and this has been done not through the use of condoms, but rather by the promotion of chastity before marriage and fidelity afterwards.

Here are some pertinent remarks by Joseph Meaney of Human Life International: "Who could have imagined the cultural decay in the last 40 years? An object only associated with prostitution

and moral degeneracy then is now a sacrosanct medical necessity ardently defended by the most influential governments and institutions like the World Health Organization. It is time that we stood up for the truth...

Any honest expert such as Edward Green, director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, has to admit; "We have found no consistent associations between condom use and lower HIV-infection rates,"

Nevertheless, the Pope was publicly chastised and condemned for these remarks by several European governments, including the formerly Catholic countries of Belgium and Spain. The various episcopacies have come to the Pope's defense, both in Europe and in Africa, with statements such as this one from the Congolese bishops (May 5) concerning condom use: "[It] is not only an ethical disorder but above all the proof of the trivialization of sexuality in our society. Instead of preventing the spread of the disease, and without even guaranteeing complete security, [it] heightens human selfishness, worsens the problem, and encourages people to let themselves be

driven by their sexual instincts and divests sexuality of its religious and symbolic functions."

These statements by the Pope and the bishops are perfectly true on the natural level, and refer to the perversity of modern sexual licentiousness, opposed to the most elementary and fundamental principles of the natural law. However, it is by remaining on the natural level that they open themselves up to secular attack. Their considerations are all about the dignity of man, of human sexuality and of human relationships. But what about the commandments of God, starting with the sixth? What about the value of the virtues of virginity and chastity, of self-sacrifice and of the Cross? What about the marriage act as having children as its first and primary purpose? What about the sacredness of the marriage bond as a sacrament? What about AIDS as a punishment and a chastisement drawn upon mankind by the sins and perversions of the end of the 20th century? It is by placing itself on the secular level, and presuming to offer a secular and human solution to the AIDS problem, that the Church has opened itself to attack from without.

Montreal Cardinal denies Church's moral teaching

Over the Easter weekend, Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte of Montreal gave an interview to the newspaper *Le Devoir*. During that interview he expressed opinions directly opposed to the Church's explicit teachings on abortion and condoms. According to him, abortion is not something always and in itself evil, but can sometimes be justified, the unborn child being considered as a violent aggressor and the abortion being self-defense! It is scarcely believable, but here are his words, as reported in *LifeSiteNews.com*: "Personally I am against murder but can understand that sometimes, when someone is being attacked, they need to kill someone in self-defense. I am against abortion, but I can understand that in certain cases, there is almost no other choice than to practice it."

The context of this statement was the extreme situation of the 9 year old girl in Brazil whose mother and physicians arranged an abortion, provoking Archbishop José Cardoso Sobrinho of Recife, Brazil, to rightly declare the excommunication incurred automatically by Canon Law. It was precisely with Archbishop Cardoso that Cardinal Turcotte was expressing his disagreement. It is true that we must be compassionate, as have been the clergy of the diocese of Recife. However, the particular circumstances cannot change the intrinsic evil of the act of murder of the innocent, nor can they justify it at any time. If the end were to justify the means, then all morality would become subjective.