

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

Pope publishes new encyclical

The third encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI starting with the words *Caritas in veritate*, "Charity in truth", is dated June 29, 2009, and purports to be a new expression of the Church's social teaching.

About the title

This title is clearly adapted from the expression used by St. Paul, "that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive, but doing the truth in charity" (Eph 4:14,15) Note, however, the reversal of the order of the words "truth" and "charity". It is certainly reassuring to hear the reminder that charity and truth cannot be separated, for "truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the 'economy' of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practiced in the light of truth" (§2)? It seems, at first, to be a very attractive way of looking at social questions, to go above and beyond the simple consideration of "justice" and "rights" mentioned by pre-conciliar Popes, and to consider that "charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine" (§2). It is also consoling to hear that "it is not a case of two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar, differing from one another: on the contrary there is a single teaching..." (§12)! Furthermore, we are happy to hear the reminder that man needs God: "because integral human development...requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God" (§11).

New concept of charity

Alas, though, the apparent similarity with Catholic teaching goes little further than the words used, words whose meaning is radically changed. The first inkling of this is contained in the very title. The encyclical is not addressed uniquely to Catholics, but also to "all people of good will". The understanding and acceptance of this document is not something that requires the Catholic Faith. This is also clearly apparent from the introduction, which does not pretend to outline the principles of a Catholic social order, but rather the principle for "integral human development" for all men, which is considered to be charity. There is, from the very beginning of this encyclical a new concept of charity, defined as "the principal driving force

behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity" (§1)! Clearly the Pope cannot be speaking of the supernatural and infused virtue of charity, for that would be to affirm that every man is in the state of sanctifying grace and that no man is in mortal sin! No, the "charity" of which he writes belongs to every man: "Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth is a force that builds community, it brings all people together without imposing barriers or limits." (§34). He is referring to the new concept of charity that he elaborated in his very first encyclical *Deus caritas est*. There he explained the Church's "true humanism" (§ 9 & 30), namely that the Church teaches man his humanity by rising above the distinction between a natural self-love and a divine self-sacrificing love, for "the more the two (*eros* and *agape*) find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized" (*ib.* §8). Love is consequently a "single reality" (*ib.*). No longer ought we to speak of supernatural charity as such, but we must rather say that charity knows no such distinctions, but embraces all human love. Hence the definition of charity in this present encyclical: "Charity can be recognized as an authentic expression of humanity, and as an element of fundamental importance in human relations" (§ 3). Charity belongs, then, to all mankind, and is characteristic of all good human relations. This is naturalism, which equates the natural and supernatural motives for charity, by merging them into one. There is consequently no distinction to be made between the Church's supernatural role with respect to her own members and a much more extensive, more universal and higher role that she has with respect to all of humanity, and which the Pope proclaims to be her ultimate purpose.

Church's higher purpose

Basing himself upon Vatican II (*Gaudium et spes*) and the encyclicals of Pope Paul VI (*Populorum progressio*) and John Paul II (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*) on the same subject, he declares that henceforth the Church "is at the service of the world", and that consequently in whatever she does (e.g. works of charity,

divine worship) she “is engaged in promoting integral human development. She has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities: all the energy she brings to the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity...” (§11). Her goal, that transcends and goes above and beyond her particular activities, is here defined as to further the principles of the French revolution, following the ideal of freemasonic naturalism. Hence her fundamental role in the process of globalization, as we shall see. Truth is likewise redefined. It is no longer to be considered as the correspondence of the mind to exterior and objective reality, and consequently as something fixed, firm, absolute and unchanging. To the contrary, truth is of its very nature a communication or sharing with others, to such an extent that a person who shuts himself up in his own “truth”, as objective as he might consider it to be, has really shut himself up in his subjective opinions, and cannot possibly attain truth, for the simple reason that he cannot dialogue or share opinions with others. Here is the Pope’s definition of truth, playing on the Greek expression for the Word (of God): “Truth, in fact is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos*, and hence communication and communion”. Truth requires communication with others’ truth. The very next sentence explains what he means by communication, namely if a person is not willing to let go of his personal opinions, he cannot have the truth: “Truth, by enabling men and women to let go of their subjective opinions and impressions, allows them to move beyond cultural and historical limitations and to come together in the assessment of the value and substance of things.” (§4). Without such a sharing with others there is no truth, for man is isolated in his “subjective opinions”. Note that there is no distinction between firmly held convictions of Catholic Faith, and other firmly held opinions. In both cases, there cannot be truth without mutual sharing.

It is for this reason that “the mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce”, by which he means that “the Church searches for truth” (§9). Yes, the Church’s mission is to search for truth (and to proclaim and recognize it), not to teach “the” truth as something already acquired. Here is the explanation, given in the same paragraph, why it is humanism (=fidelity to man) that is the basis of the Church’s mission of truth: “Fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom and of the possibility of integral human development. For this reason the Church searches for truth”. Hence the most extraordinary statement that “Truth frees charity from the constraints of ... a fideism that deprives it of human and universal breathing space.” (§3). Fideism, previously a term to indicate the heresy of those who deny the role of reason, is here used as a pejorative term to describe those whose personal convictions of Faith prevent them from indulging in dialogue, and who consequently cannot attain truth, for they do not have the human development necessary to share.

Evolution of truth

The contradiction with the Church’s pre-Vatican II teaching is manifest and obvious, which is why the Pope feels the need to justify himself. Note that he does not deny that the pre-conciliar Popes say different things, but rather affirms that “there is a single teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new” (§12). He goes on to explain what he means by this apparent (and indeed real) contradiction - both new and old at the same time. It is the perfect justification of the liberal, who lives in objective contradiction with himself, incoherent with his own conclusions, finding the coherence elsewhere than in the objective truth. “Coherence does not mean a closed system (understand by this, a system of traditional teaching, closed to dialogue from without): on the contrary, it means dynamic faithfulness to a light received.” The so-called continuity with the past is consequently not the teachings themselves, but the “unchanging light” that situates post-conciliar teachings “within the great current of Tradition” (Ib.).

Globalization

The novelty of this encyclical and its principal practical focus is without a doubt globalization, defined as “the explosion of worldwide interdependence” (§33). In itself, the Pope describes this phenomenon as “neither good nor bad” (§42). However, he encourages us to view it not just as a predetermined economic process, but rather to see it in a positive sense: “We should not be its victims, but rather its protagonists” (Ib.) You might wonder how this breaking down of borders, this formation of a freemasonic one world governmental and economic system, how this destruction of the remainders of Christendom, with its religious and cultural identity, separated and distinct from paganism and false religions, could possibly be viewed in a positive sense. The answer is that, if embraced in a humanistic sense, this globalization is a real opportunity for the dialogue necessary for integral human development, for charity in truth. Globalization is, therefore, truth: “The truth of globalization as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards that which is good. Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.” (Ib.) Globalization of humanity is consequently necessary and good, something to “steer” and not condemn, provided that it is centered on the human person and his community, and allows some openness to God by religious liberty. Hence the encyclical’s preoccupation with the ethics of ecology and the environment, of energy use and population growth, of poverty and consumerism, of international aid and tourism, of democracy and religious liberty.

Dialogue = human development

However, above all these considerations lies the universal brotherhood of mankind, on account of which man will attain

to his human development only inasmuch as he relates with diverse other men. Religion is essential in making known to man this reality that relationships with others are at the same time that which is most human in him, and that which is transcendent. All religions do this, but Christianity does it particularly well, on account of its focus on love. Here is the text, that at first might seem obscure, yet given what has gone beforehand, it really is very clear: "The Christian revelation of the unity of the human race presupposes a metaphysical interpretation of the 'humanum' in which relationality is an essential element. Other cultures and religions teach brotherhood and peace and are therefore of enormous importance to integral human development." (§ 55). Note that in this entirely naturalistic context, "integral human development", which consists in dialogue with others, has replaced eternal salvation as the goal of religion.

There is another consequence of this naturalism. After stating that "reason always stands in need of being purified by faith", which is certainly true, for without the true Faith, reason customarily falls into error, the encyclical then goes on to draw the following horrendous and shocking parallel: "For its part, religion always needs to be purified by reason in order to show its authentically human face. Any breach in this dialogue comes only at an enormous price to human development." (§ 56). For us, it is inconceivable and blasphemous to affirm that the divine truth of revealed religion can be corrected by fallible human reason. But if truth is dialogue and religion is but a means to integral human development, then the conclusion follows logically. But where does that leave the true Faith and the Catholic religion? As one amongst many personal opinions.

One world government

The most shocking and long-reaching conclusion of the encyclical's positive promotion of globalization, on a human and cultural as well as economic level, is the call for an international authority to impose it legally, to enforce in an obligatory manner the dialogue between economies, cultures, religions and peoples as promoted by this integral humanism. The Pope in fact calls "for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth, ... to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all people in solidarity... there is urgent need of a true world political authority (which) would need to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all..." (§ 67). The meaning of this paragraph has already been greatly debated, but the obvious and logical conclusion is the loss of national sovereignty and consequently of any possibility of union between the Catholic Church and a Catholic state. It means the effective establishment of the

one world order that Freemasonry has long fought to achieve. Pope Leo XIII described and condemned very clearly the "ultimate purpose" of Freemasonry, "namely, the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced, and the substitution of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which the foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere 'Naturalism'" (Humanum Genus § 10). The religious justification for a new world order, based upon human dignity, fraternity and equality, and brought about by universal democracy, is of course not a new one. It was precisely the humanitarian dream of the Sillon movement, condemned by St. Pius X in 1910, for its embracing of the principles of the French revolution.

"We fear that worse is to come: the end result of this developing promiscuousness (understand, dialogue), the beneficiary of this cosmopolitan social action, can only be a Democracy which will be neither Catholic, nor Protestant, nor Jewish. It will be a religion... more universal than the Catholic Church, uniting all men to become brothers and comrades at last in the 'Kingdom of God'. 'We do not work for the Church; we work for mankind!... We ask ourselves, venerable Brethren, what has become of the Catholicism of the Sillon? ... (It) is no more than a miserable affluent of the great movement of apostasy being organized in every country for the establishment of a One-World Church which shall have neither dogmas, nor hierarchy; neither discipline for the mind nor curb for the passions, and which, under the pretext of freedom and human dignity, would bring back to the world... the reign of legalized cunning and force...' (Our Apostolic Mandate §40). Can our judgment of Pope Benedict XVI's self-proclaimed humanism be any different? If only it could be! If only his humanism that does not exclude God, could be less of a humanism, and more of a true God-centered religion. However, it is not the case. If the Pope condemns a humanism without some concept of God; "A humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism" (§ 78), then his "humanism open to the Absolute", is a human humanism. It excludes the supernatural order of revelation, grace, obedience and submission to authority. It is for that reason that a bad conscience is not defined as that which refuses to discern God's will and admit the guilt of disobeying it. It is defined, rather, as "a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human" (§ 75), a most logical consequence if you believe that revelation is when "God reveals man to himself"(Ib.).

Surely prayer and penance, the love of the Cross and of sacrifice, the Rosary and the Sacraments, truly supernatural means that they are, can be the only response to such a public manifesto of humanism, to such a radical application of the principles of egalitarianism and fraternity as to make truth exclude the personal and private possession of the truth, and to effectively reduce charity to the authentic expression of humanity and the universal brotherhood of man.