THE ATHANASIAN

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Pantraditionalism

John Kenneth Weiskittel

At roughly the same time that this issue of *The Athanasian* is finding its way into mailboxes around the country, a group of concerned churchgoers is meeting in the Chicago area to discuss the following topic: "To Preserve the Faith in Time of Crisis." The occasion is the seventh annual convention of the Tridentine Rite Conference (TRC).

What is the TRC? Before going into detail, it is sufficient for now to state that it is a loosely knit body of traditionally oriented Conciliar "Catholics" whose stated goal, reflected in the convention topic, is to defend Catholic teachings and practices against modernism and liberalism. The leaders and lecturers of the group all profess John Paul II to be a true Pope, and avow that they are in union with him. As will be shown presently, however, many (if not *most*) of them either ignore or openly disobey their "Pope." And among the clerics in its ranks (some true priests; others, ordained in the new rite, whose ordinations are doubtfully valid), in nearly every case they function in total rebellion to the authority of the sect they mistakenly presume to be *Catholic*.

Why should this be anything more than a passing concern and curiosity for thoroughly traditional Roman Catholics? Four reasons come to mind: 1) The TRC courts involvement from sedevacantists (though it forbids them any equal voice at its gatherings); 2) some sedevacantists have taken it up on this offer, even promoting the group in newsletters and church bulletins; 3) the TRC is an excellent example of the mentality that equates the true Catholic Church and the new "Catholic" Church; and 4) participation by traditional Catholics at such a gathering, where Masses are offered by priests in union with a false Pontiff (or, in some instances perhaps, where non-Masses are offered by false priests) goes against the Church's teaching that Catholics are not to have religious involvement with non-Catholics.

A New Twist On An Old Error

Before exploring the TRC and its kindred, a question raised in the minds of not a few readers is anticipated: What exactly is meant by the title of this article, *Pantraditionalism*? Although this term has gained fairly wide acceptance in traditional circles, it is far from a household word. Yet an understanding of what it is and does is *essential* to all those committed to the cause of Catholic restoration, for, however attractive, it is the *bane* of all such efforts.

The prefix *pan* comes from the Greek word for "all." The common English word *panorama*, meaning that which can be seen in all directions, is one derivation. Two others, having theological implications, are *pantheism*, or the false belief that everything is God, and the *Pantheon*, a temple in pagan Rome celebrating all deities. Much more relevant to this discussion, however, is a third such expression, *panchristian*, which denotes the "ecumenical" heresy (or one who promotes such a belief) that *all* Christians are united, even when they do not possess formal communion with the Roman Catholic Church. *The Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary* gives the following definition:

> **PANCHRISTIANITY**... The doctrine that the church of Christ consists of a loose federation of bodies and individuals united in spirit but with no unity of faith, morals or organization, and that the disunion among Christians can be repaired by the coming together of existing sects in mutual amiability and tolerance, with a certain amount of doctrinal compromise and concession and a maximum of collaboration in social work. In his encyclical *Motralium animos*, of 1928, Pope Pius XI reiterated that for Catholics there can be no compromise on dogma and no Christian unity apart from communion with the Apostolic See; and Catholics were warned against taking part in panchristian congresses, etc. (Macmillan, 1931, p. 386)

As should come as no surprise, this erroneous mentality is today quite the vogue in the Conciliar Church. Earlier this year, the modernist-controlled Vatican issued a lengthy document entitled *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, which speaks of the "search for Christian unity" as though this was something not already present in the Catholic Church. In an eye-opening article that appeared in the July-August 1993 issue

of *Catholic Restoration*, Father Francesco Ricossa reveals that much of the thinking of Rome's "watchdog of orthodoxy," "Cardinal" Joseph Ratzinger, is nothing but panchristianity revisited. When Ratzinger met with Professor Paolo Ricca, an adherent of the Waldensian sect (a heresy dating back to the twelfth century, which denies the papacy, purgatory, just wars, etc.) this past January, he reiterated John Paul II's "irreversible" commitment to "ecumenism." Ricca was so moved by this that he told reporters: "I am 99 percent in agreement, if not 100 percent, with what Cardinal Ratzinger had to say. Indeed, I am glad and very satisfied to hear this, for it can serve as a starting point; as you all know, this concept of reconciled diversity is of Lutheran origin." (Cited, Father Ricossa, "Ratzinger: 99 Percent Protestant," p. 34)

Such thinking is roundly condemned by Pope Pius XI in the aforementioned encyclical. The reasons used by its proponents to advance such false union, His Holiness states, include the need, out of charity, to abstain from mutual fault-finding and name-calling; the striving to be one as desired by Christ; and helping to counteract prevalent anti-Christian forces. However superficially appealing these proposals may sound, Pope Pius XI expressly warns Catholics not to be taken in by them, writing:

> Such, and others like them, are the arguments put forward by those who are called *panchristians*. Nor are they few and far between: on the contrary, they are completely organized and they have found widespread associations which are for the most part directed by non-Catholics, however widely they may be separated from one another in matters of religious truth. This enterprise is actively promoted, moreover, and it has won wide acceptance, raising even in the minds of many Catholics the hope that this may be a means of effecting a union with Holy Mother Church, who certainly has no dearer wish than to call, and bring back, to her fold her wandering children. *But under these seductive thoughts and flattering words one of the gravest errors lies hid, one capable of undermining the foundations of the Catholic faith.* (*The Church: Papal Teachings*, Saint Paul Editions, 1980, p. 450. Italics added to last sentence.)

The error referred to here relates to the very nature of the Church, which the panchristians sought (and *still* seek) to distort as not relating to a visible body, one in faith, teaching, authority, and government, but to a loose affiliation of various Christian communities that differ from — and even contradict — one another in doctrine. This, in turn, is built on an equally faulty conclusion: Doctrinal differences will evaporate like morning dew when exposed to the warmth of charity. Again, to quote Pope Pius XI:

> These panchristians, moreover, who seek to federate the Churches, seem to pursue the very noble design of promoting charity among all Christians, and yet what can be done, when charity "grows" at the expense of faith? Certainly no one is ignorant of the fact that John himself, the Apostle of charity, who in his Gospel seems to reveal the secrets of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and who never ceased to remind his disciples of that new commandment "Love one another," absolutely forbade any intercourse with those who did not profess the doctrine of Christ whole and entire: "If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you." Therefore, since charity requires as a foundation pure and unfeigned faith, unity in faith is the principal bond to unite Christ's disciples. (*The Church Teaches*, p. 455)

Pantraditionalists in their thinking parallel a good deal of what is expressed by the panchristians. True, they profess that the Catholic Church (which in the minds of some equals the Conciliar Church) is the one true Church. In so doing, however, they are quick to urge that differences among those who — either rightly or wrongly — proclaim themselves "traditional Catholics" are to be seen as minor in nature, and thus ignorable. Should anyone challenge the orthodoxy of dubious groups or individuals, the pantraditionalists will often seek to silence the critic by what is popularly known as placing a "guilt trip" on him. They do this by accusing the critic of not only being mistaken in his view, but possibly even unjust, uncharitable, and sinful for questioning the Catholicity of the parties named. (If the pantraditionalist is a priest addressing a layperson, such a denunciation can, of course, be devastating.) Also similar to panchristians, they make unity in the face of an anti-Catholic enemy a cornerstone of their stand.

This desire to join forces against a common adversary has become an extremely appealing suggestion in the modern crisis, and is one that has an element of truth. Where difficulties arise are in deciding when and with whom it is permissible to unite. Prudence dictates that such activities be entered into only when it is *clear* that those with whom the partnership is sought can *safely* be identified as traditional Catholics. This, however, is a trait sorely lacking in pantraditionalists.

Reduced to its simplest form, the pantraditionalist formula goes something like this: *The revival of the Catholic Church is what really matters, so all we seek in our "faith" partners*

is that they support the Latin Mass and other pre-Conciliar sacraments, and that they profess themselves "traditional Catholics." These criteria are viewed from varied (sometimes contradictory) angles by different pantraditionalists. But, however much they may disagree in particulars, all have very loose, umbrella definitions of who is Catholic. The confusion wrought by Vatican II has taken its toll in this area as in so many others, and the TRC is but the prime example of true faith yielding to the mirage of "Catholic unity." It is essential, following the apostolic lead of Saint John and Pope Pius XI, that truly traditional Catholics not be deceived by this admittedly attractive — but ultimately *fruitless* — "solution" to current problems.

TRC (Tragically Rejected Conciliarists?)

Although TRC leaders come from various groups, they share one common belief about the state of Catholicism: John Paul II is a legitimate successor to Saint Peter and must be acknowledged as such. (As will be shown shortly, this does not stop them from openly courting the support of sede-vacantists.) What makes this stand particularly puzzling, however, is that hardly any of them gives much more than a passing nod his way. Most of them disobey him in some fashion, and, if priests, are not recognized by Conciliar authorities as licitly functioning. Some have even been "excommunicated" by John Paul II. Still, they refuse to learn.

Despite not fitting comfortably into the Conciliar Church, they are often eager to give the appearance of being in good standing with the leaders of that sect. Incredibly, Father Francis LeBlanc, co-founder of the TRC, argues that the "Holy Father" supports his efforts. Conciliar writer Thomas W. Case writes:

> [I]n 1988 or 1989 he claims to have received an Apostolic blessing on the Tridentine Rite Conference from the Pope himself. In reality the papal blessing was given indiscriminately to a general audience (an audience that happened to include Father LeBlanc), and the TRC, no matter what they say, have no papal brief for existing. (This is confirmed in a letter from Msgr. Camille Perl of the Ecclesia Dei Commission in the Vatican.) ("The Tridentine Rite Conference and Its Schismatic Cousins" Part I, *Fidelity*, February, 1993, p. 40. This citation from a pro-John Paul II publication is obviously not to be construed as an endorsement in any sense, but simply as evidence that Father LeBlanc claims "papal" backing for his project, when, in fact, none exists.)

Father LeBlanc also publishes a suitably pantraditional Mass directory that includes Indult, sedevacantist, and all points in between. Pantraditionalists are nothing, if not all-inclusive — it's a Latin Mass, so it's okay!

The TRC's current president is Father Paul Wickens. His is a name that longtime readers of *The Athanasian* will recognize as having been mentioned in these pages some years back in connection with his refusal to implement a scandalous sex education curriculum introduced by "Bishop" Gerety for parochial schools in the Newark, New Jersey Conciliar diocese. When Gerety threatened to oust him from his parish church, Father Wickens did what was natural for someone who considers sex-ed merely an "abuse." He wrote to Rome, petitioning John Paul II to come to his rescue. Predictably, his pleas went for naught, and he reluctantly became a disenfranchised priest who celebrated the Tridentine Mass on his own; an "independent" priest who did not want to be independent.

Since then, Father Wickens has become more and more active in the most conservative Conciliar circles. These constitute a twilight region since, although persons operating there claim allegiance to John Paul II and his Vatican II sect, they do not enjoy any formal recognition from him. Rather, they are regarded as lepers by the very church to which they halfheartedly belong, unable to freely function with the blessing of Conciliar authorities.

The Spring 1993 issue of *The New Jersey Catholic News (NJCN)*, a nationally circulated newsletter edited by Father Wickens, carried items concerning the TRC. Included is a four-point Statement of Purpose for the group, which reads in part:

> **1)** To uphold all the doctrines and moral teachings of Jesus Christ.
> **2)** To promote the Traditional Latin Mass...
> **3)** As members of the Holy Roman Catholic Church... we support the *Petrine Office* in all its infallible teachings on faith and morals ***throughout the centuries***...
> **4)** We condemn and abhor the influence of the heresy of Modernism/Liberalism that has permeated many educational, liturgical and episcopal committees.

Reading through these articles as presented above, there is essential agreement with the positions taken by *The Athanasian* (although **4** does not go nearly far enough in identifying the extent of the heretical penetration). Yet there is a second part to article **3** that makes all the difference in the world; it reads: "Furthermore, we accept the present Pontiff as successor of Saint Peter, and constantly ***pray for the Pope*** that he will make administrative decisions that most clearly serve the unchangeable doctrine of Our Savior."

Here the absurdity of the "traditional" Conciliarist position is made manifestly evident: For a decade-and-a-half "Pope" John Paul II has continued the same *search and destroy* operations against Tradition that were initiated at Vatican II. (A particular irony here is that TRC president Father Wickens has, as mentioned above, bitter firsthand evidence of John Paul II's full commitment to the anti-Catholic revolution, yet continues to follow his false lead as passively as a sleepwalker.) After so long a time, it is difficult to see any act of apostasy by the pseudo Pope as being sufficiently odious to rouse these people from their reverie; after having the equivalent of several glasses of ice water thrown in their faces by the "Pope," there seems little hope that anything, short of an act of God, is capable of stirring them from their sleep. (Many readers will be perplexed at such contradictory behavior — as are we — and search for an answer. The most obvious one is that it is a by-product of the confusion generated by the Council — a manifestation of *the mystery of iniquity*.) Still, as the Catholic spirit is always one of optimism, we must not give up hope that at least some of these people will grasp the contradiction of their stand, and see the full scope of the evil that confronts the Church.

But this section is old hat, some readers will protest, wondering how this relates to pantraditionalism. True, this deluded adherence to modernist Rome is "business as usual" for members of the traditional end of the Conciliar spectrum, but it is important to establish beyond a shadow of a doubt the beliefs of the TRC, so that no one will mistakenly assume it to be the equivalent of a thoroughly Catholic group, such as the Traditional Catholics of America. (We hope and pray other such groups *exist*, but see little help on the horizon at this time.) It also helps to highlight the essential differences that the pantraditionalists seek to mute.

An Olive Branch To Sedevacantists?

The issue of *NJCN* mentioned above contains a most informative editorial in answer to the question: "Should we associate with Catholics who are 'sedevacantists'?" While the answer given there is totally unacceptable to hard-line sedevacantists, it nonetheless is a faithful barometer of the pantraditional position. Beyond this, it is a demonstration of the convoluted and illogical mind-set required to arrive at such a position.

Instead of acknowledging sedevacantists as being fellow Catholics (an issue which it does not address directly), it puts them, at least implicitly, in the category of "non-Catholics." Did not the "Pope," it asks, pay many "visits to non-Catholic churches"? What about his involvement with "Assisi I and Asissi *[sic]* II"? And Vatican II "invited many non-Catholics, and furthermore, asked for their input when it came to writing up a New Mass *(Novus Ordo)*." Specifically, the *NJCN* objects to an attack by Spokane, Washington's Conciliar bishop of those who associate "with a 'sede vacante' group in his diocese (though not identified, it most likely refers to the controversial — but definitely *non-Conciliar* — Mount Saint Michael group)." While the "bishop" freely allows "Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis" (who deny numerous Catholic dogmas) into "diocesan" churches, the editorial continues, he has simultaneously sought to prohibit any involvement with a dissident group that adheres to the teachings of the Church, including "the Primacy of Peter and the Petrine Office." In the end, it warns other Conciliar publications as follows: "Please do not criticize Traditional priests for participating in activities that Our Holy Father energetically ***encourages***. Are they not simply following the example of the Pope himself, indeed the Vatican Council itself?"

What is the message being sent here? It seems to be one that plays both sides of the fence: Some sedevacantists may carelessly read it as a discrete sign of support, while "Pro Papa" (that is, *pro*-John Paul II) readers look upon it as an effort to bring the wayward sedevacantists "back into the Church." Confused? Well, do not feel alone — *welcome to the wacky world of pantraditionalism!*

While the stand of Father Wickens and the *NJCN* regarding the Catholicity of sedevacantists may be subject to debate, another publication allied with the TRC is clearer in its confusion (if this reads like a contradiction — which it should — take a look at the quotes that follow!). In the June 1990 issue of *The Catholic Voice (TCV)*, the monthly newsletter of the North Carolina-based Society of Traditional Roman Catholics (STRC), appeared the improbably titled editorial, "Traditionalists: Are They NOCC's, NOT's; TIPP's; NEP's; NONOP's; PBC's or NP's?" [punctuation in the original]

The column came as a result of a reader's letter, which asked for an explanation of the differences between the various "traditional" groups, and why such differences exist. Among those named in the letter are: "The Pius X group, the Pius V group, the people referred to as Feeneyites, the supporters of the Indult Mass, the independent priests, etc." Before turning to its conclusion, it is necessary to find out what TCV means by all its abbreviations. Its definitions [here given in brief quotations and/or paraphrases] are as follows:

1. NOCC (Novus Ordo Conservative Catholic) — he quietly resents the "reforms" but accepts them out of a

professed obedience, and will only attend a Latin Mass if it is an Indult authorized by the local bishop;

NOT (Novus Ordo Traditionalist) — more active in supporting Indult Masses, but he "can't seem to see that the entire novus ordo church has become a man-centered, rather than God-centered gathering of people... no more than another form of non-Catholic worship";

TIPP (Traditional Independent Papist Priest) — a cleric who operates a chapel without permission of the local Conciliar ordinary or even against his wishes, but who still gives lip service to all things Conciliar, especially the "Pope," who can do no wrong;

NEP (No Effective Pope) — he, too, acknowledges John Paul II's "papacy," but argues that "we are better off ignoring him" due to his scandalous reign, and that we should hope for a better man to succeed him;

NONOP (Novus Ordo, Not Our Pope) — this traditionalist claims that "the pope is the pope, but he is not the pope of the Catholic church, but the conciliar church," and therefore is not entitled to any support by true Catholics;

PBC (Pope By Convenience) — he says we have a "part-time pope," who is to be supported only when we agree with him; and

NP (No Pope) — he who believes that John Paul II is *not the Pope*; in other words, a sedevacantist.

This is a fairly complete list of positions, though there are a few not mentioned (for example, the view that John Paul II is *materially*, but not *formally*, in possession of the office he holds).

According to *TCV*, all of these viewpoints (except for the first two) merit the heading "traditional Catholic." How does it arrive at this conclusion? It does so by defining "traditionalists" as "those who won't deal with the Novus Ordo church..." Then it encourages adherents of the various positions "to determine what view we hold, support it as best we can by reading and examining the issues, listen to the priests and bishops we trust, and pray to God that, whatever happens, He will understand our confusion, and not hold each of us who is wrong, responsible on judgment day."

These sentiments about the need for Catholics to understand the issues, the better to defend their stand, and the hope that God will forgive "our confusion," are readily understandable, and can, to a large degree, be seconded here. Surely, there has never been a time in Church history with as confused and unsettled a situation as that now experienced by the faithful; thus there has never been a time in which the faithful have needed to make such a diligent effort to go beyond the rudiments of Church teaching, and grasp how these teachings are applicable to an unprecedented crisis. But this hardly makes all of *TCV*'s alphabet factions equally *Catholic*.

Returning to Thomas Case's article, some curious connections are discovered. As already indicated in this section, pan-traditional organizers either have openly referred to sedevacantists as part of a traditional "Rainbow Coalition" (apologies to the "Reverend" Jesse Jackson) or have, at least, made overtures in that direction. The Tridentine Rite Conference welcomes sedevacantists at its annual convention, and Case notes that, among other "no Popers" who have been present, Father Daniel E. Jones attended in September, 1992. Readers familiar with this cleric's endless antics are forgiven if they roll their eyes and sigh, exclaiming: "But what *doesn't* Father Jones attend!" Others (to name a few) who have made their presence known at these proceedings (and/or the 1985 pre-TRC "Priests for Tradition" conference) do not challenge John Paul II's legitimacy (at least not in the sedevacantist sense): Father Fred Nelson, the late (RIP) semi-traditionalist priest who maintained a Marian shrine in North Dakota; Thomas A. Nelson (presumably no relation), owner of TAN Books; Father Paul Trinchard, a regular columnist for *The Remnant*; "Father" Nicholas Gruner (new rite ordination), publisher of *The Fatima Crusader*; Michael Davies, author and sometime promoter of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX); Brother Francis, MICM (the Latin initials for Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary — that is, the Feeneyites," who take the dogma "outside the Church there is no salvation" to great extremes); Father James Wathan, OSJ, author, Knights of Malta luminary (this panchristian group has Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, and Old Catholic members), and proponent of MICM's view of salvation; and one "Archbishop" Zaboroski of the Mariavite Church (a Polish heretical sect *excommunicated* by Saint Pius X in 1906). The SSPX's Bishop Richard Williamson was scheduled to appear at last year's conference, but was a "no show."

The 1993 convention has "To Preserve the Faith in Time of Heresy" as its theme. A TRC promotion in *NJCN* boasts "Father" Gruner, Davies, Nelson, and pro-life leader Joseph Scheidler as among its featured speakers, and promises "Daily Masses, including a Solemn High Mass." TAN and Angelus (SSPX) books are to have literature available. Near the bottom of the page comes a most revealing passage:

Participants, Please Note:

1) While our TRC activities, such as the annual convention, are open to ***all people*** of good will, our lecture program is made up ***only*** of those who fully accept the

Petrine Office Pontificate of the present Pope.

2) Attendees are respectfully requested not to distribute literature unless given permission by the TRC officers.

So, sedevacantists are invited to attend a convention which its founder claims to be *approved by Conciliar Rome*; in which *all* the speakers support the papacy of John Paul II; in which *all* the Masses said will be said "in union with" the pseudo Pope (and, if "Father" Gruner is a celebrant, some will be of doubtful validity); in which *all* literature offered will reflect this so-called *Pro Papa* stand. In other words, they are asked to enter an environment which is entirely hostile to one of their most deeply held convictions. What appeared to be the olive branch of peace turns out, then, to be an invitation to compromise and surrender.

Norms For Dialogue

There can be no question for traditional Catholics about involvement with pantraditional groups: It is to be avoided at all costs. Some will argue that there is no harm in attending the TRC convention, so long as one does not take part in the Masses. While this desire may be innocent enough, it nevertheless ignores the principle that one must not needlessly put oneself in harm's way. Pope Pius XI's forbidding Catholics to get involved in panchristian meetings is sufficient proof of this, and ought to serve as a model concerning pantraditional gatherings as well.

However good their intentions, the pantraditionalists do not provide any meaningful answers. Far from helping effect Catholic restoration, they only succeed in further muddying the water. While sedevacantists do not obey Conciliar authority because we reject it as non-Catholic, the pantraditionalists, in complete contradiction to Tradition, acknowledge that same counterfeit authority as genuine and yet ignore or disobey it at almost every step. The time has long since passed for them to claim unfamiliarity with the scope of ecclesiastical destruction that grows daily or, worse, to dare say or imply that the Catholic Church is causing the chaos to happen. In the end, they must come to grips with a hard choice: Either accept the Conciliar Church and its "reforms" as Catholic, but in so doing give it unflinching support and obedience, or reject it as the cheap apostate imitation it is, and get out.

Their twilight status is not a solution, but *a delusion*, leaving them in a continual ecclesial limbo. It is a state that we seek to steer clear of, yet one from which we seek to rescue them. There are none outside the Church so close to her as these, and none so potentially ready to accept the *whole truth* about the mass defection from the Faith. (The term "outside the Church" is used here only in the material sense, for those of whom we speak are surely Catholic in belief and practice, and are separated but by their misguided — and partial — adherence to a false Pontiff.) To convert a Protestant, a Jew, a Moslem, a pagan, an atheist, etc., it is necessary to convince him of a number of teachings quite foreign to him. Not so with the pantraditionalist. He or she already believes virtually everything that the sedevacantist does. The only real point of difference concerns the Church since Vatican II. Both positions agree that a rupture with Catholic Tradition has occurred; the difference comes in that the usual pantraditionalist sees the rending as only *partial*, while the sedevacantist recognizes it to be *complete*.

If we should not attend pantraditional meetings, it will be asked, does this mean we ought not seek to bring such people to the truth? *Hardly*. The point of this article is to warn against a counterproductive mind-set, not to stifle important — even *critical* — discussion. The very fact that these people have strong opposition to what has gone on for three decades is an indication that they are reachable. All of us know family, friends or acquaintances who fall into this category. *But are we trying hard enough to win them?* Given the stagnant attendance at many sedevacantist chapels the answer is clearly *no*. This is due, in part, to the lack of any sense of urgency conveyed by some of these priests, and carried over into their flocks. A spiritual war of truly cataclysmic proportions is being waged against the Church, yet they approach it with all the blissful nonchalance of someone taking a walk in the park. This leads to nothing but a furtherance of the status quo (which should be *intolerable* for all traditional Catholics) and unwittingly aids the claims of pantraditionalism by: 1) hinting that valid sacraments are all that matter; 2) allowing the battle lines to remain blurred; and 3) in general, a weakening of the spirit of Catholic militancy, a spirit that is *essential* if this war is to be won.

Surely, we must seek to reach pantraditionalists, but *not* at their meetings *nor* at the expense of our Faith. We must always hold our ground: The Conciliar Church is an apostate sect, and its leader, John Paul II, a pseudo Pope. The sedevacantist stand is *ironclad*, and not to be negotiated! †

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Questions And Answers

Fr. Oswald Baker (England)

Question:

Is it true that a baby that is stillborn, or dies without Baptism, cannot be given a church burial, and is excluded from Heaven for eternity?

Answer:

The Church has not made any solemn pronouncement on the destiny of infants who die unbaptised. The general teaching of theologians has always been that the stigma of original sin does debar such souls from the Beatific Vision, and that being yet free from personal guilt they enter after death into a state of natural happiness called Limbo. The Sacrament of Baptism makes one a member of the Church. The rights and privileges that attach to membership in the Church clearly, then, cannot be granted to nonmembers. And so, as far as we know, an unbaptised infant does not go to Heaven. But if you choose to believe that God in some way known to Himself gives such an infant, before it leaves this world, an opportunity of somehow acquiring sanctifying grace, or even that the parents' desire for the Baptism suffices with God, it is a tenable opinion. A priest can certainly say prayers over the body at home and at the graveside and pray that God in His mercy sees fit to take the infant to Himself.

Question:

What about a Catholic judge granting a divorce? Is he not providing a couple with a freedom to "remarry," which may be sinful?

Answer:

It is not civil divorce — which in fact leaves the marital status unchanged — that the law of God forbids, but the attempt to remarry. The judge simply declares that, according to the conditions set out by the law of the land, this marriage is terminated. His role in any attempted remarriage is so remote that he is not morally implicated. It is different from, for example, the action of a doctor in prescribing a means of contraception, which is direct, positive cooperation in sin.

Question:

I was asked by a non-Catholic friend to explain the seal of confession.

Answer:

The seal of confession means the obligation of a priest to maintain total and permanent silence concerning whatever is submitted in confession for absolution, and whatever is connected therewith. A priest may never disclose or utilize confessional matter, by any word, act, or look. An illustration of the strictness of the obligation is the supposition of a sinner confessing that he has placed poison in the wine about to be used by the priest at Mass. He will be told he must go and take it away. If he refuses, he cannot of course be absolved, but the priest cannot take any action himself. He must say the Mass, use the wine, and die. But consider an entirely different case. Suppose a penitent, direly grief-stricken for her sin(s). She can hardly speak for tears. The priest might undertake to do some of the penance himself — and will tell her so, lest she be scandalized by a light penance. In afterwards prudently showing particular gentleness to this penitent, and doing his share of the penance, the priest is not accounted guilty of violating the seal.

No instance of violation of the seal of confession has ever been known. God would strike a priest dead rather than let it happen. The priest who converses with you and the same priest hearing your confession are yet two different persons — who never meet.

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CAPSULE COMMENTS

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Is it possible for a person to be a Roman Catholic and a formal heretic at the same time? Of course it is not. The two positions are mutually exclusive — and this applies regardless of whether the individual is a member of the clergy or the laity. But what about the Pope? Is it possible for a man simultaneously to be a true Pope and a formal heretic? No, it is not. He is either one or the other. He cannot be both.

The heresies attributable to John Paul II over the past fifteen years are a matter of record. That some of them were formal heresies (for example, his active participation in pagan worship) is beyond the shadow of a doubt. To hold otherwise is to defy reason and common sense. John Paul II, then, *has to be* a formal heretic. That being the case, he is not even a Roman Catholic, much less an authentic Vicar of Christ — and to maintain that he is or, say, could be — is nothing short of absurd!

And yet, every single one of the speakers at the Tridentine Rite Convention discussed in Mr. Weiskittel's article in this newsletter issue (and all of them undoubtedly considering themselves to be traditional Roman Catholics) accepts John Paul II as a true Pope, the Vicar of Christ. Incredible!

† †

Of the various enemies of traditional Catholicism at the present time (and for many years past), the Conciliar Church is the primary one. Surely no one group or organization has been a greater obstacle to truly traditional Roman Catholics (be they priests or laymen), so indefatigably working to preserve the Faith, than the abominable, God-forsaken Conciliar Church. Collaboration with that Church, then (that is, collaboration with the enemy), on the part of traditional Catholics can hardly be justified. We cannot effectively fight the Conciliar Church by collaborating with it.

† †

A giant step toward the upcoming One World Order Religion was taken at a meeting in Chicago (August 28 to September 5), called the Parliament of World Religions. As of this writing (September 6), there has apparently been little publicity on the gathering but representatives of some 125 to 150 non-Catholic denominations and sects and cults of all kinds were expected to be in attendance, including one or more Vatican prelates. (To the surprise of no one who knows the score, Mother Teresa was also scheduled to be one of the spokesmen for the Conciliar Church but illness forced her to cancel her appearance at the event.) The meeting was sponsored by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the non-Catholic head of the Conciliar Archdiocese of Chicago. A similar parliament was to be held on the same date in Bangalore, India.

Although public information about this event was meager during its week-long course, more is likely to be available in the days ahead (but too late for this issue of *The Athanasian*). But one thing's for sure: the Parliament of World Religions was a super-"ecumenical" affair which will play a paramount role in the ongoing formation of the satanic One World Religion.

† †

Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake.

Rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in heaven... (Saint Matthew 5, 10-12)

...contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Saint Jude 1,3)

"Where Peter is, there is the Church"
and
Where Peter is not, there the Church is not.

PRAY THE ROSARY DAILY
WEAR THE BROWN SCAPULAR