

THE POPE THE CHURCH NEEDS

Ever since, by God's providence, Mother Church set me upon the Apostolic throne... my greatest concern has been that holy Church, the bride of God, our lady and mother, should return to her true glory and stand free, chaste and catholic. But because this entirely displeased the ancient enemy he has armed his members against us in order to turn everything upside down... And truly it is no wonder, for the nearer the time of Antichrist approaches, the more violently he strives to destroy the Christian religion...

St Gregory VII (c.1020-1085)¹

For the foreseeable future Christ's Holy Church does not need a pope who will issue encyclicals on the Eucharist, on charity, hope, faith, on moral principle or the splendour of truth, no matter how important these topics are. Even less does she need a pope who thinks it appropriate to address serious moral issues in interviews with journalists, or to indulge the triviality of a 'Twitter', 'Facebook', or other chattering-opinion website. Nor does the Church need a pope who thinks it appropriate to tour the world episodically, or to address the United Nations.

Rather, she needs a pope who will put the Church's principles into action, a pope who will so conduct himself that the nations *will come to him*; one who will demonstrate the privilege of having in their midst the representative of Christ their Creator and Redeemer.

The Church needs a pope who will enforce her teachings with penalties, rejecting the foolish negation of the Church's authority by Pope John XXIII in his *Opening Speech* to Vatican II; one who, not neglecting the many administrative problems, will address the yet greater problems of philosophy and of doctrine from which her members suffer. The Church needs a reforming pope, a pope who will confront earthly rulers as Gregory VII confronted Henry IV.

Teaching

There are, at a minimum, six topics a new pope should address—*Atheism, Vatican II, Marriage, Philosophy, Evolution, and Freemasonry*.

Atheism

The attitude of popes for the last forty and more years has been at best quietist, at worst indulgent, towards atheism and materialism. With John Paul II and Benedict XVI this weakness flowed from a defective philosophical formation. With John XXIII a glib anti-intellectualism was allied with naivety. He never understood that while God's Church cannot operate without human and material instruments she is not of this world; that the Church is outside time. With Giovanni-Battista Montini, Paul VI, a besotted-ness with modern ideas and a wilfulness² coupled with ambivalence led him to betray Catholic principle in a number of areas.

¹ Pope from April 1072 to May 1085. Letter 64; quoted in *Office of Readings* for 25th May.

² While substitute as Secretary of State he misled Pope Pius XII in a grave matter. The Pope, on discovering this, appointed him Archbishop of Milan without the customary red hat and refused thereafter to see him in private audience.

It must be said that none of them had the competence to demonstrate the intellectual folly of atheism effectively. But there is a further reason why none thought it necessary to deal with the issue.

Vatican II

The concerns among the Catholic faithful over the effects of the Second Vatican Council have only grown with time. The momentum of opposition to its protocols is increasing as the bishops who attended it pass away. 'Bringing the Church up to date', *aggiornamento*, was with the Council bishops a euphemism for bringing the Church into conformity with the world. At the heart of the business was the abandonment, first by Paul VI then by the Council bishops, of the stand the Church had taken against 'religious freedom' and their adoption of the principle as Catholic teaching. Leo XIII had condemned such a course in *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885)—

"To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however it may differ from it in name."

The Council bishops chose to ignore his reasoning³. It was their commitment to Vatican II by subsequent popes which prevented them condemning atheism because *to condemn atheism would involve the condemnation of religious freedom*.

Hence a new pope should as a matter of priority establish a commission to consider and report to him on the threshold questions—

1. *How can the worldly principles adopted by the Council Fathers possibly be reconciled with the formal and infallible teachings of Pius IX and Leo XIII to the contrary?*
2. *If they cannot, how can it be maintained that Vatican II was an 'ecumenical' council?*

Marriage

Contrary to what people think, men and women do not marry in consequence of some fiat granted them by the state, or even by the Church, but by natural right; that is, through ordinances laid down by Almighty God and reflected in their very being. The problems of our age in all their complexity—divorce, contraception, abortion, feminism, the claim that homosexuals should be able to marry, the systematic abuse of the body, and so on—have a common source, the upsetting of a lawful marriage by an apostate Catholic king five centuries ago.

That king, Henry VIII of England, espoused and endorsed the protocol that the institution God had ordained was now to be considered malleable at the hands of men. His wilful rejection of the Divine authority coupled with the great power he exercised in a long reign (1509-1547) served to establish, and to reinforce in men's minds, the confusion of two distinct realities each proceeding from an intrinsic principle, the *natural* and the *voluntary*.⁴

³ A good argument can be mounted that the decision to abandon the Church's stand against the Masonic principle precipitated the explosion in atheism since the Council's close.

⁴ The *natural* proceeds from an intrinsic principle without knowledge of end, such knowledge presupposed, however, in its author. The *voluntary* proceeds from an intrinsic principle with *formal* knowledge of end. These two form a quinquartite with three other realities, the *spontaneous*, the *artificial* and the *violent*. The *spontaneous* proceeds from an intrinsic principle with *material* knowledge only of end: the *artificial* proceeds from an extrinsic principle in accordance with the inclination of the

Now, no one can rightly understand these distinctions who has not immersed himself in the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas. Which brings us to the next topic.

Philosophy

Contrary to the defective views of that saintly pope, but incompetent philosopher, John Paul II, God's Church *does have* a philosophy of her own. It is the philosophy enunciated by St Thomas seven centuries ago.⁵ *A small mistake in the beginning, Aristotle remarked, becomes a great mistake in the end.* What may have been regarded by those who indulged it as a small step—the abandonment, in disobedience of explicit direction of the popes, in seminaries and Catholic colleges of the Church's philosophy—has brought great evils. The fundamental error it entailed was the confusion of the subjective with the objective. (This is the defect from which Papa Wojtyla suffered.) All the errors in dogmatic and moral theology that have followed can be reduced to the faulty understandings adopted as substitutes for the Church's philosophy. Hence, *this topic, Philosophy*, is the most crucial of the six for a new pope to consider. If the philosophical errors are not corrected, there is ultimately no prospect for the correction of the others.

The philosophy of St Thomas cannot be handed on, nor can its salutary influence be felt again by the faithful (and derivatively by non-believers), unless it is taught systematically and correctly⁶. Hence the primary duty of a new pope is to re-establish centres of its teaching.

Evolution

Atheists consider the theory of macro-evolution proposed by the biologist, Charles Darwin, and promoted by less honest thinkers, provides reasonable grounds for the rejection of the existence of an intelligent, all-powerful, Creator. It does not.

God's Church has ever contended, in line with sacred scripture, that while impeded by its limitations and the weakness of human will, the human intellect is capable of establishing in a rational proof God's existence. Thus, Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis* (12.8.1950), n. 2—

"While human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God who watches over and controls the world by his providence and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator, there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that concern the relations between God and man wholly transcend the visible... and, if translated into human action and influence, they call for self-surrender and humility. The human mind also is hampered in the attaining of such truths not only by the senses and imagination, but by disordered appetites, the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men... easily persuade themselves that what they had rather not be true is false, or at least doubtful."

Since Pius XII the popes have dallied with Darwin's foolish teaching. This is consistent with the negative attitude they have exercised towards atheism.

subject: the *violent* proceeds from an extrinsic principle against the inclination of the subject. There was moreover another, and more fundamental error entailed, the confusion of objective with the subjective.

⁵ In *Fides et Ratio* (14.9.1998) Pope John Paul II misquoted as authority for his assertion that the Church had no philosophy of her own, words of Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis* (12.8.1950) which affirm the very contrary of this assertion, as anyone can ascertain for himself by perusing it.

⁶ That is, without the subjectivist glosses that have hampered so much modern philosophical teaching.

Thus a new pope should address Darwinian Evolutionary theory. While acknowledging its limited truths, he should utilise the Church's philosophy to demonstrate the error of attempting to lift its limited scientific thesis to the level of a philosophical principle, and particularly the impossibility of it ever providing a rational explanation for the majesty and intricate formality of the universe.

Freemasonry

This evil derivative of the Protestant revolt has not been dealt with by a pope for more than one hundred years. The reason is that many within the ranks of the faithful and the clergy—including bishops and cardinals of the Church—have submitted themselves to its diabolical terms. The extent of its penetration of the clergy may be gauged from the fact that two of Masonry's protocols, 'religious freedom' and 'separation of Church and state', were adopted at Vatican II. A new pope should isolate and condemn the sect anew and restore the penalty of excommunication for membership by a Catholic of a Masonic association.

Administration

Among the many practical steps a new pope should take is to recognise that the manifold abuses of the sacred liturgy are a consequence of the permission for the use of the vernacular in its celebration. We suggest he should withdraw the *fiat* of Pope John Paul allowing women on the altar, exposing the truth that it was Papa Wojtyła's preoccupation with feminist ideology that led him to justify this breach in the Church's age long rejection of such permission. He should take the opportunity to insist that ideology has no part to play in the liturgy or teachings of Christ's Church.

We suggest the new pope should recognise that the second and third Eucharistic prayers in the *Novus Ordo* are inappropriate to mark the immense dignity of the celebration of the Eucharist and suppress them. He should restore Latin to the essential elements of the canon of the Mass, if not to the whole of it.

Among many steps to be taken with the Vatican Curia, we suggest he should reconstitute the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*. Its lack of competence in morals is a matter of great concern, as witness its inability over fifteen years and more to clarify the difficult teaching of Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 73, its inability to solve the dilemma provided by the continuing existence of fertilised human ova stored cryogenically, and most recently, its support of the foolish comment of Benedict XVI about the possibility of using a condom to achieve some good. At the root of the *Congregation's* problems is a refusal to adhere rigorously to the Catholic principle that one may not do evil that good may come of it.

*

*

The writer is not so sanguine as to imagine that each of these matters will be addressed by the new pope, or even by his successor. He is in no doubt, however, that *until they are addressed* the faithful will continue to suffer, and atheism, and the reign of the devil will continue to flourish throughout the world.

Michael Baker

7th March 2013—Thursday in the third week of Lent: *Sts Felicity and Perpetua*;
formerly *St Thomas Aquinas*