

## CARDINAL MARTINI LOSES HIS WAY

Scuto circumdabit te veritas eis:  
Non temebis a timore nocturno;  
A sagitta volante in die;  
A negotio perambulante in tenebris...<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 90

Late in the Twentieth Century, many were of the opinion that Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, then Archbishop of Milan, should be elected Pope on the death of John Paul II. We should be thankful that the Holy Spirit's governance of the Catholic Church ensured that he was not. Cardinal Martini is the latest in a series of bishops—we have a number of them here in Australia<sup>2</sup>—to document on retirement, his lapse into heresy [*Conversazioni Notturme A Gerusalemme—Sul rischio della fede*—“Night time conversations in Jerusalem: On the risk of faith”]<sup>3</sup>. He was Archbishop of Milan from December 1979 to July 2002.

The book in which he has chosen to voice his dissent from the teachings of the Church founded by Almighty God<sup>4</sup> is well named conversations “of the night”, a time when clarity of thought is often clouded and the works of evil are abroad. Like so many of his dissenting peers, Cardinal Martini has had a longstanding problem with the Church's teaching in *Humanae Vitae*. A Catholic who dissents from what God has laid down on a serious moral matter puts his faith in peril. If he persists in that dissent his faith will be progressively weakened until he loses it.

The Catholic faith is a gift, something given freely by God to those whom He chooses. No one can contrive, or obtain, it for himself. It is one; it is true; and it is good. Mere faith, in contrast, is a kind of human opinion. Its varieties are legion; it may be true or false; it may be good or evil.<sup>5</sup> When, through repeated failures to live out its truth, a man forsakes his Catholic faith, mere faith comes in to replace it. Something happens in the former believer of which he is insuperably ignorant: he loses all memory and understanding of the thing he once possessed. He loses, in addition, the right understanding of God and of His providence; of His intimate involvement in the life of the believer, and of all men; and of the one thing in this world which, because it is not of man but of God, is different from all other, the Catholic Church. When he reaches this state, the former believer, now heretic, thinks in his ignorance that the Catholicism he has abandoned has gone wrong. Indeed, something *has* gone wrong: but it is not Catholicism. This is the position in which Cardinal Martini finds himself. He has embraced the principle of Protestantism, rejecting God's authority and substituting for it his own. Like Esau, he has squandered his patrimony.

“[H]e who adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches. It is otherwise if he holds what he chooses to hold of the things taught

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<sup>1</sup> “His truth will be a shield about you; you will not fear the terror of the night, not the arrow that flies by day, nor the evil prowling about in the darkness...”

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, Titular Bishop of Rusuca, former auxiliary Bishop of Sydney. Cf. “Bishop Robinson's Heresy” at [http://www.superflumina.org/robinsons\\_heresy.html](http://www.superflumina.org/robinsons_heresy.html)

<sup>3</sup> Reviewed by Sandro Magister and Pietro De Marco on the Chiesa website, cf. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/209322?eng=y>

<sup>4</sup> The book is in the form of an interview of the Cardinal by German Jesuit priest, Georg Sporschill.

<sup>5</sup> Thus, evolutionism is a species of faith, but a faith grounded not in reality, but in an idea.

by the Church and rejects what he chooses to reject, for he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will... It is clear that such a heretic with regard to one article has no faith in the other articles, but only a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will."<sup>6</sup>

Martini's book has been translated from the original Italian into German and Spanish, apparently, but not yet into English. We must rely, then, on the reports of Catholic journalist, Sandro Magister, and Pietro De Marco, an academic from the University of Florence and of the Theological Faculty of Central Italy, for its content. In the course of his commentary De Marco quotes Martini in the book as saying (in English translation) this:

"Men are drawing away from the... ten commandments and are creating their own religion; this risk also exists for us. You cannot make God Catholic. God is beyond the limitations and definitions that we establish. We need these in our lives, that's obvious, but we must not confuse them with God."<sup>7</sup>

Why does Martini use 'we', 'you' and 'us' here? The reason is that as far as he is concerned the Catholic Church is no longer something of God but something *we* men have contrived. The logic is clear: if *we* have contrived it, *we* can alter it. Who is Martini to tell Catholics how to conduct their religious lives? He has substituted his authority for that of God and His Church. Martin Luther did the same.

When dealing with Modernists like Martini one must never use their categories or employ their terminology: they delight in using words to distort meanings. De Marco falls into the trap when he responds to the above extract, "[I]t is not... for reasons of practicality that we establish 'definitions'..." This misses the point. It is not *we* who establish the definitions (the doctrines of the Catholic Church) but Almighty God. The Catholic Church is His creation, His institution. It is not a human thing, as Martini now thinks, but something Divine. The same errors are behind the fatuous "You cannot make God Catholic." It is not *we* who made God Catholic. He made us Catholic, placed us—a great privilege—within the Catholic Church.

We must understand the principle that drives the Modernist. Protestantism is inchoate atheism. It pretends to be religion but, because it rejects God's authority in favour of that of the believer, it rejects God. God is, for the Protestant, not the principle upon which his belief is founded. He, himself, is that principle: he chooses for himself what he shall, and shall not, believe. Now Modernism is Protestantism carried to its inevitable conclusion. It imports the philosophical error of subjectivism, that what matters is not reality, but what I think about reality (itself a consequence of Luther's revolt), into religious thinking. Belief is something the believer contrives for himself. 'God' is a figment of his mind. There is no objective Being on whom he is utterly dependent. Protestantism's atheism is, thus, now fully developed.

The extract from the book quoted above betrays another characteristic of Martini's make-up. It is Masonic. All heresy is *gnostic*, in the sense that the heretic thinks he is possessed of a higher knowledge than that of the Church. But Freemasonry's *gnosticism* is more comprehensive for it contends that all religions, and especially the Catholic faith, must be

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<sup>6</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 5, a. 3; cf. II-II, q. 11, a. 1

<sup>7</sup> Cf. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/209322?eng=y>

subject to its claims because no religion can adequately comprehend 'God'. This seems to be what Martini is getting at when he says, "You cannot make God Catholic. God is beyond the limitations and definitions that we establish."<sup>8</sup>

Martini's pontificating appears in another extract quoted by De Marco:

"I am not so much afraid of the defects of the Church. What disturbs me... are people who do not think... I want individuals who think... Only then can one pose the question of whether they are believers or nonbelievers. Those who reflect will be guided on their way..."

The pride of the Modernist noted by Pius X in *Pascendi* is patent here<sup>9</sup>. The arrogance is breathtaking: it is Martini, not God, who is to determine who is, and who is not, a believer. The Church, incidentally, has no defects: she is the spotless bride of Christ. It is only her members who have defects.

Martini condemns Pope Paul VI for promulgating *Humanae Vitae*, "with a sense of solitary duty, and motivated by a profound personal conviction", going on to emphasise his voluntary isolation. In criticising him De Marco asks rhetorically, "whom could Paul VI trust, outside of Rome, in 1968?" Again De Marco has allowed himself to be tricked by Martini's wilful obscurity. It matters not one wit whether Paul VI was isolated: Athanasius was isolated during the Arian heresy, yet it was he who expressed faithfully the teaching of the Catholic Church. It was not Paul VI who laid down the Church's teaching in *Humanae Vitae* but Almighty God: Paul VI was his instrument.

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The namby pamby approach in dealing with heretics has been a peculiar failing of the Catholic hierarchy since about 1960. It is one of the legacies of the papacy of John XXIII whose *Opening Speech* to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council with its bumbling content is received as if it was holy writ.<sup>10</sup> The heads of the Vatican Congregations do not remove recalcitrant bishops from their offices. These are "resigned", threatened with exposure and the removal of certain privileges unless they sign a letter of resignation. Most such bishops take the easy option and their errors are never publicly condemned.

Indeed, rather than condemn heretics, many modern bishops praise them. They praise Teilhard de Chardin<sup>11</sup> when the least inspection of his work demonstrates that the man was incapable of thinking logically about anything philosophical, and that his theology was fundamentally defective. They persist in calling Karl Rahner a great theologian when he was the *fons et origo* of dissent over the Church's teaching in *Humanae Vitae*. They praise the

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<sup>8</sup> In his major encyclical on Freemasonry, *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), Leo XIII remarked (in n.10)—"[N]o matter how great may be men's cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. 'A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit.' [Matt. 7: 18]..."

<sup>9</sup> *Pascendi Domini Gregis* (8.9.1907), the encyclical of Pius X condemning Modernism.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. "Failure of the Executive Power" at <http://www.superflumina.org/executivefailure.html>

<sup>11</sup> Cf, for instance, Christoph Cardinal Schonborn in his *Chance or Purpose? Creation, Evolution, and a Rational Faith*; (English translation by Henry Taylor of *Ziel oder Zufall? Schöpfung und Evolution aus der Sicht vernünftigen Glaubens*), San Francisco (Ignatius Press), 2007, at pp. 141-3.

late scripture scholar Raymond E. Brown whose poisonous interpretations of sacred scripture have destroyed the faith of millions.<sup>12</sup>

Contrary to the distortion of theological prudence promulgated by John XXIII, when occasion demands it, it is work of mercy to tell a sinner to his face: "You are damned!" The saints did it frequently as witness the lives of the Curé of Ars (St John Vianney) and St Pio of Pietriercino. The Pope and the senior members of the hierarchy may not have the saints' holiness, but they have the authority of Christ's Church. BUT THEY WILL NOT ACT !

Can we expect that the Vatican will openly condemn Cardinal Martini for his heretical teachings? Magister is, understandably, pessimistic.

"The newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference, *Avvenire*, in reporting on Martini's book on the occasion of its release at the Frankfurt book fair on October 17, wrote that 'many of the considerations expressed in it, understandably, will prompt discussion'.

"But it said nothing else. *Avvenire* has not yet reviewed the book, and no one expects it to do so in the future. There is also absolute silence from *L'Osservatore Romano*..."

How far we are removed from the days of the Church's youth. When, according to St Irenaeus, the blessed Polycarp, was asked by the heretic Marcion, "Don't you recognise me?", he replied "I do. I do recognise the first born son of Satan!"<sup>13</sup>

The mindless silence of the Church's current hierarchy does not, however, mean that we, Christ's faithful people, should remain silent! Let us, together, intone Belloc's clarion call—

Heretics all, whoever you be,  
In Tarbes or Nîmes, or over the sea,  
You never shall have good words from me.  
*Caritas non conturbat me.*<sup>14</sup>

Michael Baker

21<sup>st</sup> November 2008—*The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin*

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<sup>12</sup> It was doubtless the same mindset that moved Pope Benedict XVI on September 24<sup>th</sup> 2005 to dine with the long standing critic of the Church and *de facto* heretic, Hans Küng, spending four hours in his company. This traitor to the Church's teaching has never been suspended from the priesthood, and openly boasts of the fact.

<sup>13</sup> St Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 3, 3, 4

<sup>14</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Path to Rome*: my edition, Penguin Books, London, 1958, at p. 88.