

THE ROT BEGAN WITH JOHN XXIII

For close on two millennia the Catholic Church, her popes and bishops, taught that the Jews were responsible for the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Calvary. Objective evidence bore out the claims in the texts of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St Peter and St Paul. The faithful were never in doubt about the matter until the advent of Pope John XXIII, Guiseppe Roncalli, to the papacy.

This Pope had a bee in his bonnet, a sentimental sympathy for the Jewish nation afflicted so appallingly by the Nazis before and during the Second World War, the extent of whose persecution at their hands has absorbed the world's peoples for decades since. That the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis was irrelevant to the issue of the responsibility of the Jewish nation for the death of Christ never seems to have occurred to him.

Pope John was not alone among the clergy in refusing to make necessary distinctions. The intellectual weakness it evidences had grown exponentially among the Church's ministers with the loss of the metaphysical perception of reality in favour of a materialist and subjectivist one. Allied to this was an attitude that sees no difficulty in subjecting what is perennially true to the demands of the times, a position C.S. Lewis labelled 'historical parochialism'.

By insisting that all references in the Church's liturgy that blamed the Jews for Christ's death should be excised John XXIII abused his office. Christ's Church, her popes, her bishops, her doctors and theologians, may have insisted on the truth for close on twenty centuries but 'good' Pope John knew better; and he would have his will, the exercise of which has served to mislead generations of the faithful since. The intellectual weakness at work here was matched by the Pope's arrogance.

In this obsession and wilful insistence are the seeds of the chaos that flowered at the Second Vatican Council. Two principles are advanced. First is the contention *that the Catholic Church is in error on a fact central to Christ's sacrifice on Calvary*. It may be thought only a small error; it is an error notwithstanding. Second, is the insistence that no matter what the Church has maintained in the *past she must now* defer to the demands of the secular. These two principles underlie the chief error for which Vatican II is responsible, its teaching in breach of the Church's long held rejection of the claim—formally proclaimed in the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX—that every man has a right to pick and choose as he will among the religions on earth, a right to 'religious freedom'.

1. The Church may have taught against this in the past: she is in error.
2. Whatever position she may have held, she must now defer to the secular.

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The chief effect of Vatican II, it can be argued, was a reform of the Church's liturgy which abandoned a fixed and determinate structure, one that had obtained from time immemorial, in favour of a structure whose chief characteristic was novelty. The reform attacked the Catholic faith by attacking her liturgy—attacked the *lex credendi* by attacking the *lex orandi*.

This may be seen when one looks at what was swept away at the direction of Pope Paul's liturgical reformers. *Inter multa alia* they abandoned the solemnity of the psalms and readings of the *Tenebrae*, Matins and Lauds for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday in Holy Week.

One need only study the extracts from St Augustine's teaching on the psalms in the Second Nocturn of the office for Good Friday (*On Psalm 63*) to see how, by excising it, the reformers obeyed John XXIII's demand of the Church's liturgy. This is what St Augustine and the Church taught before the *novus ordo* came along:

"We know of the malignant gathering of the Jews and what a multitude there were working iniquity. What was the nature of the iniquity? In that they willed to kill the Lord Jesus Christ. Many good works, he said, have I showed you: for which of these do you desire to kill me? He bore all their infirmities. He healed all their sick. He preached the kingdom of heaven. He did not keep silent over their iniquities that they might be moved to hate them rather than the Physician who would heal them. Yet being ungrateful for all these, his remedies, like men possessed by a high fever, they raged against the Physician who had come to heal them and took counsel as to how to achieve his destruction. It was as though they would put it to the proof whether he were man that could die, or whether he were something more than man so that he would not suffer himself to die. In chapter 2 of the Book of *Wisdom* we have, as it were, their very words: Let us examine him. Let us condemn him to a shameful death: for he shall be visited, we have his word for it; if the just man be the Son of God, God will help him and deliver him from the hand of his enemies." (Lesson V)

And—

"They have sharpened their tongue like a sword. Let not the Jews say: We did not kill Christ. For they delivered him up to Pilate's tribunal in order that they should themselves seem innocent of his death. Thus when Pilate said to them: take him and crucify him, they answered: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. Thus they sought to cast the guilt of their crime upon a human judge. But could they by this deceive God the Judge? What Pilate did made him, perforce, in some sort a partaker of their crime. But in comparison with them he was less guilty. For he did what he could to rescue him out of their hands, and therefore ordered him to be scourged and brought before them. That is to say, not by way of persecution did he scourge the Lord but as wishing to satisfy their rage, that when they saw him scourged, they might relent and cease to desire his death. Nevertheless he did kill him. But if we hold him to guilty who did it against his will, shall they be innocent who forced him to do it? By no means. Pilate did pronounce sentence on him and commanded him to be crucified and so in some wise it might be said that he did kill him. But, you, his own Jewish people, you in truth did kill him. And how did you do it? With the sword of the tongue. For like a sword you sharpened your tongue. And when did you strike the blow? When you cried out, Crucify him, crucify him!" (Lesson VI)

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Of a piece with Pope John's insouciance towards the Church's perennial teaching was disregard for the Church's discipline manifested in his *Opening Speech* to the Second Vatican Council¹. The departure from principle and example of wrong teaching set here were confirmed when, under pressure from a vocal cadre bent on departing from the rigour of the Church's teaching and her discipline, he chose to abandon rules he had laid down for the conduct of the Council. That the decision effectively wasted years of preparation work for the Council by bishops and theologians did not concern him.

The confusion of mercy with indulgence coupled with a practical denial of the effects of Original Sin on modern man expressed in the *Opening Speech* was a further mark of Pope John's intellectual confusion.

The second of these vices appeared in the thinking of the pope who borrowed his name, John Paul II, whose early encyclicals², one would be forgiven for thinking, advanced the thesis that men were saved simply by being born, an utterly heterodox position. John Paul's deference to the ideology of feminism with the divisive effects among the faithful that has been wrought by his whimsical decision to allow women and girls access to the altar, are further instances of the operation of the principles.

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In his splendid study of the chaos that has beset the Church as a consequence of the Second Vatican Council and the popes who promoted and supported it, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Angelico Press, Kettering Ohio, 2015), H J A Sire maintains that John XXIII inflicted a wound on the Church from which it will take centuries to recover (p. 182). Anyone who has grasped just how radical are the problems that beset the Church would find it hard to disagree.

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¹ Addressed in the paper *Failure of the Executive Power*.

² *Redemptor Hominis* (March 4, 1979) for instance.