

13th MAY 2016

“Ever and anon a trumpet sounds from the hid battlements of eternity.”

Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven*

In his last poem, *Explicit*, Australian poet James McAuley (†15th October 1976) lamented the frightful age in which he had lived, and in which he would die—

No worse age has ever been—
Murderous, lying, and obscene;
Devils worked while gods connived:
Somehow the human has survived...

—and closed with the plaint—

Winter will grow dark and cold
Before the wattle turns to gold.

Things were to get much worse in the forty years that followed his death. Winter set in for the Church with great severity, largely through application of determinations of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and the ambivalence of their successors, popes included, who refused to acknowledge the reality that, far from the Church benefiting the world as a result of the Council, the world had invaded the Church's sacred precincts, and had wrought immense harm there.

At about the time of McAuley's death, the English commentator Michael Davies, quoting criticisms by Australian Catholic layman, B A Santamaria, put the position forcefully :

“An argument which has been used frequently by proponents of the post-conciliar reforms is *post hoc non ergo propter hoc*, i.e., because the decline has followed the Council it is not necessarily a result of the Council. What these people fail to face up to is the fact that the reforms allegedly implementing the Council were intended to initiate a renewal, and a renewal must necessarily involve expansion and not decline. What would these people have replied had their reforms resulted, for example, in a massive increase in Mass attendance, and Catholics who did not like the liturgical changes had replied : “Post hoc non ergo propter hoc” ?

“... Let us imagine that the chief executives of, say, the Ford Motor Company decided to give the company and its products a totally new image. In order to achieve this they made radical alterations in appearance of Ford cars, threw out all their tried and tested marketing methods, and promoted their restyled vehicles in a completely new manner. Imagine then, that sales plummeted, and not only did they win practically no new customers, but lost a huge proportion of their established clients, in some countries as many as eighty per cent. It would be an understatement to claim that these executive officers would have lacked credibility had they denied any connection between their new marketing policies and the collapse of their company. Imagine the reaction had the same executives not only tried to exculpate their new policies from any responsibility for the collapse, but denied that any collapse had taken place... Let us go one step further and imagine that they refused to abandon the disastrous policies they had adopted, and return to their traditional methods, but intended “to go forward on the same path” that had led to the self-destruction of the... Company. One can only conclude that under such circumstances their next shareholders' meeting would be somewhat stormy.

“No, Mr Santamaria is correct. It is a monumental absurdity to claim that, as once full churches empty, “the Holy Ghost is 'renewing' what is visibly ceasing to exist.” (Pope John’s Council, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977, Introduction)

Even the best of our modern bishops are in denial over the evils for which Vatican II is responsible, chief among them rapprochement with Protestantism and the secular. Our theologians and Catholic thinkers are unable to agree about the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis humanae*, or that it involved a radical departure from the Church's constant teaching. The best the Catholic faithful have been accorded is Pope Benedict's lament over what he sees as the Council's misapplication, and a call to interpret it in “a hermeneutic of continuity”. But how could the Council be interpreted consistently with the Church's constant teaching when its whole thrust served to fracture that continuity ?

The mentality fostered there, that the Church has become a new entity and her age old doctrinal demands can be reinterpreted, is manifest in the conduct of Pope Francis. The chickens hatched at Vatican II may be said, with him, to have come home to roost. The compromise of Catholic principle against divorce in his apostolic letter *Amoris laetitia* is patent. His *ipse dixit* uttered *ad libitum* contrast dramatically with the reserve which has characterised the utterances of his predecessors over twenty centuries. Two in the last week are representative of this spirit. In an interview published in *La Croix*, French Catholic newspaper, the Pope dismissed concerns over the Mohammedan idea of conquest, an essential element in that 'religion'.

“[I]t is also possible to interpret the objective in Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus sends his disciples to all nations, in terms of the same idea of conquest.”

That the one is premised on compulsion and violence if nothing else will serve, while the other is based on the love of God and the willing acceptance of the message of faith by the convert, is ignored. In another interview the Pope abandoned the Church's long standing teaching against the separation of Church and state.

“Confessional states end badly... I believe that secularism accompanied by a strong law which guarantees religious freedom provides a framework for moving forward.”

This mentality, characteristic of Vatican II's accommodation with the secular is, of course, implicit in *Dignitatis humanae* and in various other of the Council's documents.

The failure of leadership among the bishops to which the Catholic faithful have become enured now extends to the Pope. It is testament to the incompetence of the Church's bishops that a majority of the Cardinals should choose from among their number so incompetent a man to be Pope.

Christ's faithful may be consoled, however, with this realisation. The bishops of Vatican II and the *periti* who advised them are now, almost all of them, dead and their pernicious influence is waning. Opposition to the Council and its facile compromises of Catholic principle is growing apace.

*

*

Some years ago we responded to James McAuley's lament with an expression of hope. It was grounded in two things, 1. the vision Leo XIII experienced on 13th October, 1884, just six years into his pontificate, of the permission which was to be accorded the devil to attempt to destroy Christ's

Church over 100 years, and 2. the promise of Our Blessed Lady that in the end her Immaculate Heart would triumph. (See http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/when_the_wattle.pdf)

On Friday last, 13th May, there could have been heard, faint and far off, a tocsin, the sound of a trumpet. You may not have heard it, but the devil certainly did. For the date marked ninety nine years from the first appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the three children, Lucia Santos and Francisco and Jacinta Marto in the Cova da Iria, Fatima, Portugal, warning of the doom that faced the world and of the need for prayer and penance if it was to be averted. The Blessed Virgin returned on the 13th of each succeeding month of that year, save August when officialdom prevented the children attending (they saw her, instead, on 15th, the Feast of the Assumption), until the 13th October when there occurred the miracle of the Sun. More than 30,000 people were present at the Cova da Iria that day, in torrential rain. The atheists rolled up in droves. Not one of them returned home an atheist.

When did the 100 years of the devil's lease begin ? When will it end ? We know the answer to neither question, though few can doubt that we have lived through the greater part of its scope. But we know, through the coincidence of the date of the Virgin's last appearance with that of Leo XIII's private revelation, that 13th October 2017 will be a date of immense significance for the Church and for the world.

In the same year that the more indulgent and shortsighted of the Church's prelates—Pope Francis among them—intend to celebrate, as if it was worth celebrating, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's apostasy, Our Blessed Lady will make her influence felt. The evil that the Church and Christ's faithful have suffered for so long is approaching its end. *Sursum corda !*

The Prince of darkness goes his way
Inevitably. But who shall say
Or soon? Or late? Or fast? Or slow?—
It is not given us to know.

We only know the truth assuring;
Christ shall conquer long perduring;
Christ shall rule the nations ever;
Christ shall reign as King forever.

Michael Baker

24th May 2016—*Solemnity of Our Lady Help of Christians*