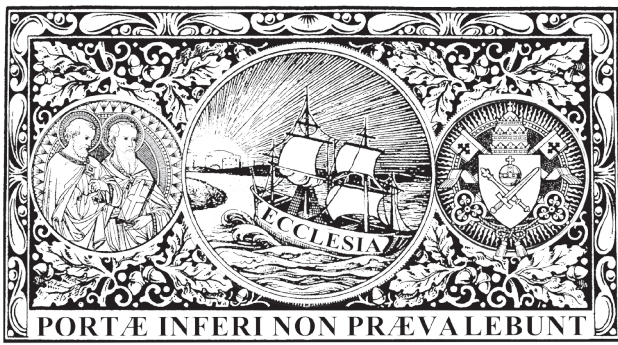




# FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH:

Catholic Obedience  
in Times of Apostasy







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Faithful children of the Church:

*Catholic obedience in times of apostasy*

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## PREFACE



**I**n the midst of the crisis through which the Church, in her human element, has been passing for more than five decades, anyone who intends to remain authentically Catholic has a twofold challenge, both doctrinal and spiritual.

To speak first of doctrine: faced with the indisputable divergence of the modern magisterium from the Tradition of all time, every Catholic must hold fast to the latter, offering a filial but firm resistance to unlawful innovations. This is not disobedience but rather a dutiful and painful obedience to the one Truth, which is God. Indeed, “*this merely apparent disobedience is actually a more perfect form of obedience*” (p. 22), and has its roots in a genuinely Catholic vision of the Mystical Body of Christ: “*It is the Church’s understanding of the mystery of transcendence that allows obedient souls, respectfully but firmly to refuse to comply with the hierarchy’s decrees when they clearly conflict with the safe path of tradition*” (p. 62).

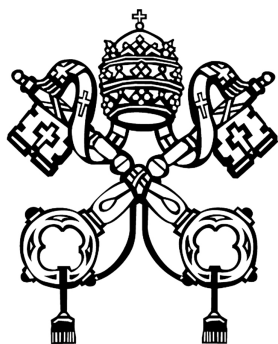
On the spiritual level, our resistance, which must refuse to condone the revolution that has taken place without falling into either sectarianism or ostentation, has two extremes to avoid, namely, discouragement and harshness. These extremes can be avoided only with the help of a deep spiritual life, nourished by those unfailing sources of grace which are the sacraments in their traditional forms, and nourished also by the catechism of Saint Pius X, by prayer and by a virtuous life. Discouragement is overcome by faith and hope; harshness is overcome by charity. In other words, one must place one's spiritual life on a deep theological level, for without this it will not be possible to mount a Catholic resistance worthy of the name to the devastation that surrounds us.

We should not approach our times in a tragic spirit. We should, on the contrary, contemplate them in a supernatural light, knowing that it is a grace and privilege to be able to give witness to our faith amidst trials, thus showing a greater love for the only Saviour, who is Lord of time and history.

Above all, we must see and accept the Church's tribulations in the light of her victory. This victory is not merely a consoling hope but a revealed certainty; indeed, in God's eternal plans, the victory has already been achieved.

The following pages are dedicated to all those who, with great courage and ardent love, undertake this painful but glorious resistance.







# OBEDIENCE AND RESISTANCE IN THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

*Prof. Roberto de Mattei*



To speak of resistance in Catholic history and doctrine by no means signifies an apologia for disobedience and rebellion. On the contrary, I will make an apologia for obedience. It is the virtue of obedience, not disobedience, that makes Catholic resistance to familial, political and religious authorities lawful, when they violate divine and natural law.

This is a necessary premise, because we must avoid the danger of adopting a psychological attitude of opposition to authority, which has nothing to do with Catholic faith and morality.

## **The moral virtue of obedience**

When we speak of obedience, what generally comes to mind is the vow taken by reli-

gious, the most difficult to maintain and hence the most perfect of the three vows taken, because it sacrifices what is most important, namely one's own will. Yet, more importantly, obedience is a moral virtue. Saint Thomas defines obedience as a moral virtue which renders the will ready to carry out the orders of superiors.<sup>1</sup> If we obey our lawful superiors, we obey God, because all power comes from Him (*Romans* 13:1). Therefore, like all virtues, obedience has a divine, not a human, foundation.

The moral virtue of obedience derives from the Decalogue. The fourth Commandment tells us: honour your father and your mother. The family is the first place where a human being learns the value of obedience. The fourth Commandment imposes a duty to obey not only one's parents, but all authorities, as an expression of the Will of God which, as Saint Thomas explains, is the first rule of order for all created wills.<sup>2</sup>

This Commandment, which, being an expression of natural law, imposes obedience to lawful authorities and lawful legislation, is universal and absolute, as is the fifth Command-

ment, which tells us not to kill, and the sixth, which tells us not to commit impure acts.

Yet obedience has an additional supernatural foundation and is the rule of the spiritual life of every Christian.

Saint Paul says Jesus Christ was “*obedient unto death, death on the cross!*” (*Philippians* 2:8). Following the example of the Divine Master and in accordance with divine law, the Saints did not merely obey the authorities: they sought to obey the will of others, while renouncing their own. Blessed is he who never acts upon his own will, but simply and solely that of others, be they parents, superiors, husband or wife, even the neighbour we encounter and should love as ourselves, according to an order of charity defined by Saint Thomas in the *Summa*.<sup>3</sup>

The opposite of obedience is disorderly affirmation of the “I”, egoism, the search for oneself and one’s own will, which leads us into sin. Sin is, always and above all, an act of disobedience. Therefore Saint Paul tells us “*by one man’s disobedience, the entire human race were made sinners*” (*Romans* 5:19). Christian society is a society regulated by



obedience and animated by love of God and one's neighbour.

A diabolical society is a society of disorder and disobedience. Juan Donoso Cortés observes: *“If sin is nothing more than disobedience and rebellion, and if disobedience and rebellion are nothing more than disorder, and disorder is evil, it follows that evil, disorder, rebellion, disobedience and sin are things in which reason perceives absolute identity, just as good, order, submission and obedience are things in which reason perceives full likeness. The conclusion is that subordination to the divine will constitutes the highest good, whilst sin is the pre-eminent evil.”*<sup>4</sup>

**Are subjects bound to obey their superiors in all things?**

The principle that obedience is due to superiors because they represent the authority of God Himself has important consequences. In the familial, political and ecclesiastical order, our superiors represent authority in the measure in which they themselves respect and ensure respect of divine law. This law is not divine because imposed on us by our superior, but because its foundation is in itself, that is in God, who is its author. He who has authority, says Saint Paul, is “*God’s minister working for your good*” (Romans 13:4). However, love for the will of God may lead us to refuse authorities and laws which refuse God and which, in refusing God, impair His glory and imperil souls.

Therefore, when Saint Thomas poses the question “*Are subjects bound to obey their superiors in all things?*,”<sup>5</sup> his answer is negative.

As explained by Doctor Angelicus, the reasons why a subject cannot be bound to obey his superior in all things are twofold.

Firstly: because of a command from a higher authority; for the hierarchy of authorities must be respected.

Secondly: if a superior commands a subject something outside his authority. For example, children are not bound to obey their parents in the matter of contracting a marriage, preserving virginity or similar matters.

Saint Thomas concludes: “*Man is subject to God absolutely, and in all things, internal and external: he is therefore bound to obey God in all things. However, subjects are not bound to obey their superiors in all things, but in certain things only. (...) Hence one can distinguish three types of obedience: the first, being sufficient for salvation, obeys in obligatory matters only; the second, being perfect, obeys in all lawful things; the third, being disordered, obeys in unlawful matters also.*”<sup>6</sup>

This means obedience is not blind or unconditional but has limits. Where there is sin, mortal or otherwise, we have not merely a right, but a duty to disobey. This also applies in circumstances where one is commanded to do something harmful to the spiritual life.

But who tells us that an order from our superiors is unlawful? We are told this by our conscience which, rather than a nebulous sentiment of the spirit, is the right judgement of

reason on our actions, the ultimate judgement on what we should or should not do. Conscience has no inherent norm, but must be subject to moral law, which is founded on divine law. The greatest act of obedience we can perform is the obedience of our conscience to moral law.

Out of love for God, we must be ready for such acts of supreme obedience to His law and His will, which are severed from the ties of false human obedience. God requires us only to sanctify ourselves; when the law imperils our sanctification, we have the right to oppose it.

The martyrs did not obey the authorities of the State, who imposed on them a requirement to worship idols. Nor did they obey parents, children, husbands and wives, who asked them to escape martyrdom for the good of the family.

Saint Thomas More was a loyal servant of Henry VIII, but did not do what Henry wanted, nor even what his wife Alice asked in their final words to one another, when she pleaded: *“Do you want to abandon us, myself and my unhappy family? Do you want to re-*

*nounce this life of domestic bliss which, even a short time ago, pleased you so much?" But Thomas answered: "For how many years, my dear Alice, do you believe I could enjoy these earthly pleasures, which you depict with such persuasive eloquence? – Twenty years, at least, God willing. – But, darling wife, you are not a good negotiator: what is twenty years compared with a blessed eternity?"*

### **Just and unjust law**

Natural law, to which our conscience must submit, is an objective and immutable order of truth and moral values. Reason discovers this order above all in our own hearts, because this order is a law written "*on the human heart by the very finger of the Creator*" (cf. *Romans* 2:14-15). Moral law is valid for each man, specifically because impressed on the conscience of each: this could not be so unless moral law were rooted in our human nature.

Each positive law which runs counter to natural and divine law is unjust and the authority which claims to impose it is abusing its power.

The concepts of just and unjust law come to us not from the modern philosophy of na-



tural law, but from mediaeval law and theology, which inherited them from Greek and Roman philosophy and developed them in greater depth and detail.

Professor Wolfgang Waldstein is the author of a celebrated study entitled *Written on the heart. Natural law as the foundation of a human society*,<sup>7</sup> in which he demonstrates that natural law has been known and practised by men from ancient times. Waldstein recalls the famous quotation from Sophocles (496-404 b. C.) in the tragedy *Antigone*, cited repeatedly by Aristotle: “*I could not, through the arrogance of one man, bring upon myself punishment from the gods.*”<sup>8</sup> The Roman jurists, in particular Cicero, in his writings on the *res publica* (*De republica*), laws (*De legibus*) and duties (*De officiis*), developed the notions of Greek philosophy. Roman law was collected in the *Digesta*, published by the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian in 533 A. D. As a result of the rediscovery and study of this work in the Middle Ages, the first university in Europe, the University of Bologna was born, whose influence on mediaeval thought was decisive.

The teachers at Bologna included Gratian (1075/80-1145/1157), the great codifier of the Church's canon law: a system in which the authority of Holy Scripture, decrees promulgated by Popes and Councils and the tradition of the Church are added to the authority of natural law.

The Carlyle brothers, authors of a celebrated history of political doctrines, recall that mediaeval jurists drew a precise distinction between natural or divine law and the positive law formulated by man.<sup>9</sup> Henri de Bracton (c. 1216-1268), in his *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliæ*, affirms that there is no king where the will is substituted for the law: "*Non est enim rex, ubi dominatur voluntas et non lex.*"<sup>10</sup> This is not an isolated saying – as emphasised by the Carlyles – but the synthetic enunciation of a principle which permeates the entire constitutional structure of mediaeval society.<sup>11</sup>

The most important mediaeval political concept, according to the Carlyle brothers, is the supremacy of the law, understood not as the expression of the will of the ruler, but rather in its twofold aspects of natural law

and customary law, born of the traditions of a community made up of the king, the nobility and the people.<sup>12</sup>

The principle of the “sovereign *de legibus solutus*” can be traced to the jurists of Philip the Fair and thereafter, in the XIV century, Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham. It is this principle which has given rise to the modern-day concept that the sovereignty of the lawgiver is not limited by a superior authority. However, according to the mediaeval notion, the sovereign, being the source of civil law, is subject to the natural and divine law which is binding on every human being. And where there is conflict between the human and the divine law, “*it is proper to obey God rather than to obey man (Acts 5:29).*”<sup>13</sup>

This concept of the law belongs to the Magisterium of the Church.

In his Encyclical *Quod numquam* of 15<sup>th</sup> February 1875 to the Prussian episcopate, Pius IX affirms: “*It is proper to obey God rather than to obey man*” (Acts 5:29). *In addition, let them know that each one of you is prepared to give tribute and homage to Caesar in those matters which are subject to civil*



*authority and power (not as a result of threats, but according to the law of conscience).”*

Leo XIII cites this in his Encyclical *Liber-tas*: in the “*tyrannical Governments*,” “*where (...) the justifying reason for a command is in opposition to the eternal law of the divine Empire, then disobedience to men in order to obey God becomes a duty.*”<sup>14</sup>

While in his Encyclical *Diuturnum* Leo XIII emphasises the sacred nature of authority and the duty of obedience, in the Encyclical *Sapientiæ Christianæ* on the duties of Christian citizens, he explains that, when laws promulgated by the State are in conflict with

the divine law and the authority is serving injustice, “*resistere officium est, parere scelus*,” then “*it is a duty to resist and a crime to obey*.”<sup>15</sup> These concepts are reiterated in the Letter *Officio sanctissimo* to the archbishops and bishops of Bavaria of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1887,<sup>16</sup> where he affirms that “*if the inevitable alternatives are posed, either to disobey the commands of God or to please men, he openly endorses the memorable and most worthy response of the apostles: it is proper to obey God rather than to obey man (Acts 5:29)*.”<sup>17</sup>

John Paul II reiterates this in *Evangelium Vitæ*: “*From the early days of the Church, apostolic preaching has inculcated in Christians a duty to lawfully constituted authorities (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14), while at the same time issuing a firm admonishment to obey God rather than to obey man (Acts 5:29)*.”<sup>18</sup>

Power is lawfully exercised when it respects life, freedom of education, the family, natural marriage, private ownership and religious and moral principles. However, when a State legislates against the laws of God and the Church, when it violates moral and natural

law; when it persecutes and discriminates against the good, it is an iniquitous State which must be combatted and condemned. It is therefore possible to disobey through obedience, with the result that this merely apparent disobedience is actually a more perfect form of obedience.

### **The right of resistance**

When faced with an unjust law or governance, Catholics have a right to act, even placing themselves outside the law.<sup>19</sup> The uprising in the Vendée, the Neapolitan Santa Fede movement and the Cristero rebellion in Mexico provide us with powerful examples of resistance by the Catholic people against an unlawful power. History offers us further examples of intervention by ecclesiastical authorities against laws and authorities. The defender of divine and natural law is in fact the Church, on which, in the final instance, it is incumbent to determine whether a law does or does not reflect the divine and natural order. This authority is the foundation of the right of excommunication and deposition exercised by the Pope, even against kings and emperors.<sup>20</sup>

When Elizabeth I of the House of Tudor came to the throne, the Catholic Church was persecuted by her who was dubbed by contemporaries *filia sanguinis*. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 1569, Catholics in the north of England rebelled, raising the old flag with the Cross and five wounds of Christ which flew in 1536 under Henry VIII. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1570, Pius V promulgated in Consistory the Bull *Regnans in excelsis*, in which he declared Queen Elizabeth I guilty of heresy and encouragement of heresy and therefore subject to excommunication, and declared that her claimed right to the English crown was forfeited: her subjects were no longer bound by an oath of allegiance and were not permitted, under pain of excommunication, to pledge obedience to her.<sup>21</sup> Pius V was criticised because this act led to a recrudescence of persecution. Possession and distribution of the Bull were considered acts of high treason. Of the many martyrs, we remember Blessed John Felton who, on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1570, was hung, drawn and quartered at St. Paul's Cathedral for publicly displaying the Excommunication Bull issued by the Pope against the Queen. Had Pius V been required

to follow the principles applied by John XXIII and Paul VI to their dealings with Communist regimes, he would have had to apply against Elizabeth I a policy which we might today define as *westpolitik*. Yet Pius V was a Pope who governed the Church supernaturally, without seeking approval from the world, and who wished to affirm the principle that it is proper to obey God rather than to obey man. Elizabeth's Neronian decrees were never applied to the letter and the persecutory legislation of the last Tudor did not achieve its objective, which was to root out the Catholic faith completely from English soil.<sup>22</sup> The Catholics had no fear: between 1580 and 1585 a new wave of persecution spread throughout England and the first missionaries from the Society of Jesus, including Saint Edmund Campion, trained in English seminaries in Rome and Douai, landed incognito on British soil.

In his Encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam* of 28<sup>th</sup> March 1937, addressed to Catholic Mexicans, Pius XI recalls that obedience can never be a supreme value. "*It is therefore natural that, when the most elementary religious and civil freedoms are under threat, Catholic*



*citizens should certainly not resign themselves to a renunciation of those freedoms. However, the assertion of these rights and freedoms may also be more or less opportune and more or less energetic, according to the circumstances.” If the powers constituted “rise up against justice and truth to the point of destruction of the very foundations of authority, it would be difficult to justify the condemnation of citizens who, through lawful and suitable means, join together to defend themselves and the Nation against persons who avail themselves of public power to bring about its ruin.”<sup>23</sup>*

Pius XI then recalls the general principles, always to be kept in mind, and no different from those of Saint Thomas, inviting Mexican Catholics to have “*the supernatural vision of life, the religious and moral education and ardent zeal to spread the kingdom of Christ which Catholic Action proposes to offer. In the face of a happy alliance of consciences which have no intention of renouncing the liberty claimed for them by Christ (Galatians 4:31), what human force or power could yoke them to sin? What dangers, what persecu-*

*tions, what trials could separate souls so strengthened by the love of Christ? (cf. Romans 8:35).’’<sup>24</sup>*

### **The Prussian example**

Our examples have to date been taken from Catholic practice and doctrine. But I would like to recall an example of resistance to unjust laws which comes to us from a world not specifically Catholic. The Countess Marion Dönhoff (1909-1992), a well-known German writer and journalist from an old Prussian family, evoked in her memoirs the anti-Nazi plot of 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944.<sup>25</sup> Many of those in Germany who dared to challenge Hitler were Prussian, predominantly senior State officials, diplomats and the military, united not by an ideology, but by a tradition of honour, cultivated for centuries by families accustomed to serve their country in war and in peace.

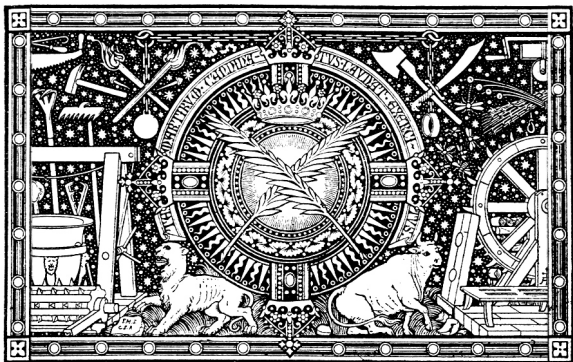
These men had not studied Saint Thomas of Aquinas, but their consciences, awareness of good and evil, the just and the unjust, led them to perceive a need to rebel against Hitler. The supreme holocaust which these opponents of Hitler had to confront, even before the loss of

their lives, was the principle of obedience which formed the keystone of their moral education. No tradition had cultivated with such strength and sincerity the principle of obedience to lawful authority as the Prussian military had done. Yet the courage to disobey unjust orders, the *Libertas obedientiae*, is also part of the Prussian tradition, whose history contains similar examples. The headstone in the Brandenburg Margraviate in memory of Johann Friedrich Adolf von der Marwitz, who refused to carry out Frederick II's order to sack the Castle of Hubertusburg, contains the following epitaph: "*He lived through heroic times in the reign of Frederick and fought every war with him. He chose disfavour where obedience did not bring honour.*"<sup>26</sup>

Honour can be forfeited by putting blind obedience to one's superiors or alignment with the mainstream trend before the interests of one's own group or movement, religious institution, family and natural and divine law, in short, putting the interests of a human reality before the principle of justice, born of conscience, the ultimate source of which is in divine law.

## **Are the faithful bound to obey the Pope in everything?**

No greater sacrifice can be asked than rebellion by someone educated to obey and serve. To love one's country and desire its defeat in the name of that love constitutes an extreme sacrifice. The fate of the conspirators on 20<sup>th</sup> July was in this sense bitter. They not only underwent trials followed by torture and barbaric death sentences, but were also misunderstood by many of their fellow countrymen, and their enemies, who cast doubt on their patriotism, although many had proved their valour and sustained wounds on all



fronts. Yet there is a crisis of conscience more acute than that encountered by the Prussian nobility in the face of Hitler. It is the crisis of conscience experienced by many Catholics in the face of unjust orders from ecclesiastical authorities, even the Pope.

Is it possible that a bishop, Episcopal conference, Council or Pope can fall into error or heresy, and expect to be followed on this path? What, in such circumstances, should the faithful do? Once again, we seek an answer from Saint Thomas.

In his various works, the *Doctor Angelicus* teaches that, where the faith is at risk, it is lawful, even proper, to resist a papal decision publicly, as did Saint Paul to Saint Peter. Indeed “*Saint Paul, who was subject to Saint Peter, publicly rebuked him because of an imminent risk of scandal in a matter of faith. And Saint Augustine commented: ‘Saint Peter also set an example so that those who governed, but on occasion strayed from the right path, should not refuse as improper a correction, even if originating from their subjects’ (Commentary on Galatians 2:14).*”<sup>27</sup>

Saint Paul’s resistance was manifested as a

public correction of Saint Peter. Saint Thomas devotes an entire question to fraternal correction in the *Summa*, explaining that it is an act of charity, superior to treatment of the sick in body or to almsgiving, “because, in it, we combat evil, which is sin, in a brother.”<sup>28</sup> Fraternal correction can also be directed by subjects to their superiors, and by the laity against prelates. “Since however a virtuous act needs to be moderated by due circumstances, it follows that when a subject corrects his superior, he ought to do so in a becoming manner, not with impudence and harshness, but with gentleness and respect.”<sup>29</sup> If there is a danger to



the faith, subjects are bound to rebuke their prelates, even publicly: “*Therefore, owing to the risk of scandal in the faith, Paul, who was in fact subject to Peter, rebuked him publicly.*”<sup>30</sup>

If Peter, Prince of the Apostles, was rebuked, cannot a successor who strays from the faith be fraternally corrected? The response of Saint Thomas is affirmative, as is that of Gratian, Prince of Canonists and author of a celebrated *Decretum* (1140), equivalent, in the field of law, to the contents of the *Summa*, in the field of theology.

The Pope, recalls Gratian, is bound by the laws of which he is custodian and cannot impose canons which run counter to the authority of the Gospels or the rulings of the Fathers. The axiom *Prima Sedes non judicabitur a quoquam*,<sup>31</sup> according to which no human authority is superior to the Pope, admits one exception: the sin of heresy. Reiterating an assertion ascribed to Saint Boniface, Bishop of Mainz, and quoted by Ivo of Chartres,<sup>32</sup> Gratian affirms that the Pope *a nemine est iudicandus, nisi deprehendatur a fide devius*.<sup>33</sup>

The Roman Pontiff has full and immediate

authority over all the faithful, and there is no authority on earth superior to him, but he cannot change the rule of the faith or the divine constitution of the Church; if this happens, “disobedience” to an order which is inherently unjust may even lead to resistance against the Supreme Pontiff.<sup>34</sup> This is a rare, but possible, circumstance, which does not violate, but confirms, the rule of devotion and obedience of every Catholic to him who is called to confirm the faith of his brothers.

Resistance may be private, but also public, and assume the form of filial or fraternal correction. The *Dictionary of Catholic Theology* affirms that fraternal correction is a precept which is not optional, but obligatory, in particular for those in positions of responsibility in the Church, because it derives from natural law and divine positive law.<sup>35</sup>

### **Spirit of resistance and love of the Church**

The Vatican II Council and what followed in the Church have raised grave problems of conscience for many of the faithful. These are problems posed even today by the Pontificate of Pope Francis.



I recall two clear examples of resistance to the ecclesiastical authority which followed the Vatican II Council and preceded the Lefebvre case. I refer to the resistance of Father Calmel to Paul IV's *Novus Ordo* Mass and that of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira to the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* in regard to the Communist regimes.<sup>36</sup>

In both cases, the attitude was filial, respectful, yet firm and uncompromising, and retains its validity today. No priest can be compelled to celebrate the new Mass and no authority can prevent a priest from celebrating the traditional Mass. No authority can impose a policy of appeasement of a regime, such as the Communist regime, yesterday Russian and today Chinese, which openly violates natural law and brutally persecutes Christians. In both these cases, as in the case of the post-Synod Exhortation *Amoris lætitia*, resistance and fraternal correction are morally lawful and proper.

In his discourse on the “*salus animarum*” as the principle of the canonical order on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000, Cardinal Julián Herranz, Chairman of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, reiterated this as the supreme regulative

principle of canonical legislation. Today a legal positivism prevails, aimed at reducing the law to a mere instrument in the hands of those who hold power, forgetting its metaphysical and moral foundation.<sup>37</sup> From this legalist standpoint, which now permeates the Church, that which the authority promulgates is always just. In reality, the *Ius divinum* is the foundation of every manifestation of the law. God is the living and eternal Law, the absolute principle of all rights.<sup>38</sup> It is for this reason that, where there is conflict between human law and divine law, “*it is proper to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).*”

Spiritual treatises teach us how to behave at times of normality, not in the exceptional times in which we are living. We recognise the supreme authority of the Pope, and his universal governance, but we know that, in the exercise of his authority, the Pope may commit abuses of authority, as has unfortunately occurred in history. We wish to obey the Pope: all Popes, including the current Pope, but if, in the teaching of any Pope, we find an (at least apparent) contradiction, our rule of judgement is natural and divine law,

expressed by the bimillenary tradition of the Church. Unfortunately, there is a spirit of rebellion in many in the Church, who rebel against its Tradition and immutable laws. They want a Church which is not that intended by Our Lord. For our part, we wish to offer our souls in an act of obedience and love for the Church and its Tradition.

Perfect Christian obedience aims to fulfil the will of God, perceived in the person of one's superior. But where there is iniquitous and unjust exercise of power, explains a Passionist theologian, "*the refusal of a command and prohibition is rightful disobedience, not rebellion against the person of the superior, but a protest against the latter's ideas, intentions and directives.*"<sup>39</sup>

According to Father Zoffoli, the worst evils of the Church do not originate from the malice of the world, from interference or persecution of the laity or from other religions, but above all from the human elements which make up the Mystical Body: the laity and the clergy. "*It is the disharmony produced by insubordination of the laity to the work of the Clergy and of the Clergy to the will of Christ.*"<sup>40</sup>

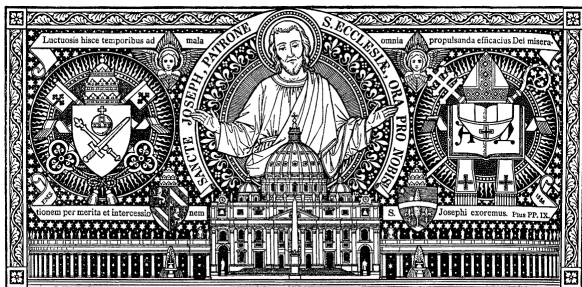
We could add that, in the insubordination of the Clergy to Christ, experienced many times in history, there is one example rarely acknowledged by history, but certainly the most serious: rebellion against the will of Christ by the Supreme Pastor of the Church. There is no other act which so leads to disorientation, the corruption of the faith and the apostasy of the faithful.

What should be done in such a case? We must seek the answer in a spirit of true obedience. A person who says the Pope should always be obeyed is frequently a person who is anarchical and disobedient in his spiritual life because he has the rule of life in himself, not in objective and absolute moral law.

We must however explain that there is a true and a false obedience. True obedience is the obedience of a person who, in obeying, is able to rise to and unite his will with that of God.

False obedience is that of a person who divinizes the man who represents authority and accepts unlawful orders from him.

We must explain that obedience has a foundation, a purpose, conditions, and limits. Only God has no limits: He is immense, infinite,



eternal. Every creature is limited, and that limit defines his essence. Therefore, neither unlimited authority, nor unlimited obedience, exists on earth. Authority is defined by its limits, and obedience is also defined by its limits. Awareness of these limits leads to perfection in the exercise of authority and perfection in the exercise of obedience. The insuperable limit of authority is respect for the divine law, and respect for the divine law is also the insuperable limit of obedience. We must be aware of the limits of obedience and respect them, in particular when these limits are not respected by the authority concerned.

To the authority which exceeds these limits, we must oppose a firm resistance, which may

become public. This is the heroism of our time, the very difficult path to sanctity today. To become saints means doing the will of God, and doing the will of God means obeying His law always, in particular when this is difficult, in particular when this places us in conflict with the law of man.

Many, in the course of history, have manifested heroic behaviour, resisting the unjust laws of the political authority. Greater still is the heroism of those who have resisted the imposition by the ecclesiastical authority of doctrines which diverge from the Tradition of the Church. This means filial, devout, respectful resistance, which does not lead to departure from the Church, but rather increases love for the Church, for God, and for His law, because God is the foundation of every authority and every act of obedience.

Fundamentally, everything is reduced to two words:

GOD ALONE

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiæ*, II-IIæ, q. 104, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, ad 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, q. 26.

<sup>4</sup> JUAN DONOSO CORTÉS, *Ensayo sobre el catolicismo, el liberalismo y el socialismo*, in *Obras completas*, edited by Carlos Valverde, S. J., BAC, Madrid 1970, p. 581.

<sup>5</sup> ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiæ*, II-IIæ, q. 104, a. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, ad 3.

<sup>7</sup> WOLFGANG WALDSTEIN, *Scritto nel cuore. Il diritto naturale come fondamento di una società umana*, Giappichelli, Turin 2014. By the same author, cf. *Teoria generale del diritto*, Pontificia Università Lateranense, Rome 2001.

<sup>8</sup> SOPHOCLES, *Antigone*, v. 458.

<sup>9</sup> ROBERT W. - ALEXANDER J. CARLYLE, *Il pensiero politico medievale*, tr. it. Laterza, Bari-Rome 1956-1968 (1903-1936), vol. I, pp. 150-151.

<sup>10</sup> H. DE BRACON, *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliæ*, Kraus Reprint, Vaduz 1964, Chapter I, 8, 5 (fol. 5b).

<sup>11</sup> R.W. - A. J. CARLYLE, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. IV, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> ROBERTO DE MATTEI, *La souveraineté nécessaire, Réflexions sur la déconstruction de l'état et ses conséquences pour la société*, François-Xavier de Guibert, Paris 2000, p. 38 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> LEO XIII, Enc. *Libertas*, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1888, in *Enchiridion delle Encicliche* (= EE), EDB, Bologna 1995, p. 449 (pp. 433-477).

<sup>15</sup> LEO XIII, Enc. *Sapientiae christianae*, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1890, in EE, p. 541 (pp. 531-575).

<sup>16</sup> LEO XIII, Letter *Officio sanctissimo* to the archbishops and bishops of Bavaria, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1887, in EE, pp. 1416-1449.

<sup>17</sup> Ivi, p. 1435.

<sup>18</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1995, nos. 73-74, in *Teachings*, XVII, 1 (1995), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome 1997, p. 809.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. REGINALDO PIZZORNI O. P., *La filosofia del diritto secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino*, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, Bologna 2003, pp. 721-768.

<sup>20</sup> ALFONS M. STICKLER, *Sacerdozio e regno nelle nuove ricerche attorno ai secoli XII e XIII nei decreti e decretalisti fino alle decretali di Gregorio IX*, in *Sacerdozio e regno da Gregorio VII a Bonifacio VIII*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome 1954, p. 15 (pp. 1-26).

<sup>21</sup> *Bullarium Romanum*, S. Franco, H. Fory and H. Dalmazzo editoribus, Augustæ Taurinorum 1857-1872, vol. VII, 810 et seq.; LUDWIG VON PASTOR, *Storia dei Papi dalla fine del Medioevo*, Desclée, Rome 1942, vol. VIII, pp. 413 et seq. JOANNES B. LO GRASSO, S. J., *Ecclesia et Status. Fontes selecti iuris publici ecclesiastici*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome 1952, pp. 250-254.

<sup>22</sup> LOUIS ANTHEUNIS, *La Législation persécutrice des catholiques sous le règne d'Elizabeth Ière d'Angleterre*, in "Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique", 4 (1955), pp. 908-909 (pp. 900-909).



<sup>23</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam*, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1937, in EE, V, p. 1225 (pp. 1206-1233).

<sup>24</sup> Ivi, p. 1227.

<sup>25</sup> MARION DÖHNOFF, *Per l'onore*, Il Minotauro, Rome 2002.

<sup>26</sup> In *Questa fu la Prussia. Testimonianze sul prussianesimo*, edited by HANS-JOACHIM SCHOEPS, Volpe, Rome 1965, p. 130.

<sup>27</sup> ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiæ*, II-II, q. 33, a. 4, ad 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*. a. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, a. 4, ad 3. Cf. *In 4 Sententiarum*, Dist. 19, q. 2, a. 2

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> GRATIAN, *Decretum*, Dist. XXI, c. 7, *Nunc autem*.

<sup>32</sup> IVO OF CHARTRES, *Decretales*, Pars V, cap. 23.

<sup>33</sup> GRATIAN, *Decretum*, Pars I, Dist. XL, c. 6.

<sup>34</sup> ARNALDO XAVIER DA SILVEIRA, *Resistenza pubblica a delle decisioni dell'autorità ecclesiastica*, in "Cristianità," 13 (September-October 1975), pp. 6-9.

<sup>35</sup> *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. III, col. 1908.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.corrispondenzaromana.it/spirito-resistenza-amore-alla-chiesa/>

<sup>37</sup> Cf. DON ARTURO CATTANEO, *Fondamenti ecclesiologici del Diritto canonico*, Marcianum Press, Venice 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Ius divinum*, edited by JUAN IGNACIO ARRIETA, Marcianum Press, Venice 2010.

<sup>39</sup> FATHER ENRICO ZOFFOLI, *Potere e obbedienza nella Chiesa*, Maurizio Minchella editore, Milan 1996, p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Ivi, p. 68.



## THE “RESISTANCE” TO THE NOVUS ORDO MASS



**D**ominican religious and Thomist theologian of great importance, director of souls, esteemed and sought throughout the whole of France, Catholic writer of a convincing logic and unambiguous clarity, Father Roger-Thomas Calmel (1914-1975) in the difficult years of the Council and the post-Council period, was characterized by his counter-revolutionary action, through his preaching, writings and above all by his example, both on a doctrinal as well as a liturgical level.

But on a particular point the resistance of this son of Saint Dominic reached heroism: the Holy Mass. The Catholic Faith is founded upon the Mass because it is in the Mass that our Redemption was wrought by Christ upon Calvary and this is perpetuated in the holy Sacrifice offered day after day. 1969 was the fateful year of the liturgical revolution, prepared for at length and finally imposed with authority upon a people who neither asked for nor desired it.

The birth of the new Mass was not peaceful. Against the hymns of victory of the *novatores*, there were the voices of those who did not want to trample upon the past – of almost two millennia – of a Mass which dated back to the apostolic tradition. This opposition was sustained by two Cardinals of the Curia (Ottaviani and Bacci) but remained completely unheeded.

The date upon which the new *Ordo Missæ* became effective was fixed for 30<sup>th</sup> November, the first Sunday of Advent, and the opposition was not going to be placated. Paul VI himself, in two general audiences (19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 1969), intervened, presenting the new rite of the Mass as the will of the Council and as a help to Christian piety.

On 26<sup>th</sup> November he said: “*The New rite of the Mass: it is a change in a venerable tradition that has gone on for centuries. This is something that affects our hereditary religious patrimony, which seemed to enjoy the privilege of being untouchable and settled. It seemed to bring the prayer of our forefathers and our Saints to our lips and to give us the comfort of feeling faithful to our spiritual past, which we*

*kept alive to pass it on to the generations ahead. It is at such a moment as this that we get a better understanding of the value of historical tradition and the communion of the Saints. This change will affect the ceremonies of the Mass. We shall become aware, perhaps with some feeling of annoyance, that the ceremonies at the altar are no longer being carried out with the same words and gestures to which we were accustomed – perhaps so much accustomed that we no longer took any notice of them. This change also touches the Faithful. It is intended to interest each one of those present, to draw them out of their customary personal devotions or their usual torpor (...).”* And he continued by saying that it was necessary to understand the positive meaning of the reforms and to make of the Mass “*a school of spiritual depth and a peaceful but demanding school of Christian sociology.*”

*“We shall do well – he said in the same audience – to take into account the motives for this grave change. The first is obedience to the Council. That obedience now implies obedience to the Bishops, who interpret the Council’s prescriptions and put them into*



*practice (...).*” In order to repress the opposition to the Pope, there remained nothing but the argument of authority. And it is upon this argument that the whole game of the liturgical revolution was played.

Father Calmel, who by his articles was an assiduous collaborator of the magazine *Itinéraires*, had already faced the subject of obedience, which had become, after the Council, the main argument of the *novatores*. But he affirmed that it is precisely in virtue of obedience that it is necessary to refuse every compromise with the liturgical revolution: “*We are not treating here of causing a schism, but of conserving the tradition.*” With Aristotelian logic, he noted: “*The infallibility of the Pope is limited; therefore our obedience is limited,*” indicating the principle of the subordination of obedience to the truth, of authority to the tradition. The history of the Church has cases of

Saints who were opposed to the authority of Popes who were not saints. We call to mind Saint Athanasius who was excommunicated by Pope Liberius and Saint Thomas Becket, suspended by Pope Alexander III. And above all we think of Saint Joan of Arc.

On 27<sup>th</sup> November 1969, three days before the fateful day on which the *Novus Ordo Missæ* came into effect, Father Calmel expressed his refusal with a declaration of exceptional importance, made public in the magazine *Itinéraires*. The first and last, as far as we know, of such clarity and most praiseworthy courage.

In the face of a text of such importance, and the taking up of a position which is so categorical, all the friends and supporters of Father Calmel trembled, awaiting the toughest sanctions from Rome. All, except for him, the son of Saint Dominic, who continued to repeat: “Rome will do nothing, it will do nothing (...).”

And in fact Rome did nothing. The sanctions did not arrive. Rome remained silent before this Dominican friar who did not fear anything but the supreme Judge to Whom he would have to give an account of his priesthood.

Other priests, thanks to the declaration of Father Calmel, had the courage to come out into the open and to resist the abuses of power of an unjust and illegal law. Against those who recommended blind obedience to the authorities, he showed the duty of the insurrection. “The whole conduct of Saint Joan of Arc showed that she had thought in this way: *For certain, it is God Who permits it; but what God wants, at least whilst an army remains to me, is Christian justice and that I fight a good battle.* Then she was burned (...). To abandon ourselves to the grace of God does not mean to do nothing. Instead it means, remaining in love, to do all that is within our power (...). He who has not meditated upon the just insurrections of history, such as the war of the Maccabees, the riding into battle of Saint Joan of Arc, the expeditions of John of Austria, the revolt of Budapest, to him who has not entered into sympathy with the noble resistances of history (...). I refuse the right to speak of Christian abandonment (...) abandonment does not consist in saying: *God does not want the crusade, let the Moors go free.* This is the voice of laziness.”



We cannot confuse supernatural abandonment with a servile obedience. “*The dilemma which is placed before all – Father Calmel points out – is not to choose between obedience and the faith, but between the obedience of the faith and the collaboration in the destruction of the faith.*” We are all invited to do “*within the limits which the revolution places upon us, the maximum possible to live the tradition with intelligence and fervour. Watch and pray.*”

Father Calmel had understood perfectly that the form of violence exercised in the “post-conciliar Church” is *an abuse of authority*, exercised by demanding unconditional obedience, before which the clergy and many laypersons submit themselves, without attempting any form of resistance. “*This absence of reaction – said Louis Salleron – seems to me to be tragic, because God will not save Christians without themselves, nor His Church without Her.*”

“*Modernism makes its victims walk under the banner of obedience – writes Father Calmel –, placing under the suspicion of pride any criticism whatsoever of the reforms, in the name of the respect which one*

*owes to the pope, in the name of missionary zeal, of charity and of unity."*

With regard to the problem of obedience in liturgical matters, Father Calmel stated: *"The question of the new rites consists in the fact that they are ambivalent: therefore, they do not express in an explicit manner the intention of Christ and of the Church. The proof is in the fact that also the heretics use it with a tranquil conscience, whilst they reject and have always rejected the Missal of Saint Pius V."* *"It is necessary to be either stupid or fearful (or both of these at the same time) to consider oneself bound in conscience by liturgical laws which change more often than the ladies' fashions and which are even more uncertain."*

In 1974 at a conference he said: *"The Mass belongs to the Church. The new Mass belongs only to modernism. I hold to the Mass which is Catholic, traditional, Gregorian, because it does not belong to Modernism (...). Modernism is a virus. It is contagious, and one must flee from it. The witness is complete. If I give witness to the Catholic Mass, it is necessary that I abstain from celebrating any other Mass. It*

*is like the burnt incense before the idols: either one grain or nothing. Therefore, nothing.”*

Notwithstanding the open resistance of Father Calmel against the liturgical innovations, no sanction whatsoever arrived from Rome. The logic of the Dominican father is too forceful, his doctrine too orthodox, his love for the Church and for the perennial tradition too sincere, for him to be attacked. Nobody did anything against him because it was not possible. Then they wrapped the case up in the most conspiratorial silence, to the point that Father Calmel – known, in part, to the traditional French world – is almost unknown to the rest of the Catholic world.

In 1975, Father Calmel died prematurely, crowning his desire of faithfulness and resistance. In his Declaration of 1969 he asked the Most Holy Virgin that he may “*remain faithful to death to the Catholic Mass*, true and without ambiguity.” The Mother of God granted the desire of this beloved son who died without ever having celebrated the new Mass, in order to remain faithful to the supreme Judge to Whom he would have to give an account of his priesthood.

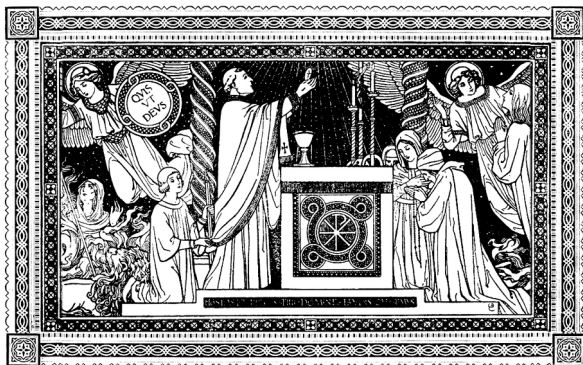


# DECLARATION AGAINST THE NOVUS ORDO MASS



*On 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1969, three days before the fateful date on which the Novus Ordo Missæ came into effect, Father Roger-Thomas Calmel expressed his refusal with the following declaration, as decisive and important today as it was then.*

I hold fast to the Traditional Mass, the one which was not fabricated but codified by Saint Pius V in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in conformity with a custom many centuries old. I therefore refuse the *Ordo Missæ* of Paul VI.



Why? Because in reality this *Ordo Missæ* does not exist. What does exist is a universal and permanent liturgical Revolution, adopted or intended by the present pope, and which has momentarily donned the mask of the *Ordo Missæ* of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1969. It is within the right of every priest to refuse to wear the mask of that liturgical Revolution. I consider it my duty as a priest to refuse to celebrate Mass in an equivocal rite.

This new rite fosters confusion between the Catholic Mass and the Protestant ‘*Lord’s Supper*’ – as two cardinals have stated in as many words, and as solid theological analyses have proven; if we accept it, we will quickly fall from a Mass which can be used both by Catholic and Protestants (as a Protestant minister has actually attested) to a Mass which is blatantly heretical and therefore null. Launched by the pope and then abandoned to the national churches, the liturgical reform will simply follow its infernal logic. How can we consent to be party to such a process?

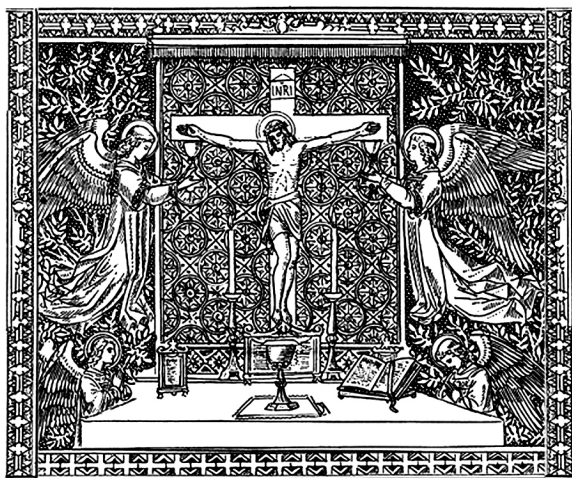
You are going to ask me: do you realize what you are risking, by taking this stand for the Mass of All Time? Indeed I do. I risk, so

to speak, to persevere in the path of fidelity to my priesthood, and therefore rendering the humble witness of my priestly office to the Sovereign High Priest, who is our Supreme Judge. I also risk reassuring the faithful, whose world has been turned upside down and who are being tempted to skepticism or despair. Indeed, every priest who holds fast to the rite of Mass codified by Saint Pius V, the great Dominican pope of the Counter-Reformation, allows the faithful to participate in the Holy Sacrifice *without the least ambiguity*; to receive in Holy Communion, *without danger of being deceived*, the Word of God incarnate and immolated, made really present under the holy species. On the other hand, the priest who yields to the new rite, pasted together by Paul VI, collaborates in the gradual establish-



ment of a *counterfeit* Mass which will have been transformed into an empty memorial with no longer a True Presence of Christ. By this very fact, the Sacrifice of the Cross will no longer be really and sacramentally offered to God; communion will no longer be anything but a religious meal where a little bread is eaten and a little wine is drunk: nothing other than what the Protestants have.

What temporal hardships and what difficulties in this world may one expect, if one does





not agree to collaborate in the revolutionary establishment of an equivocal Mass, oriented toward the very destruction of the Mass? The Lord knows, whose grace suffices. Truly, the grace of the Heart of Jesus will always suffice, and it comes to us through the Holy Sacrifice and by the sacraments. That is why the Lord tells us with such tranquillity, “*he who loses his life in this world for My sake will live eternally.*”

I recognize the authority of the Holy Father, without hesitation. I affirm nonetheless that it is possible for any pope to abuse his authority. I maintain that Pope Paul VI commits an exceptionally grave abuse of authority in building a new rite of Mass on a definition of the Mass which is no longer Catholic. He writes in his *Ordo Missæ* that “*The Mass is the sacred assembly or congregation of the people of God gathering together, with a priest presiding, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord.*” This insidious definition deliberately omits what makes the Catholic Mass Catholic, and forever irreducible to the Protestant ‘Lord’s Supper.’

For the Catholic Mass is not just any memorial; it is a memorial which really contains

the Sacrifice of the Cross, because the body and the blood of Christ are made really present by virtue of the double consecration. The rite codified by Saint Pius V permits of no misunderstanding on this point, but the rite invented by Paul VI leaves the question floating and equivocal.

Likewise, in the Catholic Mass, the priest does not preside in just any manner; he is marked with a divine character which sets him apart for all eternity and thus he acts as the minister of Christ, who performs the Mass through him; he could never be likened to a Protestant minister, who is delegated by the faithful to ensure the good order of the assembly. This, which is obvious in the rite of Mass established by Saint Pius V, is obscured if not suppressed entirely in the new rite.

Simple integrity, therefore, and the honour of the priesthood infinitely more, demand that I not have the impudence to tamper with the Catholic Mass, received on the day of my ordination. Since it is a question of honesty, and especially in such a matter of divine gravity, there is no authority in the world which may stop me, be it the authority of a Pope.

Moreover, the primary proof of fidelity and love which the priest must give to God and men is to maintain intact the infinitely precious deposit which was confided to him when the bishop imposed his hands upon him. It is first on this proof of fidelity and love that I will be judged by the Supreme Judge.

I wait with entire confidence on the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Sovereign High Priest, that she may obtain for me the grace to remain faithful until death to the Catholic Mass, *true and unequivocal. Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac – I am yours, save me.*

*Father Roger-Thomas Calmel, O. P.*





## OUR RESISTANCE



**I**n the constitution *Pastor Æternus*, promulgated in 1870 by the First Vatican Council, we read: “*The Holy Ghost was promised to the successors of Saint Peter not that they might make known new doctrine by His revelation, but rather that with His assistance they might religiously guard and faithfully explain the revelation or deposit of faith that was handed down from the apostles.*” Now, any authority which would claim to free itself from its precisely determined duty, would, as Father Calmel once wrote, “*by that very fact oblige its subjects to not obey.*”

Hence arises the duty of resistance. It is a painful resistance, since it in some sense runs contrary to the order of things established by God for His Church, but it is a necessary one.

This resistance flows from the very nature of the Church, which is “the Mystical Body of Christ, His holy Spouse, a society that lives by a theological life and with a sense of honour of

which the Saints have left us the example; it is a hierarchical society of grace which requires from us an heroic charity, lived out in that true obedience which is very different from conformism. It is the Church's understanding of the mystery of transcendence that allows obedient souls, respectfully but firmly to refuse to comply with the hierarchy's decrees when they clearly conflict with the safe path of tradition."

But for this resistance to be authentically Catholic, it must be imbued with faith and charity. "We cannot doubt even for a moment that the Lord asks us to persevere in resistance to neo-modernism (...). Resistance is a clear duty, as also is perseverance in the Faith (...). Now, just as He asks us to bear witness to the Truth, so also the Lord asks us and, in a way, even implores us to grow in love and prayer.

The Lord clearly wishes to give Himself to our souls more and more, and this union with the Lord, growing ever purer, is more important than fighting against all the tactics of *progressivism*." Our union with Him must not, of course, be something isolated from this resistance; rather, it must direct our resistance,

must infuse it with its own gracious spirit, and so keep it in peace (...). We will not pursue our fight in a suffocating atmosphere. The peace of the champions of the Faith will be our inheritance.”

The first weapon of the counterrevolution, then, is an ardent and generous supernatural life. “Our resistance will be much more effective when we direct it against the stronghold of the enemy, the hidden breeding ground where the infection develops, namely, the distortion of all that is supernatural.”

It is necessary therefore to restore a life of deep theological virtue as the basis on which our resistance is built. “Today as always, it is love which will produce holiness. And in the days that are coming, when the faith will be generally obscured or denied, the first effect of love will be perseverance in the Faith. This will mean not only conforming one’s life to the Faith through love, but also guarding the Faith through love. To guard the Faith, when the hierarchy lets it be hidden and lost; to stand firm in the Faith, in a danger of this kind; these things are impossible without a great simplicity of heart. For if one

lets oneself be attracted by the glory which comes from men, or if one is afraid or weak in the face of the evils inflicted by men, one will become a traitor without fully realizing it, justifying oneself with the false reassurances which come from the wisdom of this world.”

This is why “the greatest temptation today, especially for priests and religious, is to avoid the fight, and to keep the peace.” This problem arises when the defense of the Truth, and hence resistance to modernist innovations, is held to be incompatible with the interior life. In reality, the very pre-condition of the interior life, as also of the religious life, is *to refuse every compromise*. “The martyrs of the first centuries, as well as bishops like Athanasius, Chrysostom or Hilary, did not escape prison: they accepted it like contemplatives.” “The great apostasy will spread itself throughout the whole world, not only through the manoeuvres of some servant of Satan’s, perfectly aware of the role which he assumes and of the gravity of what is at stake, but also through *the complicit docility of Christians, and above-all of deluded clergy*.”



Indeed, “*combat is a requirement of love*, and needs to carry the countersigns. The new commandment of perfect charity needs to be practiced in wartime. We must unite ardor and the wounds of battle with deep peace of soul.” “Keep yourself close to God, for even though we must enter combat and must fight, defending ourselves and sometimes separating ourselves from others, this must be done with a heart united to God, without growing hard (...). It is necessary to combat with the arms of light.”

It is certainly natural to ask why the Lord allows these days of danger and scandal and apostasy. “It is in order that the Church will respond to her Spouse with perfect love (...). The trial is sent or prolonged to allow us to give more love.” Hence “it is a grace to live in these times of trial. We will have the grace to suffer and to resist without making them into a tragedy.” It is necessary to unite contemplative peace to a tireless combativeness and to endure the tribulations of the Church in the light of her victory and of the help which she infallibly receives. Saint Augustine says that if God permits evil, it is to bring a

greater good out of it. The present crisis, therefore, is a call to sanctification and allows no room for lukewarmness or a worldly spirit. So we “must not only persevere in the Faith (keeping Tradition), but at the same time sanctify ourselves in this resistance,” like the martyrs who were “inflexible in the witness given to the Faith,” but who were also “full of prayer.” These evil days in which we must live are a providential invitation to greater



love, and to a deeper practice of the theological virtues.

Finally, we should remember that “we are the true Church, which is being tested, as it has always been (...) but a Church which is sure of winning as it has always done (...). But as always, the Church will win not because we remain inactive or cowardly, as if the Holy Ghost dispensed us from everything and did everything Himself, but because the Holy Ghost, far from excusing us, will cause us to cooperate with Him, and will make us into warrior-saints for His Church Militant.”

“In the midst of the modernist revolution, we must be witnesses to the Faith, as were our brethren, the Martyrs of the first centuries, in a full-scale violent persecution. They showed themselves to be not only strong and courageous, but also gentle and patient, since their souls were aglow with charity. May the love of God, a love which proves itself in action and which seeks to grow ever greater, be at the heart of the witness that we give.”

\* Quotes taken from: J. D. Fabre, *Le Père Roger-Thomas Calmel*, Clovis 2012.



## THE “RESISTANCE” TO THE VATICAN OSTPOLITIK



The Vatican *Ostpolitik* had numerous critics all over the world, beginning with those who should have been its beneficiaries and who stated that they were rather its victims: the Christians of Eastern Europe. However, the most significant demonstration of public dissent among Catholics was, without a doubt, the historic declaration of resistance published in 1974 in 21 daily papers of various countries by the TFPs then in existence in Europe and the rest of the world. The author and first signatory of the historical declaration was Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908-1995), Brazilian thinker and man of action.

In 1972 “détente” had received a considerable impulse from Nixon’s journeys to China and Russia. The aim of the policy developed by the American president and his secretary of state Kissinger was identical on a global scale to the policy that Willy Brandt, the German Socialist Chancellor, was developing on a European scale: the idea of a “convergence”

between the Western and Communist blocs. The sole result of this policy of collaboration, based on the privileged Washington-Moscow axis, was to postpone for twenty years, thanks to economic aid, the inevitable crumbling of the Communist empire, while Soviet aggression continued to increase in proportion to the assistance received from the West.

In the ecclesiastical field, Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, “minister of Foreign Affairs” of Paul VI, followed a policy of *entente* with Communism similar to that of Brandt and Kissinger. One of the most illustrious victims of Vatican *Ostpolitik* was Cardinal Mindszenty, primate of Hungary and hero of anti-Communist resistance who, in 1974, was removed by Paul VI from the archdiocese of Esztergom and exiled to Rome, to facilitate the approaches between the Holy See and the Hungarian Communist government.

*“In the midst of the general devastation – wrote Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira – Cardinal Mindszenty has arisen as the great non-conformist, and the champion of the great international cause. By his unshakable refusal he has saved the honour of the Church and of the*

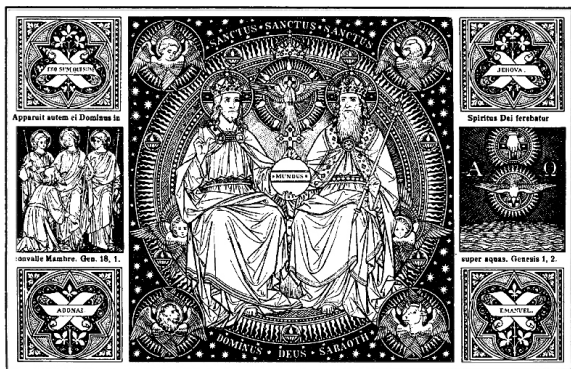


*human race. By his example, enhanced by the prestige of the Roman purple that he wears on his robust shoulders, and acting as a brave and self-denying pastor, he has shown Catholics that it is not lawful for them to go along with the multitudes who bend their knee to Belial” (Folha de S. Paulo, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1974).*

A few days later, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1974 a lengthy declaration of the Brazilian TFP appeared as an advertisement in the *Folha de S. Paulo*. It was entitled: *The Vatican policy of détente towards the Communist governments: should the TFP retract or resist?*

That same year, on the occasion of a journey to Cuba, Archbishop Casaroli had af-

firmed that “the Catholics who live in Cuba are happy under the Socialist regime” and that “the Catholics and, in general, the Cuban people, haven’t the least difficulty with the Socialist government” (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1974). This episode is recalled in the declaration of the TFP, along with two others that are no less significant: the journey to Russia in 1971 of Mgr. Willebrands, president of the Secretariat for the Union of Christians, to meet the “Orthodox” bishop Pimen, a man trusted by the Kremlin; and the support of Cardinal Silva Henríquez, archbishop of Santiago of Chile, for the Marxist leader Salvador Allende.





Faced with these facts, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira responded with respectful but strong words, in the name of the TFP: *“We cannot give up the fight. We cannot give it up because of a duty of our Catholic conscience. For if it is a duty of every Catholic to promote good and fight evil, our conscience imposes on us the responsibility of propagating the traditional doctrine of the Church, and of fighting Communist doctrine”* (Folha de S. Paulo, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1974).

Obedience to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, imposed on us by the catechism and by our faith itself, is not unconditional. It has limits, as all theologians affirm. The *Dictionary of Moral Theology* edited by Cardinals Roberti and Palazzini explains: *“It is clear that it is never lawful to obey a Superior who commands something that is contrary to divine or ecclesiastical laws; in that case the words of Saint Peter should be repeated: we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).”*

This legitimate “disobedience” in matters of faith and morals to an order unjust in itself can be extended, in particular cases, even as far as public resistance to the ecclesiastical

authorities. Arnaldo V. Xavier da Silveira, in a study dedicated to public resistance to decisions by ecclesiastical authority (*Résistance publique à des décisions de l'autorité ecclésiastique*, in *La nouvelle Messe de Paul VI: qu'en penser?*, Diffusion de la Pensée Française, Chiré-en-Montreuil 1975, pp. 319-334) proved it well, offering examples of saints, doctors of the Church and illustrious theologians and canonists that demonstrate how – in the case of “*imminent danger for the faith*” (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 33, 4, 2) or of “*the aggression of souls*” (Saint Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II, 29) in the doctrinal field – it is legitimate for the faithful to exercise a right of even public resistance to the ecclesiastical authorities.

Hence the lawfulness of a position of *resistance*: “*This resistance is not separation, it is not revolt, it is not harshness, it is not irreverence. On the contrary, it is fidelity, it is union, it is love, it is submission*” (Folha de S. Paulo, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1974). Referring to the position of Saint Paul towards Saint Peter when Saint Paul “*opposed him to his face*”



(*Galatians* 2:11), Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira wrote: “*In the sense in which St. Paul resisted, our state is one of resistance*” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 31<sup>st</sup> April 1974). This position of resistance was expressed publicly by all the Associations for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property then in existence in America and Europe, as well as by other, sister associations.

Twenty years after the Council, the *Instruction on some aspects of “liberation theology,”* promulgated by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which defined Marxism as *a shame of our time*, seemed to prove the validity of the position of “resistance” to the *Ostpolitik* of the TFP and of the anti-Communist Catholics of the whole world.



## DECLARATION AGAINST COMMUNISM

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*On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1974, after Cardinal Casaroli's visit to Cuba – which was a new link in a chain of events which unfolded over many years – Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder of the TFP, in San Paolo (Brazil), wrote the following declaration of resistance to the Vatican policy, which was evidently pro-Communist and therefore anti-Catholic.*

(...) The Vatican policy of *détente* with Communist governments creates a profoundly difficult situation for anti-Communist Catholics, much more as Catholics than as anti-Communists. For at any moment they can face a supremely embarrassing objection: Doesn't their anti-Communist position lead them to a goal directly opposed to the one being sought by the Vicar of Christ? And how can one consider a Catholic to be consistent if he goes in a direction contrary to the one taken by the Pastor of Pastors? This question leads all anti-Communist Catholics to an alternative, either they must give up the struggle or else explain their position.

We cannot give up the fight. Our conscience as Catholics will not permit it. Since it is the duty of every Catholic to promote good and combat evil, our conscience calls us to propagate the traditional doctrine of the Church and to fight Communist doctrine.

Today, the words “freedom of conscience” echo throughout the West and even in the dungeons of Russia (...) and Cuba. This familiar expression is often used in illegitimate ways. But in its more legitimate and sacred sense, it affirms the right of a Catholic to act according to the dictates of his conscience in religious as well as civil life.

We would feel ourselves to be more imprisoned inside the Church than Solzhenitsyn was in Soviet Russia, if we could not act in accordance with the documents of the great Pontiffs who enlightened Christendom with their doctrine.

The Church is not, the Church never was, and the Church never will be a prison for consciences. We are bound by a bond of obedience to the successor of Peter, which we will never break, which we love in the depths of our soul, and on which we bestow our greatest



love, and we kiss this bond at the very moment at which, overwhelmed with sorrow, we now affirm our position. And on our knees, looking with veneration toward the person of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, we express all our fidelity to him.

***In this filial act, we say to the Pastor of Pastors: Our soul is yours, our life is yours. Order us to do whatever you wish. Only do not order us to do nothing in the face of the assailing Red wolf. To this, our conscience is opposed.***

### **The Solution Given by the Apostle Saint Paul**

Yes, Holy Father, Saint Peter teaches us that it is necessary “to obey God rather than

men” (*Acts* 5:29). You are assisted by the Holy Ghost and supported – under the conditions defined by Vatican I – by the privilege of infallibility. But this does not mean that in certain matters or circumstances the weakness to which all men are subject cannot influence and even determine your conduct. One of these fields where your action is subject to error – perhaps *par excellence* – is diplomacy.

And this is precisely where your policy of *détente* with the communist governments is situated.

What, then, should we do? The limits of this declaration do not permit us to list all the





Church Fathers, Doctors, moralists, and canonists – many of them raised to the honours of the altar – who have affirmed **the legitimacy of resistance**. This kind of resistance is not separation, it is not revolt, it is not acrimony, it is not irreverence. On the contrary, it is fidelity, it is union, it is love, it is submission.

### **Resistance**

“Resistance” is the word we choose purposely, for it is employed in the Acts of the Apostles by the Holy Ghost Himself to characterize the attitude of Saint Paul toward Saint Peter, the first Pope, who had taken disciplinary measures maintaining in Catholic worship some practices from the old Synagogue. Saint Paul saw in this a grave risk of doctrinal confusion and harm for the faithful. He then stood up against Saint Peter and “opposed him to his face” (*“in faciem ei restiti,” Galatians 2:11*). Saint Peter did not see this zealous and inspired action of the Apostle of the Gentiles as an act of rebellion, but rather one of union and fraternal love. Knowing well in what he was infallible and in what he was not, Saint Peter submitted to the arguments of Saint Paul. The

Saints are models for Catholics. Accordingly, in the sense in which Saint Paul resisted, we also offer a resistance.

And so doing, our conscience is at peace.

To resist means that we will advise Catholics to continue to struggle against Communist doctrine by every lawful means in the defence of their threatened countries and of Christian civilization.

To resist means that we will never use the unworthy resources of sedition nor, much less, take attitudes inconsistent with the veneration and obedience due to the Supreme Pontiff according to the terms of Canon Law (...).

## **Conclusion**

This explanation was imperative. It is a legitimate self-defence of our Catholic consciences regarding a diplomatic policy that was becoming unbearable, placing as it does anti-Communist Catholics in a most difficult situation; for their position was becoming incomprehensible to the world at large. We emphasize this, by way of conclusion, at the close of this statement.

No conclusion, however, would be com-

plete without reaffirming our unrestricted and loving obedience not only to Holy Church but also to the Pope, in the full terms prescribed by Catholic doctrine.

May Our Lady of Fatima help us on this path that we must tread in fidelity to her message, having already by anticipation a joy in the knowledge that the promise She made will be fulfilled: “Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

*Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*





## EXAMPLES TAKEN FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

**Saint John the Apostle**, this man so marvellous in charity, was inflexible against the heresy that destroys charity in its own source, by spoiling the faith. From him the Church has received the teaching to flee heresy like the plague: *Do not even address him with a greeting*, says the friend of Christ in his second Epistle, *because he who greets him participates in his works of malice*. One day, when he entered a public bath, he realized that the heresiarch Cerinthus was also there, and he left immediately as if it were a cursed place. Cerinthus's disciples tried to put poison into a glass he used, but when the holy Apostle made the sign of the cross over the drink, a snake came out, showing the malice of the sectarians and the sanctity of the disciple of Christ. This apostolic firmness guarding the deposit of faith made him the terror of the heretics of Asia, and thus justified the prophetic name of *Son of Thunder* that the Saviour had given him, as he had also given to his brother James the Greater, the Apostle of Spain (Dom Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year*).

**Saint Augustine:** “By dint of seeing everything, we finish by putting up with everything, and *allowing everything*.”

**Saint Hilary:** “The time has come to speak, the time of silence has passed. *Silence* would no longer be called moderation, nor submission, but *cowardice*.” “I prefer to die in this world, rather than let the virginal purity of *Truth* be corrupted by a man.” “The ears of the Christian people are purer than those of the *bishops*.” “I bind myself to the name of God and to the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, rejecting all covenants with adversaries and all fellowship with the infidels: a fellowship that would have allowed me, like others, to have only the deceptive name of bishop.”

**Saint Athanasius:** He told the Christians who suffered under the Arians: “May God comfort you! What is sad is the fact that the others have occupied the churches with violence, while in this period you find yourself outside. It is a fact that they have the seat, but you have the apostolic faith. They can occupy our churches, but they are outside of the true faith. You remain outside the places of worship, but

faith lives in you. Let's see: what's more important, the place or the faith? True faith, of course. Who has lost and who has won in this fight: the one who keeps the seat or who observes the faith? (...). You are the ones who are happy, you who remain within the Church for your faith (...). They are those who have broken away from it in the current crisis. No one will ever prevail against your faith, dear brothers, and we believe that God will give us back our churches one day. The more violently they try to occupy the places of worship, the more they separate from the Church. They claim to represent the Church, but in reality they are those who are expelled from it and go astray. Even if Catholics who are faithful to tradition are reduced to a handful, it is they who are the true Church of Jesus Christ."

**Saint Gregory the Great:** "He who submits to evil by *obedience* is closer to rebellion than to submission."

**Saint Vincent of Lerino:** "If Peter, if Paul, if John, if the whole choir of the Apostles would evangelize us differently from how we were evangelized, they would be anathemas."

**Bishop Robert Grossatesta:** “No faithful subject of the Holy See, no man who is not cut away by schism from the Body of Christ and the same Holy See, can submit to mandates, precepts, or any other demonstrations of this kind (ecclesiastical benefices given in an arbitrary manner, *translator’s note*), no, not even if the authors were the most high body of angels. He must needs repudiate them and rebel against them with all his strength. Because of the obedience by which I am bound, and of my love of my union with the Holy See in the Body of Christ, *as an obedient son I disobey, I contradict, I rebel*. You cannot take action against me, for my every word and act is not rebellion but the filial honour due by God’s command to father and mother. As I have said, the Apostolic See in its holiness cannot destroy, it can only build. This is what the plenitude of power means; it can do all things to edification.”

**Saint Catherine of Siena:** “By force of silence humanity is rotten.” “Holy Father, those who obey you are lost in disorder and iniquity.”



**Saint Thomas More:** “If I have all bishops against me, I have all Saints and all Doctors of the Church with me.” “For there is no born Turk so cruel to Christian folk as is the false Christian that falleth from the faith – we shall stand in peril, if we persevere in the truth, to be more hardly handled and die a more cruel death by our own countrymen at home, than if we were taken hence and carried into Turkey.”

**Saint John Fisher:** “I could well be accused of singularity if I alone – as you say – resisted on this subject (the defence of moral law, *translator’s note*). But I have on my side all Catholics and bishops of the world from the Ascension of Christ until today, united with the consent of the whole Catholic Church. No doubt that my position is much safer.”

**Saint Robert Bellarmine:** “If the Pope disturbs the State and, even more, if he is prejudicial to the Church, it is allowed to resist him, not doing what he commands and preventing his will to triumph.”

**Mgr. C. E. Freppel:** “Dogs bark for their masters and you do not want us to do it for

Christ. They understand nothing of these virtuous indignations, only those who do not believe that the *truth* is the greatest good of this world, *the supreme interest* before which *all human respect* must be given up.”

**Dom Prosper Gueranger:** “Normally, without a doubt, the doctrine descends from the bishops to the faithful people, and the subjects in the order of faith do not have to judge their leaders. But when the shepherd turns into a wolf, it is up to the flock to defend itself first (...). In the treasure of Revelation there are essential points, of which every Christian, for the sole fact of being a Christian, has the necessary knowledge and the obligatory protection (...). True faithful are those men who, in such situations (the possible betrayals of the hierarchs, *translator’s note*) draw the inspiration of a line of conduct in baptism alone; not the pusillanimous who, under the specious pretext of submission to established power, await, to attack the enemy or oppose his exploits, a programme which is not necessary and which should not be given to them.”

**Cardinal John Henry Newman:** “At the time of Arianism, the faithfulness of the laity has saved the Church.”

**Cardinal József Mindszenty:** “Truth remains truth, even if it loses its voice (...). The lie remains a lie even if millions of people profess it and impose it.”

**Vatican I:** “If the Pope, as a private person, encourages heresy, the Apostolic See would be vacant, and then we must not innovate anything, but stick to what has been handed down (*nihil innovetur sed traditum teneatur*).”

**Leo XIII:** “The worst kind of heretic is one who, teaching for the most part true Catholic doctrine, adds a word of heresy, like a drop of poison in a glass of water.”

**Cardinal Charles Journet:** “As for the axiom ‘Where is the Pope, there is the Church,’ it is valid when the pope acts as pope and head of the Church; in the opposite case neither the Church is in him nor he is in the Church.”



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*Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel*



“But when Cephas  
came to Antioch  
I opposed him to his face  
because he stood condemned.”

*Galatians 2:11*

NOT FOR SALE