

The Paulus Institute

for the Propagation of Sacred Liturgy

Washington, DC, Cosmos Club, October 20, 2016

His Excellency Bishop Athanasius Schneider

“Mary’s Victory Over All Heresies”

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Since the discussion is about heresy, one heretic who comes to mind is Martin Luther. On an airplane, the pope recently said that Martin Luther did not err on the issue of justification. What is your response on the Lutheran heresy on the issue of justification and the upcoming ecumenical council and events and to a traditional Catholic’s response to the reports that are coming out?

His Excellency: We have already had an infallible response to the errors of Martin Luther: the Council of Trent. The teachings of the Council of Trent about the errors of Martin Luther, I repeat, are infallible, *ex cathedra*, and the comments of the pope in the plane and not *ex cathedra*.

2. Your Excellency, you used the word “dialogue” earlier. I had an epiphany a couple years ago when I realized there is a Hegelian dialectic, a thesis and antithesis, that maps up perfectly with defending the doctrine of the Church and becoming pastoral. The pastoralism lines up perfectly with the antithesis of the Church, which reduces everything to meaninglessness. So if we hear somebody support in the Vatican or in the USCCB the problem of homosexuality, we will hear another statement made coming from the opposite side that makes a defense of that position totally impossible, with the certainty that the first group of people that attack you will be the bishops. So when I hear the word “dialogue” in any interfaith discussion, I automatically jump to the conclusion, that turns out to be 100% accurate, that will be what’s being done in the name of pastoralism, which is the antithesis to the doctrine. This whole thing seems to be about the planned implosion of the Church where the first group of people look at are people on the outside.

His Excellency: We could witness in the past fifty years, more or less, the method of the so-called “dialogue.” We could observe that it was not bearing fruits, but mostly confusion about our Catholic faith, about the gospel, and weakening our commitment to preach the gospel, to preach the truth, to teach all nations—all nations—even the truth, all nations what Christ said, and they have to *obey* the commandments of Christ. This is, you can read, in the gospel of Matthew. And so did the Church. And so, I think we have to correct this. We cannot continue in such an ambiguous manner [for the recovery] of dialogue. Dialogue is possible in daily life; we have to speak to one another. But when I speak with a person who is in error, it is also a dialogue. When I have a true love, I will help the person who is in error to come out of the error. Of course, I will do this with respect, with love, but with clarity. We have to be witness, always, of the truth, and to [state] this. This work of dialogue should be corrected.

3. (Question unavailable)

His Excellency: The pretext of so-called charity to help a neighbor with a completely and earthly agenda, this is naturalism. This is not Christianity any more. We have the first task to teach the truth, to transmit the grace of God, the supernatural life, for eternity. We are not born and created for this earth. Recently, there is on the internet a good initiative of a text with the title, “Declaration of Fidelity” on the website Filial Appeal. [“You’re all invited to sign.”] Yes, please. I would encourage you, but I was in some way a collaborator with this text. So, we made a statement, a witness. The first signatures were a group of eighty persons, three cardinals, three bishops, I am one of them, the pastoral administrator of Afghanistan, a general superior, several priests, and lay people all over the

world. It was very beautiful to have this *una voce*, one voice. This is our answer. Declaration of fidelity to the unchanging truth of the Church concerning marriage. Unchanging truth. Each thesis in this declaration states, we firmly reiterate, or we firmly maintain the truth, that, and so forth, we sent this. In my opinion, this is our possible answer, to be faithful.

4. One of the things you spoke a lot about was faith. I am reminded of St. Thomas, and John of St. Thomas after him, about wisdom, actually, wisdom as distinguished from the practical wisdom of prudence within our nature, the gift of wisdom infused by the Holy Ghost, which is what faith becomes in eternity. I know that Mary has something to teach us about this, but could you also speak about this relationship between the infused gift of wisdom that gives us a naturality with God and the faith?

His Excellency: Very good. I am very happy with this question. Indeed, today as we are observing this confusion inside the Church, I am most certain that the lay people are now called to witness their faith. I think this is an effect, a consequence, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which you received in the sacrament of Confirmation. And so you lay people, you received the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, one of these gifts is the gift of wisdom, the wisdom of faith, the gift of courage. You know these seven gifts. You have received these in the sacrament of Confirmation. I have observed these gifts that you have received, these gifts are now bearing fruits, because now in these times the faith is now shining, in some ways, more clearly, more beautiful, in the souls of the lay people than in the great part of the souls of the hierarchy, sad to say. Thank you, I can say as a bishop, thank you to my dear faithful who are confirmed in the sacrament of Confirmation.

5. Our Lady of Akita talked about the time of bishop against bishop, and obviously that prophecy is manifest today. What we see coming from the highest part of the Church is that the unfaithful bishops, the heretical ones, are being rewarded, and the ones who speak in truth, one has been banished, one has recently been replaced. And so, I have a fear that the good ones will be silenced. We are in the position that when we speak the truth of the Church, or Our Lord's words, very soon, maybe tomorrow morning, someone will say, but the pope doesn't say that. So we're in a most difficult position, because we do not even have the support, or even a façade, of being Catholic from above.

His Excellency: You have the façade. You have this time the catechism, the immutable catechism. And so, continue this. When in some way the hierarchy is weaker, then speak louder, your faith, and say, I *know* to whom I believe, I know, and no one can take away the faith from me. And so you have to confess your faith and to pray for the bishops that God may grant us really courageous bishops, shepherds of the Church, that they are rewarded, maybe those who speak today, they are rewarded in the Church. But what does it mean, this reward? For me, it is nothing in comparison to eternity. What does it mean, this? My reward is a good conscience, of faith, of fidelity to Jesus, and the reward I hope to receive in heaven. These temporary rewards I think they have not so much meaning. And so, the better reward is to be faithful to the faith. And God will do his work. So be faithful and believe, and help even those who are losing their faith, even when these may be a bishop, and continue your faith.

6. Because of social media, because of modern media, we're constantly bombarded by the modern, and it's very easy to get distracted because of what's happening in most recently. As Catholics we have almost two thousand years of rich theology to learn from and pull from. How do you recommend we live, not only a detachment, a distancing from, it feels like an over attachment, too much attention to the pope. We're not paying attention to our local bishops. We're not paying attention to the thousands of years of history we have as a faith. What advice do you give to people to kind of ignore the waves that are going on in the Church, and get deeper under the water?

His Excellency: In this globalized world of the internet and social media, I think we in some way do not have to pay too much attention to all these every day words of the pope, his gestures. It is not necessary. In the past centuries, Catholics lived and have not known what the pope was speaking all their life. They heard the preaching of the parish priest, and maybe they heard the pastoral letter of the bishop, and no more. And they have known maybe the name of the pope and prayed for him, and no more. So it is not necessary in my opinion. We have to pray for the pope every day, of course, we are Catholics, and we have to have reverence to his office. Catholicism is not necessarily a papacentrism, but a Christocentrism, for which the pope is only a vicar. For him, we pray and we love, for his office and his person. But we have to be moderate in some way and more serene, because we know our faith.

7. Your Excellency you visited the SSPX seminary a year or two ago. What are your thoughts on the SSPX and what do you think will happen with them going forward?

His Excellency: Of course, we do not have to think this one group is the saviour of the Church. The Church has her Saviour. This is Jesus Christ. Of course we are living in a very difficult time, extraordinarily difficult, and what Msgr. LeFebvre did in the past, maybe in the future we will have a more positive judgment in general of his work, in general I think. I am not classifying every step of his, but globally in these difficult times. Second, this group has a danger, and I told them when I visited them, this is a danger, the more they are in some way self-sufficient ecclesiastically, and this is not normal, it could last some time, but it should not last too much. Otherwise, this group becomes self-sufficient, autocephalis, this is not Catholic any more. This is in some way like a sect; we are the only safe place. All the rest is gone away. This is a danger. I am not saying that all in the Society of Pius X has this attitude, but there is some danger of this. I hope that Pope Francis is generous to them and wants to achieve some solution, a practical solution, canonical I would say, and this is already offered to them. I could in some way help, but there are some difficulties internally in the Society who are against, have no trust. A great deal of them have lost trust. This is a problem. And then, I don't know exactly the last information, what Rome will do. But last week Msgr. Fellay was in Rome to speak about this. So we have to pray for a miracle that it will happen. It will be good that they will be recognized by the Church. It will be a new presence of many priests and faithful who are substantially Catholic, who will give a good constitution to strengthen the army which we are.

8. I was reading that marvelous talk you gave a while back on asking for a new syllabus of errors. And I was reading the footnote and who provided the investigation into what is the authentic meaning of the Church of pastoral. And I found that it was the Friars of the Immaculate that helped you prepare that. This pope has destroyed that entire order. Is that why?

His Excellency: I don't know. I think it is not on this specific topic, but in my opinion the destruction of the Franciscans of the Immaculate has a deeper root, in my opinion, a general root, to stop an order, a flourishing order inside the Church who was increasingly to diffuse tradition inside the Church, doctrinally and liturgically, the traditional Mass for example. This was to some circles in the high hierarchy a challenge, and they wanted to stop this. This is my opinion, globally. The development of the Franciscans of the Immaculate is a traditional order in the Church which is not depending on *Ecclesia Dei*, because some liberal members of the hierarchy considered the different communities of *Ecclesia Dei* some kind of museum pieces. So they could control them. But since another community which is not *Ecclesia Dei*, in some way an ordinary institute, with the same characteristics of *Ecclesia Dei*, then it becomes dangerous for them. And then they tried to stop this. But this is a work of God. No one can stop this. This is temporary, in my opinion, measure, a temporarily. But this suffering by them will bear fruits. We have to see longer.

