

Fr. Perozich comments —

Catholics are asking, “Who will the next pope be?”, and “Who do you want to be the next pope”.

This is a google translation from the Italian of Fr. Serafino Lanzetta’s thought of who a next pope should be and how he should express the Catholic faith.

Put things back in place. The Church is not the monopoly of the pope and his "style"

padre Serafino Lanzetta

What do the cardinals want? A successor of Francis or Peter? This is a fundamental question that must be answered with the help of theology and the history of the Church and not simply with personal ideas or power groups.

It is now time to initiate an internal reconciliation within the Church, with a clear link to the whole of Tradition and not to its last glimpse, as has been the custom for some time now, from Vatican II onwards. **The last Council is not the year zero of the Church, when it all began.** It is an ecclesial moment, an ecumenical council, one of the twenty-one councils of the Church, with a magisterial peculiarity that is easily misunderstood. Vatican II is often looked at as if it were the Council of Trent or Vatican I and hence the catch. If we stick to the term "council" and to the fact that a council is a solemn or extraordinary manifestation of the Church's magisterium, then Vatican II fits perfectly with previous councils.

But if one looks at its actual exercise, one does not deviate from the level of ordinary magisterium (unless it reiterates a previous doctrine), such as that of a papal encyclical, to get an idea. A magisterium therefore still in the making, at its first degree and potentially open to new acquisitions or necessary improvements. From this magisterial atypicality derives the temptation either to "canonize" Vatican II by promoting it to the only council of the Church, year zero precisely, by virtue of a presumed conciliar spirit (of which Francis was proud) or to have to trash it because it broke with the previous magisterium.

A careful work of selection and theological distinctions must be done that is expected from a pontificate capable of mending the present with the perenniality of faith, with its "today". Not with the past as chronological time, but with today as a kairological time: **a time that does not begin with us, with Pope Francis, or with a council that we like best, but with Jesus and the Apostles, reaching us in our time and overcoming it to open the doors of eternity to us.**

It is not clear why, but it seems that the pope, for a while now, has been a sounding board for Vatican Council II and that's it. Perhaps of the "post-conciliar" popes (except for Benedict XVI, the only one perhaps who will never be canonized), but not of the "pre-conciliar" ones (as ecclesial time is usually labeled). **To guarantee and show the unity of the Church, shouldn't there be a clear link to the whole papal magisterium?** Why should we be afraid to cite Leo XIII, St. Pius X, St. Pius V

or St. Leo the Great as examples? Were they popes of another Church?

It is this division that profoundly threatens the unity of the Church. If the Church of today is not capable of recognizing in the Church of all time the one Body of Christ, in a magisterial continuity between yesterday and today, there will be no way out of the crisis of faith that grips the Church of our time. This continuity must be manifested in the one *Traditio fidei*, and the most concrete way is that enunciated by St. Vincent of Lérins in the fifth century: "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est"; **what is believed everywhere, always and by everyone.**

Being part of the one Body of Christ, which does not begin with us, but which comes from Christ through the Apostles, with a wisdom and doctrine that are now two thousand years old, is what gives guarantee to today, helping us to overcome the challenge of polarization between conservatives and liberals, between doctrinairists and pastoralists, which is not a theological challenge but a political one. **The real stake is faith or its denial, even if cloaked in devotion to the poor, the last and migrants.** Do not come and say that the Church and faith are a "*coincidentia oppositorum*" or a "*complexio oppositorum*" (a more softened form, but still tending to reconcile opposites) so as to give one blow to the circle and one to the barrel, making everyone happy and assuring that the Church still goes forward even if the Pope is wavering, more attentive

to the ebb and flow of history than to the obedience of faith. The maximum is not the minimum and vice versa.

Those who are at the top cannot be at the bottom. Hegel, in addition to Nicholas of Cusa, believed in the dialectical synthesis of opposites, moved by Luther **who had made God and his contradiction the manifesto of the humility of faith (of incomplete thought) that resigns itself to the impotence of reason and the uncertainty of truth**; of a thought that even reaches the negation of God because in the end He would not be what He is if He is not contradicted in Himself; He would not be merciful if we did not sin.

The Church is a symphony of truth and love, not a cacophony of discordant and contradictory sounds. There is no coincidence or complexio that one wants between truth and error, between good and evil, between sin and grace. There is only opposition, which in the end is that between God and his enemy. You have to choose which side you are on.

Let the new pope present himself to the Church as the successor of the apostle Peter and not of Francis, John XXIII, or Benedict XVI. The pope is not a monopoly of an idea of pontificate (and of the Church) **but depends on what precedes him: the uninterrupted faith of the Bride of Christ.** The Church precedes the pope in terms of the faith we profess because in the end it is Christ who precedes the Church and the pope.

It is Christ who founds Peter as the rock of faith and thus founds the Church on the immovable rock of faith

and of the person of Peter. Peter's faith and person are thus in turn built up in a stable way on Christ.

Only if we put Christ back at the center will the Church return to life, putting out into the deep in the sea of this world that is increasingly thirsty for truth and love. Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia, certainly, but also and always Ubi Ecclesia ibi Petrus. Peter must be there where the Church is so that the Church is where Peter is. **The Church is wider than Peter, than any single pope, because she guards the papacy, the holy sacraments, the holy doctrine of faith and morals, and thus gives each successor of Peter his true identity, provided he obeys Christ and is docile to the Spirit of God.**

It would also be time, therefore, for a pope who professed the integral faith of the Church, rejecting the errors and correcting the ambiguities that have thickened in this last glimpse of time, examined in the light of a longer time in which either the conciliar spirit or the anti-spirit has prevailed unquestioned. Here too there is no coincidence. An alleged change of moral paradigm is not only at stake, as some have baptized openness to the ethics of the situation.

The visceral opposition to Bergoglio has itself given rise to a sort of paradigm shift, albeit to a very limited extent but with damage to souls: it has fueled a new confused and variegated sedevacantism, which is nothing more than a sort of hyper-papalism in which the pope is placed above the Church, a veteran of an exasperated

conciliarism in which Vatican II was superior to the Church.

Let's put things in order: first there is Christ, then the Church with the pope obedient to the Church, and then the council at the service of the Church and never superior to the pope. We must rediscover true faith and unity in faith. It seems a rare commodity in our day to ask the pope to profess the integral faith. There are those who still mock this request, but it is the only solution for true ecclesial unity. Without a clear and solid faith, the Church cannot subsist. It also seems that asking for such a thing shows oneself nostalgic or retrograde.

In reality, **what we all need is this: a guide who makes the Good Shepherd, Christ, shine through in his person**, with a personal baggage that is not only of ideas coming from his theological and human formation, but that is the pastoral truth and love of Jesus as an offering to all men to be saved; that it is the baggage of Catholic doctrine, in diachronic **listening to the whole Traditio fidei**.

Only in this way does it become not stones but pastus, the food of life, the Holy Eucharist. And here a discourse that reappropriates the sacredness of the liturgy by emanating from the uninterrupted *lex orandi* of the Church (obviously **not beginning with the Missal of Paul VI, but from that formed from the Apostles and the Fathers with the great Saints**) is necessary and urgent. God is no longer seen because our liturgies are sloppy and often devoid of faith.

Finally, it would be desirable to no longer insist on a style that varies according to the pope of the day and doctrine, thus provoking yet another rift between faith and Christian life, a more plastic expression of the upstream rift between the Church of today and the Church of all time. **The style must be Catholic and therefore superimposable on the doctrine of faith and morals**, although it remains accidental and provisional with respect to the faith and its proclamation. Trying to save cabbage goats **by saying that in the end "style is man", the pope, and that the doctrine of faith is to be adapted to the style, to the pastoral priorities of the Pope, simply means subordinating faith to man, doctrine to style.** Thus it is easy to resolve faith into a "pastoral style", which, while diluting doctrine, itself presents itself as a principle of action and a new Christian mens, to the point of unacceptable exasperation, such as justifying as almost equal belief in God and being atheists, having faith in Jesus Christ and following other religions.

The Synodal Synod was also intended to be a style, a way of being of the Church today. Yet he discussed Catholic doctrine (the sacrament of Holy Orders, ecclesiastical celibacy, homosexuality, etc.) with the intention of changing it, but without great success. **It is inevitable that style in the long run will impose itself as doctrine and that faith will be downgraded to a mere style: faith of the past or of today, it is often heard, depending on tastes, on style. Will the new pope want to remedy all this?**