

"We Are Excommunicated!"

What a strange event, the Catholic Church excommunicating the members of the Army of Mary! Later, when light will have been shed for all to see and the truth better known, the entire world will wonder how such a thing could have happened.

But what is excommunication? It is the fact of excluding a person – or a group of persons – from "communion with the Church". In other words, it is declaring that such and such a person – or such a group of people – is no longer Catholic in the eyes of the authorities of the Church and can therefore no longer participate in the life of the Church with all that this involves.

To this point there is nothing abnormal: every association of persons and every institution that exacts of its members that they adhere to specific and well defined rules and regulations has the right to exclude from its ranks any person who does not respect these rules (after an enquiry and confrontation if necessary). That is the way it is everywhere in the society of men, as much in sports organizations or clubs as in professional associations, as well as within our democratic governments.

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Yes, but who cannot see that, in the case of the Church and when it is a matter of religion, things are somewhat different? Yet, throughout its history and especially during that era of great faith that was the Christian Middle Ages, the Church has often had recourse to excommunication as the supreme argument to impose its regulations upon humble folks as well as upon heads of nations.

For, at that time, religion was not an empty word. It was an essential element of one's life, and one often worried much less about one's present condition than about one's eternal destiny. Thus, given that excommunication no longer permitted one access to the sacraments, such as sacramental confession and that men nevertheless knew they were sinners, it was sometimes perceived as being a "one way ticket" to hell, especially since this latter held an important place in the popular beliefs, and as a result, there was a tremendous fear of it.

Why recall that? To show the power that excommunication had then when everyone in the West was Catholic, for it was a matter, then as now, of the severest punishment which a Catholic could incur. However, it lost some of its power after the different Protestant religions came into being in the 16th century, when all the founders of these religions were excommunicated in their turn.

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But today, the question that needs to be asked is whether or not excommunication can still be considered in the same light as it was perceived in former times. Of course, it contributed to maintaining the Church's cohesion, and perhaps, to saving the Catholic faith, to bringing it into this 21st century with all its grandeur and divine mission. Yes, but it is precisely in this regard that

things are no longer right...

That the Catholic Church, as an institution made up of men charged with seeing that rules are respected, should reach a point of dealing ruthlessly with those members that do not respect the rules, that is normal – at least from its point of view, for it would still be necessary that the intervention be legitimate and justified which, as far as we are concerned, is not really the case.

But is it normal that the Church should reach the point of turning away from its finality that essential part of the mission which Christ entrusted to it? That is very serious. Thus, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, following up on the declaration of Cardinal Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec, and having received the approval of Benedict XVI, the Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic Church, has prohibited thousands of faithful from receiving the sacraments of the Church and thus receiving the Body of Christ and His forgiveness.

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For, if the Eucharistic miracle really takes place in the priest's hands, the fact remains that he is not the one who accomplishes it, but Christ. By what right, then – and this regardless of the regulation which they use to support their decision, – can men of the Church prohibit thousands of people from having access to the Eucharist, people for whom Christ gave His life and who have done nothing more than attend a ceremony during which, for the majority of them, they had the pleasant surprise of seeing six individuals offer their life to establish God's reign in our midst?

"This is my Body given up for you," Christ said, but today's Church says, "but not for you, the members of the Army of Mary"! Why? Because we believe in "erroneous doctrines"! But what does the Church really know about them, since it never wanted to humble itself enough to listen to what God had nevertheless charged us with telling it. We have before us – and we are the witnesses of it – a sort of "reversal" of an incredible seriousness: what is of primary importance – and we can see this – are the rules of men and not the work of Christ which is to save souls!

The same is true with regard to sacramental confession. In fact, we all know that it is not the priest who forgives, but Christ. Therefore, by what right would any authority whatsoever in the Church be able to prohibit thousands of its mem-

bers from receiving Christ's forgiveness of their sins.

Let us consider this: whereas Christ indulgently forgives anyone who sins against Him, the Church, for its part, does not forgive those whom it accuses of having sinned against it, except if they renounce the Lady who has led a great many of them to the Lord. We reach the point of asking ourselves what Christ the Savior, who gave His life for each one of us, must think of His Church.

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Thus, to intervene on a point of law is one thing (and we could perhaps discuss it), but to prohibit thousands of believers from receiving the Body of Christ and humbly obtaining His forgiveness for their sins, well, that is quite another matter! Yes, sacramental confession and the Eucharist are powers the Church received from Christ and of which it is the guardian, but it is turning them away from their primary finality by using them as weapons in support of objectives that are contrary to the Lord's will.

In fact, do we not know, for having seen it so many times, that it is God Himself who is guiding His Work and who tells Marie-Paule what she must do in order for it to advance. From the moment that is the case, it is quite obvious that the Catholic Church has just placed itself in an "unpleasant position". It would have been better to apply Gamaliel's wise advice: "My advice is that you have nothing to do with these men. Let them alone. If their purpose or activity is human in its origins, it will destroy itself. If, on the other hand, it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them without fighting God himself." (Acts 5:38-39)

Alas, it would seem that the Church preferred the **letter** of its ecclesiastical laws to the **spirit** of salvation which was Christ's intent twenty centuries ago and still is today. Let us repeat it: this is serious. And the Church, in locking itself in its "Church logic", with its severity and its obduracy, cannot see that the "mysticism of the Kingdom" is already succeeding it, and that this "mysticism" is shattering all the barriers and breaking through all the boundaries of the past. Its blindness is condemning it; it has just prohibited its own access to this Kingdom of light and peace which Christ, through Marie-Paule, has come to bring to us.

September 14, 2007

Marc Bosquart

We express our sincere condolences to the bereaved families over the loss of a loved one. May Christian hope, before the reality of death, bring you consolation and peace.

IN MEMORIAM

BOUSQUET, Marguerite - Brive-la-Gaillarde, France
DUMESNIL, Sr. Marie-Thérèse - Lac-Etchemin
FORTIN, Diana - La Malbaie
GIGUÈRE, Grégoire - Lac-Etchemin
HUPÉ, Rémi - Gatineau

LÉPINE, Rolande - Terrebonne
PAQUETTE, Alfred - Coaticook
PITRE, Jeannette - Laval
POLIQVIN, Julienne - Vankleek Hill, ON
ROY, Cécile - Rimouski
VEILLETTE, Cécile - St-Lin-des-Laurentides