

HABEMUS PAPAM?

Habemus Papam. I am told I must rejoice. So why this profound malaise? Shall I regale you, my fellow faithful, with my tale of woes? On second thought, let me just share with you my compact history of the recent Papacy; call it my Litany of the Three.

In his book "Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII" (NY: Viking, 1999), John Cornwell tells us how **Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli**, later **Pope Pius XII**, accommodated our Church to Hitler's murderous Third Reich and the Holocaust--in spite of repeated entreaties from the German bishops to come out in public against the unfolding abomination. Hitler was nominally an Austrian Catholic. Should Pope Pius have had the moral gumption to ex-communicate him? For his utter moral blindness, this Infallible of my long-lost childhood was rewarded with canonization by a pair of successors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Next, the now-retired **Joseph Ratzinger**: In his youth, a member of the *Hitlerjugend*. Did he object? Resist? Was *imitatio Christi* too much? Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. In 1968, on the Theology faculty of Eberhard Karls University in Tubingen, this paragon of Christian orthodoxy came out against the striking students and many of his own colleagues, including **Fr. Hans Kung**, famed theological adviser to the Second Vatican Council--who had recommended him for the post. The revolution that shaped my generation this side of the Atlantic was anathema to this strict dogmatic.

In his next incarnation as head of the Munich diocese, **Archbishop Ratzinger** was complicit in hush-hushing priestly child-abuse in his diocese. Promoted to the Curia, **Cardinal Ratzinger** took over the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith--a.k.a. The Holy Office, a.k.a. The Inquisition. There he proceeded to muzzle his old colleague Fr. Kung, removing him from teaching Theology at Tubingen. More recently as **Pope Benedict XVI**, he helped our very own Cardinal Timothy Dolan muzzle the American nuns, whose mortal sin was taking Christ's Gospel of love, charity and inclusivity too seriously. His lasting legacy, we are told, is berating European and American Catholics for exercising, too exuberantly, it seems, our God-given rationality.

Just for comparison: On March 12, 2013, the NY Times reported the passing of the last living Valkyre conspirator, **Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist**. Scion of protestant East-Prussian landed gentry, namesake of the illustrious novelist Heinrich von Kleist, and son of the anti-Hitler resistance hero Ewald von Kleist, this 22-year-old lieutenant in the German Army was recruited by **Col. Calus von Stauffenberg** in 1945 to join the Valkyre plot. Only the steadfast refusal of von Kleist's co-conspirators to disclose his name under torture saved his life. Joseph Ratzinger, by then 17, was out of the the *Hitlerjugend* and into the *Waffen SS*.

And now, **Jorge Mario Bergoglio**: anti-women, anti-gay, anti-abortion, anti-contraception and a "humble" Jesuit to boot, reigning as **Pope Francis I**. According to the Argentine journalist **Horacio Verbitzky** ("*El Silencio: de Paulo VI a Bergoglio: las relaciones secretas de la Iglesia con la ESMA*", Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2005), as Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Argentina during *La Guerra Sucia* **Fr. Bergoglio** accommodated to the military dictatorship, refraining from either protesting the arrest of or protecting two fellow Jesuits who were snatched and incarcerated in the infamous Naval torture camp. Their sin? Not accommodating like their Superior; that and their ardent belief in Christ's ministry to the poor, also known as **Liberation Theology**.

So enlighten me, my fellow faithful, what exactly am I to rejoice in? The recurrent moral blindness of our Papacy? Their retrograde rejection of the world we live in? Their insistence on repressive hierarchic control? Their repeated accommodation to murderous "conservative" regimes? Their 335AD Nicea model of servility to mundane Imperial powers? Shall I, per chance, rejoice in **Fr. Tomás de Torquemada**, my illustrious namesake who burned my kin at the stake for being mere *conversos*? Or in that other Francis, the rapacious Church-supported **Generalísimo Fransisco Franco**?

For you see, I take my Catholic Faith dead serious. I believe in Christ's gospel, and have always cleaved to this hopeless romantic idea that **The Body of Christ** were us, the flock in the pews. To top it all, my favorite religious order is still the Society of Jesus. But how can this "humble" Jesuit hold spiritual sway over me, when all I see is--here I had better revert to my native tongue and his--*nomás que otro lobo en piel de oveja*? Shall I acquiesce to his triumph of style over substance? Is that what our Savior would have done?

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