

(This amusing little piece was originally posted on the Rorate Coeli website: <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/07/two-plus-two-makes-three-after-mass.html#more> It has been posted on the Apropos website www.apropos.org.uk for the information of Apropos readers)

TWO PLUS TWO MAKES THREE

"An after-Mass debate in a mixed-use Sacristy"

- *Atto primo, scena unica* -

A work of fiction, by Fr. René Tiepolino (*nom de plume*)

The Philosopher: All cats are mortal; Socrates is mortal; therefore Socrates is a cat.

The Old Man: - and has four paws. It's true! I have a cat called Socrates.

The Philosopher: You see!

Eugene Ionesco, *The Rhinoceros*

In a mixed-use sacristy somewhere in the world following a Traditional Mass, the celebrant, *Don Pietro Recitalamessa*, is greeted by Auxiliary Bishop Annibale Psittacus, who will "preside over" the Ordinary Form shortly thereafter.



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Don Pietro: Your Excellency, Everybody is talking about Professor Sheldon's new thesis that $2 + 2 = 3$. What is the official position of the Church?

Bp. Psittacus: The thesis has been accepted with enthusiasm by the whole Vatican - indeed we regard it as something of a breakthrough.

Don Pietro: And the Holy Father?

Bp. Psittacus: I had the honour to talk to an assistant to His Holiness yesterday over a cup of disposable coffee during an informal 11 o'clock chat-time by the Santa Marta coffee-dispenser. I am not yet at liberty to reveal the comments - they have not yet been spinned - suffice it to say that there has been talk of a Joint Declaration by the Church and the United Nations. The disposable Declaration is envisaged as part of the dialogue between the Church and the World. It was the Council that showed how enormously important this Dialogue really is.

Don Pietro: How does the Vatican understand the Professor's formula?

Bp. Psittacus: As the rejection of logic. We are living in a post-logical era. The World has been living that experience for a long time. Then it entered the Church. Now it's going to be recognized officially as such.

Don Pietro: When did it enter the Church?

Bp. Psittacus: With the Council (and there was only one, by the way). The doctrines it taught were new: Collegiality, Ecumenism, Freedom to choose one's own Religion, and so on. These doctrines now exist side by side with the traditional doctrines, so we end up with a situation of contradiction. It doesn't add up: $2 + 2 = 3$.

Don Pietro: We can call this 'The Principle of Contradiction.'

Bp. Psittacus: Yes, and we can regard this principle as one of the Council's most precious gifts to us.

Don Pietro: How has this gift been developed since the Council?

Bp. Psittacus: The Popes subsequent to the Council have made ample use of it. In fact it is one of the most important features of their authentic Magisterium.

Don Pietro: Can you give us an example?

Bp. Psittacus: The Council declared that the Old Covenant has never been revoked. The recent Popes have repeated the doctrine, and we're talking about saints here - so these words are not to be taken lightly! What's more, the prayers of Good Friday have been altered to conform to it. This is of course diametrically opposed to traditional Church teaching.

Don Pietro: As you said, this new doctrine now co-exists with the traditional teaching, and the Church has denied neither of them. As far as She is concerned, then, we are forced to conclude that everything is true and everything is false, or put another way, She is no longer interested in the Truth.

Bp. Psittacus: There you have it!

Don Pietro: What is She interested in, then?

Bp. Psittacus: Love.

Don Pietro: What love?

Bp. Psittacus: Love for neighbour, for all men, regardless of creed; mercy rather than condemnation; seeing what we have in common rather than what separates us. The principle $2 + 2 = 3$ means that we are living in a post-logical era: logic has been superseded by a higher principle, which is Love. Go into any church on Sunday and listen to the sermon. What's it about? love, love, love. Pope St. John Paul II said we should be building 'a Civilization of Love' [Here he draws a bright parrot-green handkerchief from his sleeve and dabs his doleful, moistening eyes.] It's just so beautiful! Sorry!

Don Pietro: Pope Benedict said 'a Civilization of Love and Truth.'

Bp. Psittacus: But the present Holy Father has gone back to the former idea: tenderness, spiritual hugs, this sort of thing, and the joy that it brings – he used the word 109 times in the exhortation *the Joy of the Gospel!* What a thought! This is where the Church is heading; this is why he canonized the two Popes. They're the Council saints, the *subito santo* patron saints of the new Church, the Church of Love. Look at Pope St. John Paul II for example – the Pope of love.

Don Pietro: - and Pope St. John XXIII?

Bp. Psittacus: Good Pope John, *il Papa buono*, the Pope of the *Buongiorno*: it's all the same thing. *Buon Giorno! Buona sera!* Love, love, love!

Don Pietro: But love depends on Truth: it must correspond to reality, otherwise it's no real love: a parent that gives a child 100 euros to buy drugs is not a loving parent. The love that you're talking about is a love detached from the Truth, from the Truths of the Faith. At the end of the day, it's not love at all.

Bp. Psittacus: Hard words, Don Pietro, hard words! – which may not be good for your image. Careful, or you will be telephoned.

Don Pietro: Come on, Your Excellency, we're rational men. Our lives and thoughts are all based on the Truth. How can you possibly rationalize the contradictions you mentioned?

Bp. Psittacus: We have to adopt a different theory of Truth: Reality changes and Truth changes with it. Cardinal Mandragara pointed out that we have to overcome outmoded notions like True and False. Cardinal Caper said that we can't be casuistic either: Rather we must seek what conforms to the pastoral necessities of the day.

Don Pietro: Excuse me, but that is simply the Modernist doctrine condemned by St. Pius X in *Pascendi!*

Bp. Psittacus: You and your condemnations! You're all the same you Traditionalists! You have no love! You have no heart!

Don Pietro: I'll use my heart if you use your head. Tell me how Catholic doctrine can change over time. Are you saying that before the Council the Old Covenant was revoked and after the Council it was not revoked?

Bp. Psittacus: No, it was never revoked. So before the Council in 1962 it was revoked and not revoked, and after 1962 it was not revoked.

Don Pietro: So if a non-Catholic who explicitly rejected the Catholic Faith but was otherwise good died before 1962 he would go to Hell, and if afterwards he would go to Heaven.

Bp. Psittacus: Not quite. If he died before that date he would go to Heaven and Hell, and if he died afterwards he would go to Heaven. You see how the World's a better place in the new Pontificate!

Don Pietro: Congratulations for your clarity – there's not much of that in the hierarchy these days!

Bp. Psittacus: I'm a Logician after all! It's enough to apply the principles to the facts. No, Don Pietro, we must overcome these outmoded, scholastic categories of True and False and go with the flow, which in the pastoral field is the flow of Love. As I said before, we are living in a post-logical era. We have to manage the best we can: if love is the way, let us love: *Vivamus atque amemus*. We can spin it as Catholic later.

Don Pietro: Thank you, Your Excellency, for these very precious, disposable words, which of course are both true and false at the same time!

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