

THE REPOSSESSION OF ARCHBISHOP THUC

It seems to me that regarding high ranking churchmen we are living in an age of double personalities. The allegations that Paul VI, in many of his public appearances, had been substituted for by an impostor have received considerable publicity both in Europe and America. There appeared also photographs of the two, side by side, showing the recognizable differences between the portraits of the two persons. When finally Paul VI died on Aug. 6, 1978, the mystery had not been satisfactorily solved. The world still cannot be sure of who was buried in the coffin bearing the name of Paul VI.

Recently, I read in Father Noel Barbara's pamphlet "Burning Questions: Straight Answers" (pg.19) that Archbishop Peter Martin Ngo-dinh-Thuc, the former Archbishop of Hue, Vietnam, "presently lives in France (83000 Toulon), and is 86 years of age".

Unfortunately, there is no date of editing on the above pamphlet, thus the reader cannot be sure what point of time was in mind of Father Barbara when he said about Msgr. Thuc: "He lives at present in France". The only clue for calculation is the age of 86 years. Msgr. Martin Thuc was born on Oct. 6, 1897. Adding to his birth date the number 86, we will arrive to the year of 1983. Therefore - according to Father Barbara - Msgr. Thuc in 1983 lived in Toulon, France. If Fr. Barbara is correct in his statement, then a question arises:

- Who was that elderly prelate whom Bishop Louis Vezelis brought from France to Rochester, N.Y. shortly before Christmas of 1982?

On Jan. 28, 1983, the same elderly prelate was introduced by Bishops Musey and Vezelis to a group of traditionalist priests in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as Msgr. Peter Martin Ngo-dinh-Thuc, the former Archbishop of Hue, Vietnam. After the short conference, he returned to the Franciscan Friary in Rochester, N.Y., and continued to live there under the patronage of Bp Vezelis throughout the entire year of 1983, and a little beyond. While living there, he had been more or less shielded from the outside world. Even contact (telephone or personal) with traditionalist priests was rarely permitted. The only notable exception was the above mentioned conference in Baton Rouge, which came about as a result of a moral pressure put upon Bp Vezelis by traditionalist priests of this country, - as it will be explained later.

- Who is Archbishop Peter Martin Ngo-dinh-Thuc?

He was the person who - without receiving permission from the Vatican - consecrated the first Palmar de Troya bishops in Spain in January 1976. Then, seeing the tragic consequences of his hasty consecrations, he recanted his action, and sought reconciliation with Rome. Paul VI absolved him from the censure. But after a while, Msgr. Thuc (or his alterego) turned around, and began to ordain priests and consecrate bishops again without the permission of Rome.

In 1981, he conferred the dignity of the bishopric to Fr. Guérard des Laurières of France, and to two elderly Mexican traditionalist priests: Fr. Carmona and Fr. Zamora. The Mexicans, in turn, consecrated Fr. George Musey (USA) on April 1st, 1982, in Acapulco, Mexico. Bishop Musey consecrated Fr. Louis Vezelis, OFM, on Aug. 24, 1982, in Buffalo, N.Y.

None of the two new American bishops was the choice of American traditionalist priests. As I mentioned in my Monograph # 62, Father Robert McKenna, O.P. in a telegram to the Mexican prelates expressed his opposition to any hastily arranged consecration. But the two Mexican bishops, pressured by the fear of an imminent revolution in Mexico (which incidently did not materialize), performed the consecration of

" but valid

the first American priest (Fr. Musey) who had contacted them and was able to converse with them in Spanish.

Since the bishop consecrations of 1981, there has been much talk and writing about Abp Martin Thuc, pro and con, but no traditionalist priest from the United States was given a chance to visit him in Europe. The two German gentlemen in Munich, Dr. Heller and Dr. Hiller, have successfully kept the Archbishop out of circulation. Bp Vezelis tried to do the same thing, after he received Msgr. Thuc in the Friary of Rochester, N.Y.

When the news leaked out to traditionalist priests in America that Archbishop Martin Thuc was a guest of the Franciscan Friary, these priests expected to receive an enthusiastic invitation to come and visit the Archbishop who (indirectly) gave two bishops to traditional American Catholics. Nothing of that sort has happened.

Some priests, waiting in vain for the invitation, made an attempt to get in contact with the Archbishop by phone, or at least to receive some information about his well-being - with no success.

Naturally, rumors and questions started to rise:

- What is going on? What is there that must be hidden from the public?

The two American bishops have been claiming that the source of their episcopal power was Abp Martin Thuc. But the isolation of the Archbishop began to undermine their claim that there was nothing wrong or illegal about their consecration.

The growing pressure made the two prelates realize that it would be a lesser risk to show the Archbishop (in whatever condition) to the priests - at least for a short time - than to keep him in isolation and led the rumors spread which ultimately would cast a shadow on the validity of their consecration.

BATON ROUGE

Therefore, they devised a plan to produce the Archbishop to the public in a place which was not easily accessible to the majority of traditionalist priests. They chose Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which is in the South, and seventy miles from the nearest big airport: New Orleans, Louisiana. (Only independent traditionalist priests were invited, i.e., those who were not members of the St. Pius X Society.)

The conference was held on Friday during the time that was available between lunch and the evening Mass at 7:30 P.M. On Saturday morning all the priests had to hurry back to their distant places for the Sunday Mass. All the priests had to pay their own travel and lodging expenses. (If there were exceptions, I was not among them.) Amidst these circumstances only five priests took time to go to the conference; none of them from the West Coast. (Those priests in the West invited Archbishop Thuc for a visit in California, but their desire was not satisfied.)

At the conference (Jan. 28, 1983), Archbishop Martin Thuc occupied the chairman's place, but otherwise he was totally passive. He did not participate in the discussions, he made no remarks, he gave no directives of his own, he did not even give a sign that he understood the subjects under discussion. To sum it up: At the first meeting with American traditionalist priests, Archbishop Thuc was expected to act as a leader, but he did not. Instead, the two American prelates did the talking, gave directives and demanded submission from the priests - in the name of Msgr. Thuc.

At that time, this particular arrangement did not cause as much concern in my mind, than as did recently, after I had read Father Barbara's statement (who himself lives in France) that Msgr. Thuc was living in Toulon, France, at the same time when - according to our knowledge - he was living in Rochester, N.Y. under the patronage of Bp Vezelis, up until the last week of January 1984.

- What happened to him at that point in time?

Since I was not an eye witness, I have to restrict myself to report only the

gist of the news that reached me second-hand.

THE ABDUCTION

So far, it seems to be an established fact that Msgr. Ngo-dinh-Thuc was taken from Rochester, N.Y. by a Vietnamese businessman to New York City under the pretext of attending there a Vietnamese celebration. I do not know if the celebration took place or not, but after the previously agreed time for return had passed, the above businessman did not take the Archbishop back to Rochester, N.Y., but kept him in a suite in his hotel. After two weeks or so, Bishop Vezelis went to New York City to claim the Archbishop. He met him in the hotel room, but some Vietnamese people (among them priests and bishops) physically frustrated his effort to take the Archbishop with him. They claimed that it was the wish of the Archbishop to stay in the hotel with his new environment.

More details will certainly come out by those persons who were directly involved in this particular event.

I only wish to draw some conclusions of an armchair observer, and anticipate some possible followings of the above incident.

First of all, I do not wish to believe that Msgr. Ngo-dinh-Thuc has an alter-ego. But in a world of unprecedented chicaneries, one cannot be absolutely sure about it. I hope that Fr. Barbara in France will check out the veracity or falsity of his above mentioned statement about Msgr. Thuc living in France, when in fact, he was living in Rochester, N.Y. I hope he will not find another Msgr. Thuc in Toulon, thus he will put the problem of duplicity in person to rest, and leave us with the certainty that in January of this year the real Archbishop Martin Thuc fell into the hands of certain Novus Ordo people. Shall I call the whole episode the "repossession of Archbishop Ngo-dinh-Thuc" by the Novus Ordo Church?

CONCLUSIONS

(1) The "repossession" seems to be the result of a prearranged plot concocted possibly by certain elements in the Vatican.

On the Gulf Coast there is a young Vietnamese priest who a few years back served a traditional Vietnamese and American group. In January 1983, however, he visited some bishops and Cardinals in the Vatican in order to find a solution to his "conscience-problems". There he received the advice to submit himself to his local bishop in the United States. He complied, and now he says the Novus Ordo Mass. On January 29, 1984 (Sunday), this young priest announced from the pulpit that Msgr. Ngo-dinh-Thuc had arrived at the Vietnamese (Novus Ordo) Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, although the good Msgr. was still in New York City confined to his room by the "friendly" Novus Ordo surrounding.

Such an announcement would have been a routine action, if it were true. But in connection with the event of "repossession" it became a clue pointing toward the presence of a plot. The young priest did not see Msgr. Thuc in the seminary; he was only told about the "arrival". It is possible that according to the original plan, the "repossessors" wanted to take Msgr. Thuc, without delay, to the above named seminary for residency. One of these "repossessors" perhaps prematurely conveyed the news to the young priest so that he might publish it from the pulpit. Meanwhile, for certain reasons (I deal with it later), they changed their plan; thus, the captive Archbishop did not arrive at the seminary at the prearranged time.

(2) The irony of the events has put Bishops Musey and Vezelis in the same shoes that they had previously provided for traditionalist priests: they shielded Msgr. Thuc from the priests. Today, the Novus Ordo surrounding is shielding Msgr. Thuc from his two American bishops.

(3) What possible interest would the Vatican have in the "repossession" of the old Archbishop?

I am inclined to connect this "repossession" with the promulgation of the OPEN LETTER - EPISCOPAL MANIFESTO by Abp Lefebvre and Bishop Castro Mayer on Decem-

ber 9, 1983. As time goes on without any follow-up to the MANIFESTO either from the part of the Vatican, or the part of Abp Lefebvre, the probability of an understanding between the two parties raises its head. The Vatican does not want to give traditionalist bishops to the faithful. Its purpose is to extinguish the valid priesthood in the Church. In this regard, Abp Lefebvre has not given any embarrassment to the Vatican. His principle has been: "Not to defy Rome" by consecrating tradition-minded bishops.

There were, however, two places of loose ends: Msgr. Thuc and Msgr. Castro Mayer. If today there is no follow-up to the MANIFESTO, it means that Abp Lefebvre took care of Castro Mayer by refraining him from consecrating traditionalist bishops. (I wish I would be proven wrong in this matter.) - The other case of loose ends, Abp Martin Thuc, was taken care of by the cleverly executed "repossession" in late January of this year. Msgr. Thuc is now under Novus Ordo control, and the Vatican has the assurance that no new traditionalist bishop will ever be consecrated by him. (The Vatican might have locked the proverbial "barn door" after the horses have already escaped.)

(4) You might wonder why Bishops Musey and Vezelis do not raise the charge of kidnapping, and enlist the help of the police and courts to gain back the freedom of Msgr. Thuc. This possible course of action might have crossed the minds of the "repossessors" too, and prompted them to drop the idea of taking their captive Archbishop to the seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Transporting a kidnapped person across state borders would have involved an investigation by the FBI. The present status quo favors the "repossessors". They are cautious not to upset it with a hasty movement. Meanwhile, they have plenty of opportunity to bend the mind of the old Monsignor according to their wish. - To upset this status quo and to gain back the custody of Abp Thuc, would require from his traditionalist bishops enormous amount of legal, travel, hospital, medical and other expenses; and would possibly have international implications with the Vatican and/ or France. (Msgr. Thuc came here with a French passport.)

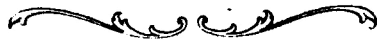
My guess is that the American Thuc-bishops do not wish to start such a costly legal battle which, even if in case of winning, would not bring them anything else, only the responsibility of taking care of an old prelate who can no longer handle his own affairs.

On the other hand, if Msgr. Thuc remains in the "care" of the "repossessors", we can, in the near future, expect some new statements, recants by the old Archbishop, to be published by his captors. You should look at those future news-items with the knowledge that the old Archbishop in his captivity does not have a chance for free expression or communication.

From an earthly view point, this is a tragic end of a man who valiantly stood up for the Faith at a time when no other bishop of the once great Catholic Church had the courage to "defy Rome"; that Rome which has lost the faith. At this time, Msgr. Thuc is the real victim of circumstances. Even if in the course of his activities, he committed some blunders, like consecrating unsuitable persons to the bishopric, the greater part of responsibility for it belongs to those "traditional" bishops who have left this brave fighter alone at the battlefield, because they preferred to pursue the policy of negotiation with the enemy entrenched in the Vatican.

Let us keep him in our prayers that in as much as his life seemingly will end in ignominy, without having human acknowledgment or praise, may Christ give him that imperishable crown which is reserved for the faithful servants who "fought a good fight" and "have kept the faith" (II.Tim. 4, 7).

May Our Lord use the sufferings of his faithful bishops, priests and lay-people as a tool which would bring closer the day of victory for the REMNANT CHURCH.



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