



## **VATICAN - WORDS OF DOCTRINE Nicola Bux and Salvatore Vitiello - "Ecumenism, Unity and Primacy of Peter"**

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - "Ecumenism, Unity and Primacy of Peter" are intrinsically connected realities which live of and in each other and which can never be artificially placed in dialectic contraposition. Whenever ecumenism is presented in tension with Primacy, or even worse, Unity as an obstacle to Primacy, a serious, intellectually illegitimate and historically unfounded abuse is committed. Peter is guarantor of the full unity and the permanence in the truth of the whole Church; his word must not get lost among others, it calls all, with authority, to conversion to "sequela Christi", the only true, realistic and not eschatologising, path for the ecumenical journey towards full manifestation of the catholic unity given to us by Christ.

Centrifugal forces are physiological to the extent that their energy is in proportion with the centre from which they draw their very existence. When instead these forces degenerate, besides lacerating the body, they determine their own dispersion and in the end eliminate themselves. This should be remembered by false prophets of nothing who convince themselves that they are lessening the power of the Primary and speak about Ecumenism and Unity as an alternative to Peter and candidate themselves as "authoritative interpreters of the Gospel", in a delirium of exacerbated desire for presence which has nothing to do with authentic Petrine service.

In fact a strange centrifugal force exists in various components of ecumenical thought today: it sees certain members of the People of God open to any form of approach and dialogue with non Catholics, non Christians and non believers but completely closed to "natural docility" with regard to Church Teaching, which should characterise every Christian. This is then ecumenism "without roots" which mistakes vague anthropocentric cordiality, for the serious and scientifically based "dialogue of truth" so often invoked by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

It is unity with others, which does not start from unity with oneself, one's dwelling and which, all told, flees from adult and responsible relationships with "those at home", seeking refuge "ad extra" in a mistaken relationship with others, destined inevitably to disappoint and hurt, because it is neither motivated nor founded on unity "ad intra". This sort of centrifugal force feeds more on attitudes than actual theological positions, more on grey and indistinct, vaguely conciliatory declarations, than references to the truth, more of desire for inexpensive media presence than humble, hidden and faithful service to the Church and to others. There are false prophets of nothing who from the highest organs of information (even catholic ones!) hurt the Christian family instilling their weekly dose of weak, sceptic and relativist Thought.

Prophets of "eschatologising gospel radicalism", who always put the Kingdom of God in opposition to the Church (especially the Catholic Church), live a time of particular centrifugal vigour whenever the reality at stake is the Primacy of Peter. The expression of a precise and explicit wish of Christ our Lord, becomes the object of infinite distinctions of which, ultimately, the sole aim and effect is to mislead the weak and, in the vagueness proper to philosophical and theological relativism, weaken firm and loving fidelity to the will of the Lord who chose Peter and his successors to be the secure guide of the flock and "perpetual and visible foundation of unity of the bishops and the multitudes of the faithful" (cf. Lumen gentium 23; CCC 882). In the name of unity "ad extra" they are willing to sacrifice unity "ad intra", showing rare myopia both theological and historic.

If today forms of Petrine Primacy may be the subject of studies and renewal even profound (cf. Ut Unum sint), in order to purify them from what is not essential and remove anything that might prevent the full catholic unity of the Church from emerging, there remains the reality of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and dependence on it of the authority of the college of bishops, which has no potestas whatsoever "unless it is conceived together with the Roman Pontiff" (Cf. Lumen gentium 22; CCC 883; CJC 336). (Agenzia Fides 16/6/2006 - righe 50, parole 681)