

A Return to Parish Councils

An objector to this title might say: Your eminence, we would be exaggerating if we talked a lot about parish councils. My answer would be: Isn't it an exaggeration to be worried by some villages with this story? I am starting a story now. A while ago, I was sitting with the faithful in a civilized village where a lot of people got educated in colleges. And I had assigned, days before, its parish council. An enlightened young man initiated towards me and criticized the incomplete representation, and objected saying that mixing opinions was not wide enough. He also reminded me that I should have been more precise in the issue.

I tried to clarify that this incompleteness comes from the law before coming from my administration or from my assistant that prepares the lists. What does the "agreement between the parish and shepherd" mean? Who would be the mouthpiece of the parish if the parish didn't express through electing, i.e. through democratic referendum?

I suggested this process and a lot objected saying that it strengthens conflicts as the municipality elections in another village did. In addition to the difficulty of gathering people and electing and the name lists...etc. The question that results from the law is the following: Who are those that the bishop should take their opinions? Are they the heads of houses? Why the heads and not their children who might sometimes have more jealousy towards the church and a greater commitment? Moreover, are families the nucleus of the Church? And is this our teaching? Or it is that every individual is a member in the body of Christ without passing through his family? Do we surrender in front of the familial approach?

I confess that we need a lot of wisdom and slowing down in our selection. Although we are trying to do this, we never get a council that satisfies all the faithful. We must do mistakes in selecting people sometimes because we are not from the locality and we don't live in it. Perhaps changing one third of the members every two years, as it was stated in the law before being edited, achieves a greater equilibrium and limits mistakes. I believe that nothing prevents us from sticking to the old law in managing this issue in the archdiocese without editing the text. Also nothing prevents the bishop from cancelling a council before the four years pass if he saw that this is better to calm feelings down and to ward off dangers.

There is no perfect law on this earth. Laws vary in their badness. But the beautiful thing is that people with pure hearts and that can criticize constructively can deal with the existing council with its incompleteness and weakness if it didn't have real bad people. Perfect people are not from this world. We desire to have them, but they are a wish. The jealous and pure people are a support to the council and an enforcement for it at the same time; they are a power that puts a pressure on

the council. A believer doesn't quit from monitoring the responsible and from giving them advices and revealing their mistakes for us and encouraging them when they should. Church issues are given to all the faithful together. Changing doesn't mean being ungrateful to someone. It is only a try to train people to work and strengthen them in the spirit of responsibility.

Therefore I hope that you accept the assigning that happens so that you don't make me give a lot of my time to the issue of councils which is very tiring. Accept the assigning if it wasn't a tragedy so that our selection would be more mature in the coming four years and cooperate in service and in giving new opinions through the spirit of creativity and sacrifice.

The important thing in all of this is to renew your minds and to focus on the essential thing which is helping the priest, enhancing his situation, serving the poor, spreading spiritual education, fighting the enemies of faith if they penetrated into you, investing in church property in a scientific way, having transparency in the accounts, writing reports, controlling the records and thinking about enhancing all facilities so that the service won't be blamed as the apostle says.

Let us leave the spirit of complaining and nagging which is a lesion in our country and go to the spirit of cooperating to build the body of Christ and to reject familial conflicts. Do not mix political parties with Church issues. This partisan that differs from you in the policy of the nation might have good morals and be a lover of God. Church gathers the faithful in Christ even if they differed in earthly issues. The only law that unites us is the law of love.

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