
RAPHAEL'S 'DISPUTE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT' AND THE ANOMALY OF POPE INNOCENT III

Once again, discovering the importance of what is not there

Pierre Beaudry, 3/28/2019

INTRODUCTION

Two week ago, Philip Ulanowsky initiated a new project which I have endorsed and which he identified as a **VISUAL ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE PROJECT**. The intention of such a project is to form a working group focused on Lyndon LaRouche's principle of creativity in classical artistic composition. Lyn identified the principle of beauty behind the necessity of such an intention during the NEC Meeting of Saturday, November 26, 2011, when he said:

“And that's beauty! That's the meaning of beauty! Not something that makes you feel good. But the fact you are elevated, your motivation is elevated, and the elevated emotion itself inspires you! It's the source of the creative potential. It's your best defense, psychological defense, against many kinds of ills.

“But the idea of the "art appreciation" approach, I hate "art appreciation"! I despise it! Because it's a fake! It's a fraud! It's not the experience of creativity.”

The present report is aimed at bringing a contribution to this project by illustrating how to look for anomalies and singularities inside of a classical

painting; but is such a way that it may cause an axiomatic change in the mind of the observer and improve his sense of beauty by way of telling the truth publically; that is to say, by way of an axiom busting process which puts his reputation on the line.

1. RAPHAEL'S 'THE DISPUTE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT'



Raphael Sanzio, *The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*, Vatican Rome. 1508-09

How can you know who is telling the truth in artistic composition? Some historians have claimed that Raphael wanted to please his mentor, Pope Julius II, with his characterization of *The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* and that he accepted to go along with what this revisionist Pope wanted him to paint. This is not true. There is a very big anomaly in that Vatican fresco that Raphael painted regarding the subject of the true nature of the “Holy Sacrament” and the subject of the authority of the papacy which I had identified in a previous report written ten years ago.¹

From the standpoint of the creative process, it is important to be aware that when an artist paints his own portrait inside of a painting and the subject of that same painting appears to be about something else, the artist is sending a message which he wants the observer to discover; and, what is to be discovered generally has to do with changing the state of mind of the observer himself.

The self-portrait of Raphael inside of the “dispute” may be considered as a signal to the effect that the observer is invited to take part in an experiment which involves a higher reflexive dialogue, an “*elevated emotion*” which is to be shared between the artist and the observer. The question is: what does Raphael want us to focus on? The answer is: the authority of the papacy versus the authority of the creative mind. What is being disputed behind *The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* is the temporal fallibility of the Pope and the infallibility of the creative mind.

The observer, who uses his mind instead of simply his impressions or his faith, must ask himself: Why did Raphael paint his own portrait with a papal headdress? Was this a sacrilegious act against faith, a provocation against the Papacy, or was he simply inviting the observer to discover some hidden reason behind this anomaly? The answer to that question can be found by using Cusa’s method of solving the paradox of the *coincidence of opposites*. But, what *opposites* are we looking for?

¹ [RAPHAEL SANZIO, THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS AND THE DISPUTE, PART II.](#)

2. THE QUESTION OF THE FALLIBILITY OF THE POPE

“De te fabula narratur.”(The story is about you)

Edgar Alan Poe, *The Purloined Letter*

Over the past two thousand years, there have been a number of terrible historical events which the Catholic Church is responsible for and which it wishes to pass over in silence. The intention of memory erasing is without a doubt a serious concern with the Catholic Church, in more ways than one, but the truth always has a way to seep through the cracks even against the will of the most stubborn efforts to obliterate it. The story of Raphael's fresco includes one such truth which concerns the authority of the papacy, the question of the fallibility.

When, you look at the historical period which just preceded the Renaissance, you have to wonder what the “dispute” over the schism of the Avignon crisis was all about and how the coming of Joan of Arc had been aimed at bringing a solution to it. The Renaissance was bringing to a close the dark-age period of an Imperial Papacy known as the “Ultramontane Papacy,” which had overshadowed the authority of kings all over Europe for several hundred years. As Thomas Aquinas confirmed in his writings: *“Secular power is subject to the spiritual power as the body is the subject to the soul, and therefore it is not usurpation of authority if the spiritual prelate interferes in temporal things concerning those matters in which the secular power is subject to him, or concerning those matters the care of which has been entrusted to him by the secular power.”*²

Thomas Aquinas's theological blessing of papal authority has been for centuries the theological stamp of approval behind the power of every Pope since the thirteenth century. My question is: Is this the same as the infallibility of the creative process of artistic composition? If not, then why did Raphael choose to represent himself as a Pope inside of his own fresco? Is he looking at himself as the Pope of artistic composition?

²Thomas Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Dino Bigongiari (Editor), Hafner Publishing Company, 1953, p. xxxiv.

The irony of Raphael's self-portrait is crucial for understanding the truth about the Catholic Church and about artistic composition as well; and that is why the authority of one or the other is a fine ironical ambiguity. Such an irony, however, can only be discovered after the observer has realized that the presence of the artist in his own painting is actually intended to provoke an axiomatic change in the mind of the observer. Just as sometimes words speak for themselves, the presence of the artist in a painting is a performative signal to the spectator, a warning that a decisive action has to be taken and that he is invited to start looking for *something that is not there*. The observer has to start looking for a truth which puts into question his own allegiance to sacrosanct public opinion.



Raphael's self-portrait (second from left) wearing a papal headdress and staring discretely but directly at the observer.

Thus, the artist's intrusion inside of the spectator's mind has the effect of causing a state of perplexity and uncertainty which leads him to ask questions such

as: Why is he looking at me? What is he attempting to tell me? These questions are like flare signals going off in the observer's mind, telling him that some secret is hidden there, and if the observer wishes to learn the truth about this painting, he must investigate the epistemological nature of that warning process and look for the singularities which will guide him to this truth.

Both Leonardo and Raphael used similar ironies in their paintings for the purpose of changing the way the spectator looks at artistic composition. They used such a device in order to share with him the innermost secrets of their creative insights.³

3. THE DISPUTE WITHIN THE DISPUTE

In the case of *The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*, the message is about the fact that the matter being revealed refers historically to two contradictory tendencies inside of the leadership of the Catholic Church, two different and opposed attitudes vis-à-vis the fundamental principle of justice for mankind or *agape* (love of mankind). Such is the underlying and unspoken subject matter behind the dispute; and that is also the secret of how Raphael dealt with the “conflicting issue” that he wished to bring our attention to in our own minds?

Recall, for a moment, the role played by Saint Dominic, founder of the Dominican Order (*Domini canus*), known as the “Dog of God” during the Middle-Ages Inquisition, and you will recognize that the disputed issue that Raphael is referring to, here, calls for the presence of Thomas Aquinas, who wrote the last theological word on the authority of the papacy.⁴ The Pope next to Thomas

³ In the case of Leonardo, I invite the reader to take peak at my report: [LEONARDO DA VINCI, THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS](#).

⁴ As I reported in [THE ULTRAMONTANE PAPACY PART I](#): “It is the dissonance of this anomaly between knowledge and belief, that resonates in the irreconcilable opposition between Plato and Aristotle in *The School of Athens* and that is reflected darkly in the opposition between Augustine and Aquinas, in *The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*, which has been at the core of the division within the Catholic Church for two millennia. There is a unique dynamic intention hidden behind the two frescos which bears upon what Nicholas of Cusa developed in *Concordancia Catholica* as the unity of distinction between belief and knowledge; that is to say, that the two

Aquinas is Innocent III (1198-1216), the most powerful and feared Pope of the entire period of the Middle-Ages. During the reign of Pope Innocent III, mass murder was justified under the guise of “protecting the true Faith.” Why are the two painted together and why are their eyes locked into such a horrifying stare?



“If looks could kill!” A telling exchange of view between Thomas Aquinas and Pope Innocent III

frescoes are unified in a single integral whole which represents what Lyn once described as Raphael’s unity of effect in the simultaneity of eternity. As a student of Leonardo and of Cusa, Raphael followed their principle of proportionality and concordance in a very dynamic way.”

The underlying subject of the “dispute” in Raphael’s fresco concerns the authority of the Pope as it was formulated in the Decretals as a Body of Canon Laws (*Corpus Juris Canonici*) ruling over the Church. The book of Decretals was the Middle Age compilation of ecclesiastic laws of the Catholic Church representing pontifical decisions concerning the authority of the Church over all “spiritual matters” of society. The third compilation of such Decretals (*Compilatio Tertia*) contained the decrees of the first 12 years of the pontificate of Innocent III.

Compare this stare with Raphael looking at the observer at the other end of the fresco. What is the connection? Raphael introduced his own portrait into the fresco in order to bring the attention of the observer to the matter of the dispute over the difference between love and hatred of mankind, hatred of heretics on the one side and love of fanatical unipolarism on the other side; that is, the matter of two opposite historical tendencies inside of the Catholic Church, but also reflected in the political unipolar world of today. Those two tendencies have not yet been fully resolved to this day and that is the reason our society requires a paradigm shift. The point is how to discover how Raphael expressed the *unity of opposites* between those two world views. Now, you can discover why Raphael decided to wear the papal headdress. Measure the distance between the two arrows below.



The *coincidence of opposites* between Raphael (extreme left) and Pope Innocent III (extreme right)

Those two arrows direct the observer to discover why Raphael had required his own presence in this assembly and in that precise location. Unless the observer looks for the reason behind this chosen location, the riddle of Raphael's presence

as a Pope in this painting cannot be resolved. In other words, Raphael calls for the observer to look for the resolution to this dispute.

When the observer discovers that Raphael is located precisely at the opposite side of Pope Innocent III from the central position of the Holy Sacrament, then the solution is at hand. This is how Raphael calls on the observer to resolve this problem by discovering the *coincidence of opposites*. That is the visual equivalent of what Lyn called a strategic “placement of the voice” in music.⁵

Note how the *coincidence of opposites* between Raphael's left eye and Innocent III's left eye can be discovered in several ways. The simplest one is by a physical measurement of the opposition to the center. But, there is another way to discover the truth of this opposition. As you examine how both opposite left eyes are at equal distances from the central Monstrance, note also how one eye is soft and loving while the other is harsh and hateful. How can such an opposition be resolved?

Such a unity of reason is located theologically in the consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity present in the Sacred Wafer, at the center of the fresco. Communion, in that sense, is the religious way to resolve the opposition. The mind requires a similar form of resolution by adopting the Cusa method of *coincidence of opposites*. Axiomatically speaking, the strategic and political opposition of today's world is faced with the same dilemma. One must find the way to solve the paradox caused by the conflict between the American neo-con view of the world and the LaRouche and Xi-Jinping win-win view of the world.

What Raphael is revealing, here, is the Ultramontane Imperial design of many inquisition Popes who used the Dominican Order as their “Dogs of God” to commit genocide against Muslims in the Holy Land and against Jews and other peoples in Europe during the Middle-Ages. The truth of the matter is expressed by Raphael's brilliant ability to depict from the corner of his eye the state of mind of Innocent III and his evil conspiracy with Thomas Aquinas. Raphael is also pointing discretely to the fanatical content of the Decretals (book of papal Decrees), which Pope Innocent III is holding in his hands, which he used as “legal” justification for

⁵ See my previous report: [CUSA'S SCIENCE OF CREATIVELY THINKING THE FUTURE](#)

his murderous crusades. The Pope's offering of the pen to Thomas Aquinas is as if he were calling on him to justify, a few decades after the fact, his evil actions by saying: "This pen is for you, my son. Now, go and justify the theological rules of my infallible papal powers."⁶ It is the conspiratorial fixation of such religious fanaticism between the two leading figures of the Church which tells the story which Raphael dared to paint truthfully on the wall of the Stanza.

From 1209 to 1229, Pope Innocent III waged a genocidal crusade against the Cathars of the Languedoc in Southern France, and promised complete remission of sins, with a guaranteed place in heaven, to anyone who would agree to kill them without mercy. The Abbot of Citeaux, Arnaud Amaury, initiated the papal genocidal order with the infamous words: "Kill them all, God will know his own."⁷

The Cathar Crusade lasted 20 years and killed some 20,000 men, women, and children; all in the name of the "True Faith."⁸ Is this sort of distorted religious fanaticism not contrary to Christianity? Is this not the same sort of warfare that the British, the French, and the American Neo-Cons have been engaged in waging all over South West and Central Asia for the last decades under the guise of "regime change," and under the name of democracy?

⁶See my report: [THE ULTRAMONTANE PAPACY PART I](#). Thomas Aquinas concocted the following theological justification for killing heretics: "(1) *There is the sin, whereby they (the heretics) deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be shut off from the world by death. For it is a much more serious matter to corrupt faith, through which comes the soul's life, than to forge money, through which temporal life is supported. Hence if forgers of money or other malefactors are straightaway justly put to death by secular princes, with much more justice can heretics, immediately upon conviction, be not only excommunicated but also put to death.*" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, ii, Q. xi. Article III. **Whether heretics should be tolerated**, in *Documents of the Christian Church*, selected by Henry Bettenson, Second edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 186-187.)

⁷ Innocent III was also infamous for having inspired the failed Children's Crusade which took place in 1212 under his watch. In Northern France, a young boy began to preach that the Lord had visited him and told him to lead a Crusade to convert Muslims to Catholicism. A few months later, he had assembled a grouping of over 30,000 children who followed him south to Italy where a great number of them sailed to Africa only to die along the way. The Crusade failed and thousands of children died before reaching their goal or were sold as slaves in North Africa. Is this the suicide scenario that is currently being played with the deployment of the poor abused child, Greta Thunberg?

⁸ [The Albigensian Crusade](#).

CONCLUSION

On March 13, 2000, Pope John Paul II asked forgiveness for the errors of the Church over the past 2000 years, but the [*Memory and Reconciliation: the Church and the faults of the past*](#) issued by the International Theological Commission of the Vatican Curia was another cover up which omitted the names of the sins the Church had committed during those centuries as well as the names of their victims.

A plea of forgiveness for the genocide of the Cathars had been asked of Pope John Paul II, personally, in 1998, by the mayor of Toulouse and other officials, which stated:

“It was a three-page letter sent to Pope John Paul II at the initiative of mayor of Toulouse, Dominique Baudis, president of Occitan Convergence Joan Francés Laffont, Abbot Jòrdi Passerat, Bertran de La Farge, Patrick Lasseube and some 20 occitanists who asked the Catholic Church to recognize its sins. Pope John Paul II asked forgiveness in a [year] 2000 document entitled "Memory and Reconciliation", but it was too generic and made no reference to the Cathars.”⁹

According to the Cathar website, http://www.cathar.info/cathar_news.htm of October 16, 2016, the French Bishop of Pamiers, Monseigneur Jean-Marc Eychenne, made a public apology for the persecution of the Cathars of Languedoc. The Cathar website reported:

“On October 16, 2016, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pamiers apologized for acts contrary to Gospel. Though not explicit, these acts are widely taken to include the Crusade against the Cathars, the activities of the Inquisition in the Languedoc, and in particular, the burning of some 225 baptized Cathars at Montsegur in 1244. Speaking in French, the bishop said: ‘We ask the Lord for forgiveness for some of our members and some of our institutions participating in acts contrary to the Gospel, in which the Lord

⁹ See [*Bishop of Pàmias to ask forgiveness for Cathar Crusade*](#). 22.09.2016. See the letter to John Paul II: [MANIFESTE POUR LA RECONCILIATION](#).

Jesus gave us the commandment to love our neighbor and not to respond to violence with violence'

“The Bishop's apology was made specifically on behalf of his diocese. The apology was made at a crowded hour-long service (a "celebration" not a mass) at the village Church of Montsegur - with a thousand or so listening outside. The Cathars' distinctive form of the Lord's Prayer was sung in the church. Cathars never built or used church buildings, so this might have been the first time the Cathar form of the Lord's Prayer has ever been used in a church.”¹⁰

Such anomalies were not painted by Raphael for the purpose of discouraging people from becoming Catholics or for blaming the Church of wrong doings; the reason was for the beneficial effect of change in the way human beings think about mankind and about the creative process. In this masterful display of the brush, Raphael succeeded beyond all measure to confirm the universal method that Leonardo da Vinci had established a few years earlier when he wrote about his creative principle of composition: *“A painting or any representation of a human figure must be treated in a manner such that those who see it can easily recognize the concept of its soul through its physical demeanor.”*¹¹

FIN

¹⁰ [Apology by the Bishop of Pamiers.](#)

¹¹ Leonard de Vinci, *Les Carnets de Leonard de Vinci*, Gallimard, Vol. I, 1942, p. 229.