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Foreword: Revisionism

In any question which has existed in the Church for more than ten minutes, one may find the partisans for a particular answer and the partisans against. Frequently distributed along a spectrum, from the extreme to those whose *via media* is just shy of holding nothing at all, they nevertheless are distributed along one plane, and give voice to a diversity of answers within a common paradigm. A newcomer is faced with three possibilities: to adopt either one or the other stance, positioning himself somewhere along the continuum between High and Low or Right and Left or Traditional and Modern or whichever pair of epithets may (imperfectly) summarise the two goods which appear to be in conflict (thereby buying the fundamental parcelling out of the terrain); or to cry *a plague o' both your houses!* and call the whole framing of the issue into question. To do this in one or two issues is considered flippant, but to do it systematically is to be revisionist.

This thesis began as an attempt to occupy a position *within* the usually accepted parameters of the debate on *Ressourcement*—specifically, to distinguish between the movement and its excesses, defending the former whilst apologising for the latter, and holding out as a way through the current *impasse* in Catholic theology ‘a *ressourcement* in *Ressourcement*’. After all, these authors were unpopular in the 30s, unpopular in the 50s and *still* unpopular in the 70s—unpopular, that is, whenever they tried to do anything which did not fit the neat narrative of the proto-liberal saviours of a moribund scholastic Catholicism. (For a defence of this perhaps startling historical claim see Chapter ??). It has ended in the firm conviction that this debate itself is part of the problem. The real crisis in Catholic theology (and the fact that one is expected to defend the existence of the crisis only points to its extent) is a crisis in the life of the Church: specifically, a crisis in that reflective life which is her Tradition. *Ressourcement* saw this coming and sought to address it; if we have ended up with a very different *problématique* today it is in part because we have not listened.

Thus I am revisionist about *Ressourcement*. But I am equally revisionist about all the *other* major elements in narratives (right and left) of twentieth century Catholicism. I hold:

- that the near universal scholarly consensus regarding Modernism (*viz* that it was largely a straw man invented by the Pope) is demonstrably false;
- that *heresiological* Modernism is a coherent (if exaggerated) entity, albeit one which was rather askew the *actual* Modernists;
- that the popular narrative of centralisation in the nineteenth century Church, driven by political or social forces quite independent of theology is at least an oversimplification, and that for that matter far *less* centralising took place in the *nineteenth* century than is commonly claimed (rather: modern communications made a previously centralised system more noticeable);
- that anti-Modernism, for all its excesses (and there were many), never had anything to do with ‘rejecting the modern world’ or ‘rejecting modern civilisation or progress’ (the private grumblings of curmudgeonly churchmen notwithstanding);
- and, by extension, that the *Syllabus* really did mean what Dupanloup said it meant (about which a very confused fable has been spread in all the popular English books);

- that Newman did not mean by the ‘development of doctrine’ anything so imprecise as the meaning given to that phrase recently (although this issue has been largely cleared up by excellent scholarship);
- that the liturgical movement and the liturgical reform of 1968-9 have nothing to do with one another;
- that liturgy, despite being rather rarely mentioned explicitly, is in fact the cornerstone of *Ressourcement* theology;
- by extension: that accounts of *Ressourcement* as ‘inheritors of Modernism, precursors of Vatican II’ are (at least in the sense that Mettepenningen meant that phrase) at best deeply misleading;
- that there is such a thing as a *Ressourcement* way of doing theology, and that it is *not* identical methodologically or in conclusion with that of modern liberal Catholic theology or modern conservative Catholic theology;
- that there is such a thing, *even when Ressourcement authors themselves seem (occasionally, and very late) to distance themselves from it*—or in other words, that merely because the postconciliar decade was a heady time when *everything* seemed up for redefinition, the careful work of the preceding half-century did not somehow cease to be valid;
- that in nearly every mythologised *Ressourcement* controversy, the account we have of it is hopelessly muddled (for instance, Lubac did not mean what he is taken to have meant about Nature and Grace, and Congar had almost nothing to say on the difference between ‘Tradition’ and ‘traditions’, *pace* the title of his book);
- that, in sum, the narratives of both right and left about how the Church got where it is (wherever one thinks that is) are mostly fiction, and by extension, that the Church is in a very different place.

Having made these claims I would like to minimise them. Whilst I shall endeavour to demonstrate the historical *truth* of each claim as we go along, the *historical* argument of this thesis (to which we turn in the next section) need pass only the test of plausibility; and in the long run I am interested in clearing a good deal of historical baggage out of the way, not because I think history done better will yield a *different* conclusion (although I do), but because I reject the whole endeavour to “read the signs of the times” by replacing reasoned coherence with the tradition of the Church by the identification of this or that historical process as divine providence. In other words, if Pius X or Tyrrell or Chenu or Garrigou-Lagrange or Ratzinger or Küng are right, it had better be on the strength of their arguments, and not by general appeals to “how things have turned out”. Of course, this is an uncharitable presentation of this position at best and a straw man at worst, but it is as well to identify one’s targets at the very beginning if only to ensure that we do not become hung up on ancillary arguments. Thus, whilst I pick fights with a large body of modern scholarship on its *own* ground (and am thus entirely vulnerable to demonstration that I am, in fact, wrong) unless the vast majority of the historical ground-breaking of this thesis turns out to be wrong (which I certainly hope it is not), the theoretical edifice can more or less continue to stand. Or: criticism of my (necessarily foreshortened) historical discussion of individual points is perfectly legitimate, but I would ask the critic to be

sure that such a criticism really impedes the work I put the history to before assuming that everything comes crashing down.

Lastly, this thesis is political, because it endeavours to be practical. By that I do not mean that it is party-political: the Church is already too divided into camps of opposing certainties, the schism between which would be more serious even than the rupture I am concerned with here were it not equally trivial and largely perpetuated by the reflexive world of online isolation and a near total absence of any critical or intellectual engagement in the proverbial Catholic man-in-a-pub; and the tribalism of contemporary academia is even more distressing. Rather, I am presenting a *political* argument because my subject—the rupture in both Catholic thought and Catholic intuition between the pre-modern and modern Church (which came to a head in the decades after the Council)—is a political problem. It is a problem which immediately asks *what we might do about it*, and any practical answer to that question is immediately political: composed of policies, organisations, confraternities, propaganda, journalism, and so on. It was in exactly this sense that *Ressourcement*, addressing itself ultimately to an instance of this same problem (as I shall argue) albeit generally in a very different context, found itself ineluctably pushed into the political sphere. All the dissertations in the world on the proper relationship between Nature and Grace are of no use unless the ideas in them are diffused; and likewise, political activity is only as good as the ideas it seeks to propagate, except incidentally. Thus at the very end of this thesis I draw out the practical corollaries or conclusions of the argument, and in doing so address the growing civil war within the Catholic Church in terms which, I hope, will be equally unpalatable to both sides.

For the history of the last century is anything but clear:

A moment's reflection suffices. Immense is the manner in which the orchestration of these themes might vary. That in a very short time after the Council ended the alliance of interpreters fell apart (for the post-Conciliar de Lubac the post-Conciliar Chenu is 'absurd') should not surprise, nor should the resurgence of a Traditionalism conscious of insuperable disagreements among its own critics. A new criteriology is needed. There was once a pope who sought to provide it.¹

As Nichols notes acerbically, the pontificate of Benedict XVI was marked by an effort to tell a kind of authoritative history of the 'new' theology and thereby to construct a critical appraisal of the situation we find ourselves in. For better or for worse this project is no longer pursued in Rome, and the work of critical appraisal has, in effect, been handed to the laity.

¹Aidan Nichols, 'An Avant-Garde Theological Generation (review)', *New Blackfriars* 102.1102 (2021), eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/nbfr.12703>, p. 1031.

Introduction

J'aurais voulu entrer, Seigneur, dans une église ;
Mais il n'y a pas de cloches, Seigneur, dans cette ville.

Blaise Cendrars, *Pâques à New York*

I

What is to be argued (and what asserted)

The subject of this thesis is Tradition, understood as the life of the Church stretched out across time. Tradition is that continuity in virtue of which the history of the Church is *her* history, the history of one (at times rather conflicted) acting subject. But this definition is, for all practical purposes, useless, and so it is immediately translated into another: Tradition is that norm *in virtue of which* the life of the Church is a single life; Tradition is that standard *against which* any proposed action can be measured. In Congar's terminology, we have passed from a *subjective* account of Tradition to one *objective*, Tradition as contained in what have traditionally been called the "monuments of Tradition", which means, in practice: in books, in libraries. Thus we repair thither to learn what the Tradition actually says about some particular question, and we consult Denzinger for "magisterial tradition", a patristic index for "patristic tradition", a handbook of comparative liturgiology for "liturgical tradition", a florilegium of the great mystics for "spiritual tradition"; we interpret and weigh the results of our research according to our several inclinations, and before long there are several more or less well argued schools of thought purporting to set out "the Catholic position on X". Sometimes the Magisterium intervenes more or less forcefully, and sometimes these interventions are even heeded; sometimes revolutions in thought, or new data, render old positions untenable: in general, for one reason or another, a more or less familiar process tends to whittle down the options until only a few candidates survive for any length of time, and if they survive for long enough and gain traction in the communal life of the Church they become part of the record of the Church's history which furnishes the monuments of her Tradition. Thus whilst in theory the Tradition may be considered subjectively as the life of the Church, in practice we mean by it the objective contents, the *traditum*: to call a position *traditional* is to say that it is in accord with this *traditum*; to call it *untraditional* is to say that it is not.² This observation applies regardless of whether one adopts a position regarded

²The *depositum fidei* is contained within but not identical to the *traditum*: there is much which the

as “traditional” (which generally means *rejecting* some innovation on the basis of the *traditum*) or “progressive” (which generally means arguing that such-and-such a change in the *traditum* is in fact in harmony with its greater context, taken *en bloc*, or its spirit), although for practical reasons one side tends to stress the incongruence of such-and-such a position with the *traditum*, and the other the need to appreciate the *whole* tradition and its meaning in order to discern what really is handed on as *tradition*, and what is merely historical baggage. If in either case one were to attempt to move from the objective to the subjective, and argue either that *the whole collective life of the Church tells against such-and-such a doctrinal compromise* or *the whole collective life of the Church (at any rate today) shows the acceptability of such-and-such an innovation*, one would immediately fall back on objective *contents* in order to avoid having a purely vacuous answer.

The claims of this Thesis are:

- (1) That there has been a discernible rupture in the Tradition subjectively considered, that is, that the handing on of the *traditum* has become so muddled that we struggle to discern what is and is not part of it;
- (2) That this rupture is traceable to a neglect largely in place *before* the council in the subjective means of forming those perceptions which make up a discerning of the Tradition, i.e. it is not for want of data, but for want of virtue;
- (3) That told like *this*, the confusing history of twentieth-century Catholicism makes a great deal of sense; and that
- (4) Various movements—of which we focus on perhaps the most interesting, *Ressourcement*—recognised and sought to address this rupture in aesthetic formation, and consequently are quite unintelligible if taken out of this context and treated merely in terms of their objective conclusions.

In other words, I am deliberately rejecting the usual way of discussing the question of Tradition, *because I think that we can no longer reliably discern what the traditum is or what it signifies* and that our current confused state is precisely a confusion of this aesthetic faculty of judgement before it is any disagreement over content. In one sense this argument is not new—Balthasar put it very well at the beginning of the Trilogie, where he warned that if we forget beauty ‘syllogisms may still clatter away like rotary presses’ but ‘the very conclusions are no longer conclusive’³ —but I intend to be abnormally pig-headed over it: I really do mean, not that we need a new or restored aesthetic theory, which if we spread it well enough will bleed over into the kind of practices which form the right kinds of dispositions, but that we need the right practices *simpliciter* (and by extension largely do not currently have them). Thus it will not surprise the reader to discover that I have my own aesthetic and liturgical preferences and would more or less like everyone to agree with me.

About this I shall say nothing more here. All this—for reasons of space—is simply assertion, but it is as well to lay one’s cards on the table and begin at as much of a disadvantage as possible, and I should not like the uneasy suspicion that I would like to restore the Old Rite and perhaps even such anachronisms as the old Breviary to grow gradually in the reader’s mind when I can forestall the process by confessing them at the beginning. This thesis is concerned *solely* with arguing for the last claim.

Church hands on which is not even remotely *de fide*, but which could not be lost without Tradition suffering (particular music, art, liturgical colours and so on).

³CITATION NEEDED [Balthasar rotary presses.]

The other claims are unavoidable, and having asserted them here I shall allude to them along the way and return to them very briefly at the end; without them the motivation for this thesis would be opaque and its import obscure. But I am interested here solely in writing a critical appraisal of *Ressourcement* in terms of this central idea, and I shall push this account at points beyond the limits *Ressourcement* authors themselves recognised, highlighting when I do so. I have adopted this method of telling a history firstly because I believe (and shall argue) that *Ressourcement* is best picked out by this idea; secondly because the history of the Church in the last century in general and *Ressourcement* in particular is so hopelessly politicised that without a clear speculative account everything risks being lost, and thirdly because the idea I am trying to get at is stubbornly existential: it is only understood by coming to see it in action. (If for a moment I am thoroughly reactionary I would simply say: what I am doing here is *itself* an exploration of the Tradition, and I cannot very well do that except by being traditional. Where my texts lie askew the main current of Tradition, so much the worse for them, and I shall take liberties.)

This idea might be expressed as a rejection of the now standard form/content distinction—a rejection of the idea that we can meaningfully separate signifier and signified. In this form the idea is more or less played out, in any case:

There are no formulae of faith which are, as formulae, enduringly valid, capable of transmitting the living faith to men of all ages. Is this relativism? Not at all. It is what is meant by the identity of the faith with itself *in history*. For we do not possess the absolute which acts as an inner norm to our faith in an absolute way; we possess it only within our historical situation. ...

Is there, then, no precise content of faith? Of course there is. But there is no explicitly fixed *representation* of truth—which is not the same thing.⁴

What is perhaps most striking about this is how dated such naive linguistic representationalism now sounds. Schillebeeckx was aware of the problem, and the essay proposes a solution—of sorts—by attention to the existential historical condition of speakers then and now. On this model, we have acceptable formulae for getting at truth in *this* point in time; and with historical investigation we can have formulae which are able, now, to express what was *then* meant by what was said; and so a (theoretically) simple substitution is possible. Every assumption in this claim looks a good deal less philosophically tenable or even intelligible than it did in 1968.⁵ But even on its own assumptions the claim is dubious: if we supposedly have such infallible access to “what was meant by P”, why not use it *in order to understand P*, rather than to generate some *new* formula, where the slightest slip could lead to us saying more or less than we meant to? Schillebeeckx would doubtless respond that this was exactly what he was endeavouring to do: in order to coin our new formula we need to understand the old. But the old is no good without this understanding, and if the faith is to be presentable in the modern world without a lot of hard work we are going to need to find new ways of saying things. Certainly; but does it follow that the formulae

⁴Edward Schillebeeckx, *God and the Future of Man*, trans. from the Dutch by N. D. Smith, London: Sheed and Ward, 1969, pp. 39–40; See the excellent discussion (to which we shall return: **CITATION NEEDED** []): Thomas Joseph White, ‘The precarity of Wisdom, Modern Dominican Theology, Perceptualism, and the Tasks of Reconstruction’, *Ressourcement Thomism, Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*, ed. by Reinhard Hütter and Matthew Levering, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010, p. 99.

⁵**CITATION NEEDED** []

themselves are more or less accidental, as Schillebeeckx assumes—that signifier and signified align by mere convention?

In Schillebeeckx's presentation, the problem of Tradition begins with the objective (a particular formula) moves to the subjective (speakers in such-and-such a context expressing the formula) and the immediately translates this back to the objective (what speakers in such-and-such a context meant by the formula). There is another way to approach this problem, expressed, ironically, in the very phrase from Chenu which was taken to express exactly what we have just seen in Schillebeeckx and which precipitated the breakup of le Saulchoir to which we shall turn in a few chapters:⁶ 'a theology is a spirituality which has found instruments adequate for its expression':

A theologian might call himself an Aristotelian, and justly, if we consider his psychology or his views on the metaphysical primacy of being; but he is only a *theologian* by virtue of a spiritual transformation of aristotelianism itself quite foreign to Aristotle, and under the proviso of a constant openness to the possible riches of other systems and other philosophical positions.

To point out this relativism in the structure of theology is not in the slightest to fall into eclecticism.... The relativity of differing systems corresponds exactly to their differing intelligibilities, and thus to their degree of truth....

In the last analysis theological systems are only expressions of a particular spirituality. This is their interest, and their grandeur. If one must be surprised by the divergence of systems under the unity of dogma, one should first be surprised to see the same Christian faith give rise to such variegated spiritualities. The grandeur and the truth of Bonaventuran or Scotist Augustinianism are entirely [contained] in the spiritual experience of St. Francis, which is the soul of this greatness in his children; the grandeur and the truth of molinism are contained in the spiritual experience which is the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius. One does not enter into a system for the logical coherence of its construction, or the veracity of its conclusions; one finds oneself already within, as if from birth, by the capital idea which is the object of our spiritual life, with the whole way of looking at the world and the system of meaning which go along with it. *A theology worthy of the name is a spirituality which has found rational instruments corresponding to its religious experience.*⁷

The distinction here turns on whether one inserts the word *contained*: are the theological claims *present inchoately* in the spirituality—that is, as something distinct, but arising in a particular context—or are they simply *in* it, so that the theology is just spiritual experience under another name? The whole passage forces the first sense: theological systems, taken *en gros*, arise within the framework formed by particular spiritualities, which themselves form multiple approaches to the same faith. Getting at the meaning of any particular formula, in this model, implies *learning to see the world* through the particular eyes of a particular spirituality; a process *partially* achievable by imagination, but which will demand sooner or later an unambiguous submission to the spirituality in question (whence Chenu's confidence on St. Thomas, and tendency

⁶CITATION NEEDED [Crossref to history chapter]

⁷Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie, Le Saulchoir*, French, Paris: Cerf, 1985, pp. 148–9.

to avoid other systems). In this model the meaning is not there to be extracted, but is embodied in practices which have to be adopted if its theoretical expression is fully to be grasped.⁸ In other words, in this model the *traditum* includes the spiritual context in which it is articulated: the signifier and the sign are essentially linked. And thus in order to retrieve the Tradition one has to acquire a kind of theological virtue: what Congar called the *habitus* of Theology. This claim is what I take to be the central insight of *Ressourcement*, and it is this claim I intend to defend.

This begs the question of whether this is a *theological* thesis at all, in the sense of a work of some neat subdomain. (Is it speculative? or historical? or dogmatic?) Our theological vocabulary must strike an outsider as odd; perhaps nowhere more so than in the considerable space which is devoted these days to “retrieval.” What, one might ask, leads theologians to lose their treasures so readily as to need this constant attempt to find them again? (An immediate answer might be: previous attempts at retrieval.) I am no exception (this is a thesis about retrieval) but I can at least offer an explanation: the work of theology has for too long—at least since the middle ages, and then again since the nineteenth century—been considered one of scientific progress. Yesterday the set of theologumena was so large, today it has grown by such-and-such a percentage, “promising work is being done” on new questions (one has an image of white-coated scientists loading a promising new compound into the test rig in the early morning sunlight), work which one day will enter into the “opinions of the schools” and allow us to send further researchers off, even earlier in the morning. With such a muddled account of the work of theology it is hardly surprising that we are in frequent need of retrieval. The work of theology should rather be conceived of—with apologies for the atrocious neologism—as *traditioning*. Very rare are the genuinely new questions; very rare is theological progress. But bringing every particular situation into the common life of the Church—into the *normative* life of the Tradition—is not merely an aesthetic and ascetic exercise, pursued by liturgy, prayer, art, music and so on. The intellectual act of taking the world to the Tradition and the Tradition to the world is Theology. At any rate it is theology as *Ressourcement* saw it.

II

Overview

II.1 Part 1: Defining Ressourcement

In part 1 I sketch an account of the intellectual position (as distinct from the historical movement) I call *Ressourcement* theology. I begin with the most celebrated (and mythologised) *Ressourcement* controversy: the argument over Nature and Grace; and show that both Lubac’s critics and his admirers—then and now—missed what he was really doing. He attacked an *aesthetic* separation between Nature and Grace, such that nothing in my intentional life is taken to have any real bearing on my spiritual life; he set out to retrieve an *apologetic* and *intentional* tradition. Unfortunately he accepted the equation his opponents made between the speculative and the intentional, and the debate promptly veered off course and has remained in a sterile exchange of truisms ever since.

⁸I am going beyond Chenu here: he *does* at times sound a good deal more like Schillebeeckx than I suggest, and he does sometimes suggest a translation/equivalence model of ‘getting at’ the meaning of past expressions. But the notion I am advancing here is also very much present in him; we shall consider this tension in more detail later.

This confusion between two orders was the result of anti-modernism and the corresponding rejection of “immanence.” Thus I turn to Modernism and show (i) that there was in fact such a thing, (ii) that it raised questions of capital importance, albeit in ways which now seem extremely naive; (iii) that the Church, rather than address it, tried to suppress it by force (a readiness to turn to persecution which has remained to hamper ecclesial renewal ever since) and (iv) that *Ressourcement* tried to provide this answer. This same concern lead *Ressourcement* to consider the role of the aesthetic formation provided by the Liturgy. Unfortunately *Ressourcement*’s liturgiology—while very much present—was unsystematic, and never given the prominence it should have. Thus *Ressourcement* thinkers sometimes looked for the mystical elsewhere, at times (as with Teilhard) with bizarre consequences.

We are on firmer ground with *Ressourcement* philosophical foundations. *Ressourcement* is not a philosophical endeavour in any systematic sense (which is why I take philosophy last, in light of the concerns which have already emerged). But it took a general immanent pragmatism from Blondel (without always respecting his distinctions) at a time when contemporary philosophy was simultaneously misunderstood and condemned, and in doing so returned to the sore wound of Modernism, whose “philosophy” had been analysed at great length and with no charity whatsoever in *pascendi*; and it treated as strictly philosophical the domain of the *intellectus*, thereby appearing decidedly irrational to its rationalist adversaries.

At this point, having apparently strayed quite a long way from the question of Tradition, we have in fact all the elements for a retrieval of Tradition as a *practice*. I thus present my account of “*Ressourcement* Theology” (as distinct from the theology of any particular historical figure) and use it to get an idea of who I mean by *Ressourcement* figures themselves.

II.2 Part 2: Exercises in *Ressourcement* theology

This project is currently too abstract. I thus turn to two theological themes—History and Patristics—and trace them across a range of *Ressourcement* authors. In both cases we find the same pattern: *Ressourcement* does history differently. Texts are piled up alongside one another without conventional contextualising; traditional authorities like Cajetan are readily criticised, but the saints (and above all the Fathers) seem to be equally unassailable and fragmentary. History itself—profane and sacred—is treated systematically, but the analysis frequently becomes political (This is also the place to consider *Ressourcement*’s political engagement (notably during the crisis of the war and ensuing reconstruction). Daniélou seems *more* concerned with getting commented editions of the Fathers (with translations) out during the occupation (Lubac was *more* concerned in attacking “the two-storey account of Nature and Grace” in between clandestine publications).

The puzzle is resolved once one realises that *Ressourcement* is thoroughly vitalistic. Historical research forms a *sense*, a virtue: the *sense* of the piled-up experience of the Church. This virtue is more valuable even than the historical facts (and *Ressourcement* has little taste for academic history of the kind which simply accumulates observations) but it is active, and the historian who acquires a sense of the Church in history cannot help looking with new—and critical—eyes at his own era. Ultimately *Ressourcement* history (and *a fortiori* *Ressourcement* patristics) is an attempt to acquire the *sense* of the Tradition; and to inculcate this sense in others; without this sense the data themselves are deficient.

II.3 Part 3: Ressourcement, Tradition and the Church

If *Ressourcement* authors thought there was a rupture in mid-twentieth century Catholicism things have only become worse. Continuity may have been mostly mechanical; but mechanical continuity is still continuity. The wholesale destruction of continuity in the spiritual life of the Church after the council (and not merely the most visible rupture of the Mass and Office) in one sense only formalised a *de facto* rationalism which thought of the Tradition purely in terms of its propositional content. Despite excellent sociological, anthropological and historical work this element of the post-conciliar reforms is barely discussed, so I first present the evidence.

This discontinuity runs wide and deep today, but any retrieval of the Tradition along the lines of *Ressourcement*'s own attempt will begin with its *preconditions* and thus, normatively, with the Liturgy. Thus I conclude with practical politics, including an appeal for something like the ancient western liturgy on *Ressourcement* grounds; or what the liturgical movement might have been (and indeed what, in the long run, it is slowly becoming).

Nonetheless I must disavow one aspect of this overtly political conclusion. To argue for the restoration of the Mass (and, almost more importantly, the Office and the Rituale) on *these* grounds is not merely to add one more argument to a growing arsenal of Traditionalist weaponry ready to be lobbed around rather fruitlessly, generally online. Nor is everything I have said about *Ressourcement* merely prolegomena to defence of my own aesthetic prejudices. Catholic Traditionalism is as in need of retrieving the authentic *living* tradition as any other “grouping” in the Church (albeit starting with some material advantages)—I speak foolishly!—and the solution to a crisis which was already simmering in the early twentieth century cannot consist in returning to fifties.

The restoration of—or rather immersion in—the intellectual, aesthetic, *intentional* Tradition of the Church which *Ressourcement* sought—that attitude which is ultimately summed up far better in the style of a book like *Catholicisme* than I can analyse it here—is a vision of enormous breadth and richness. It remains for us to work at realising this vision.