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The Surprising Opposition to Pope Benedict

Michael Sean Winters | Apr. 19, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

On this sixth anniversay of the election of Pope Benedict XVI, it is well to recall the sense of dread with which many of us on the more progressive side of things greeted his election. And, who can forget George Weigel opining that "the 'progressive' project is over."

I would submit that this sense of dread has not been borne out by the pontificate itself and that the wisest thing said on the day of Benedict's election was the sage observation that "Ratzinger the cardinal will not necessarily be a true guide for Benedict the Pope."

Indeed, within a year, it was the conservatives who were gnashing their teeth. I wrote an article for Slate [1]that recalled Father Richard John Neuhaus's expressions of disappointment at what Benedict had wrought. Since then, the conservatives have continued to be disappointed. Even when Benedict does something they like, such as issuing Summorum Pontificum, which permitted all priests to say the Traditional Latin Mass, that decision has not been accompanied by any promotion of the Traditional Latin Mass. For example, Pope Benedict himself has never presided over one of the traditionalist liturgies.

Sandro Magister brings the story [2]up to date with an important article on the debate within conservative circles about their disappointment in Benedict's tenure. Let them keep gnashing their teeth - and they will keep gnashing, at least through the inter-religious prayer meeting at Assisi later this year! Six years ago I did not anticipate that on the anniversary of his election, my first thought regarding Pope Benedict would be: Ad Multos Annos!

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