

From a letter to Rodolfo Quadrelli of January 8, 1984.

My dearest Quadrelli:

I received your dear letter extremely late; it is dated December 12th. It is actually postmarked January 3rd. The delay of the second date is normal during these holidays, which are for me the worst days of the year, if for no other reason because they are the most desecrated. I agree completely with what you tell me about the current nihilism. It is no longer tragic nihilism, whose last traces could be found, perhaps, in terrorism. That nihilism was supposed to lead to a revolutionary solution, which was more or less confusedly glimpsed or, better, confusedly remembered. In it there was still an element of rage, and this gave it a remotely human semblance. But today's nihilism is gay nihilism, in two senses. It is gay because it is not restless (perhaps it could be even defined as the suppression of Augustine's "inquietum cor meum"). And also because its main symbol is homosexuality (indeed, we can say that it always understands love homosexually, even when the relationship is still between a man and a woman). Not for nothing, it finds its representatives in ex-Catholics, who are still courted by Catholics who recognise in them something that at bottom they find in themselves. Such nihilism is precisely the reduction of every value to "trading value." It is the utmost bourgeois outcome, in the worst sense, of the process that started with the First World War. The worst clouding of judgment produced by nihilism is the loss of perception of the inter-dependence of all the factors of today's history. Indeed, if you look carefully, it is just the flip-side of scientism and of its necessary unmooring from all values that are not strictly instrumental. [...]

As for Catholics, what characterises them is the acceptance of an interpretation of our time whose origin is Marxist or neo-bourgeois. The result is that they can no longer think of their metaphysics and their religion as truth. This impotence is manifested by the fact that they present it using allegorical and allusive language, through which they claim to distinguish themselves from common and traditional Catholics, and truly succeed. Their school of unbelief is unparalleled. [...]

Regarding the students' movement, I would not be so severe. The truth is that it was defeated or re-directed to the advantage of those who, nominally, were its adversaries.

But here a lengthy discussion would be necessary, which we can develop some other time.

I think that the only way to escape from the current desolation is by going back to Hegel's famous sentence (which, however, I deem valid independently of his philosophy) that says that "philosophy is one's own time apprehended in thought."

There are two interpretations of our age that determine all particular judgements, the Enlightenment-Masonic (in its different versions) and the Marxist, both false. It is a matter of moving beyond this "determinative falsehood," but so far few steps have been taken in this direction. What are most serious are, above all, the responsibilities of the Catholics who, after 1960, thought they would "get up to date" by appropriating the theses of one or the other of these trends. With the result of making it hard for people to believe.

With warm friendship, your
Augusto Del Noce