

SAINT *FALCONE* and SAINT *PALOMINO*

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Some weeks ago, the Mexican journalist Adela Micha broadcasted an interview with the emeritus bishop of Ecatepec: Onésimo Cepeda. Besides the quality of Micha's work (I perceived the interview more as a friendly and warm chat), it seems an interesting exercise. ¿What could we infer from the Mexican Catholic Church after watching this interview?¹

It is well known the distinction between “hawks” and “doves” in the foreign policy scope. The former seen as hardline officers who prefer assertiveness in foreign policy; the latter seen as force-skeptical officers who prefer diplomacy and deterrence. In my opinion, bishop Cepeda's interview reminds us the pastoral cleavage in which the Catholic Church is immersed. Not in the foreign policy sense but the pastoral one, *i.e.* the behavior of these prelates as Church authorities.

There were four notable questions during the interview: Does the bishop has a comfortable lifestyle? Yes, he does. Is the bishop a friend of powerful politicians and businessmen? Yes, he is. Is there corruption in the Church? Priests don't steal money, he answered. The secular State is...? “A joke”, and he argued that states cannot be secular but governments can and I still writing these lines without understanding that. From these answers, it is possible to come up with an ideal type of bishop which I would call Saint *Falcone* (the Italian word for hawk). Church's hawks are very close to the political power, they perform their spiritual assignments in wealthy or populous dioceses and carry out a kind of sybarite, non-pastoral lifestyle. These hawks do have a triumphalist vision of the Church, neglecting all its mistakes (aren't pederast priests corrupt people,

monsignor?) Also, they represent the intransigent face of the Church with respect of secularity and pluralism.

On the contrary, the Church's doves would be the prelates who are closer to the outcasts, like migrants or poor people, rather than to the powerful. They are those who pay attention to the spiritual needs of the poorest and suffering dioceses and national churches. They can also be more flexible with respect of secularization and pluralism. Of course, I am not implying that these prelates are the nemesis of businessmen and politicians, but they indeed don't spend too much time socializing with them. This ideal type could be called Saint *Palomino* (the Spanish word for little doves).

We talk about a real and even deep cleavage in the Church, at national and global levels. In Mexico, there are hawk prelates such as Norberto Rivera and Onésimo Cepeda, opposing doves like Raúl Vera, Carlos Garfias or Felipe Arizmendi. Other national churches, *e.g.* Spain, do count with their own hawks: emeritus archbishop Rouco Varela of Madrid who is very close to the right-wing Popular Party or Luis Martínez Sistach of Barcelona, close to the former independentist party Convergencia i Unió.

At the global level, this is not different. Since the Second Vatican Council, two factions have arisen within the Church: on the one hand, the “Roman party” or “diplomatic party”, composed by prelates who have lived in Rome for many years and have a more bureaucratic, political, and doctrinal profile; on the other, we have the “international party” led by prelates from developing countries and countries where Catholicism is not the dominant religion such as Ghana, Argentina Philippines, Austria or the United States. The “internationals” are closer to Pope

¹ El Financiero Bloomberg TV, “En EF y por Adela' presenta a Onésimo Cepeda”, <https://youtu.be/SGrx7qPhsno>.

Francis's idea of a merciful and poor-defender Church. Both parties compete for the papacy and do have different projects for the Catholic Church.

Like all organizations, the Catholic Church looks for its own survival. Thus, the relation and proportion between *falcones* and *palominos* could affect some factors which are determinant for such survival: the increasing or decreasing number of parishioners; the possible Church-State conflicts; the possible divisions within the catholic clergy; or the future influence of the Catholic Church in contemporary society •