

I have never forgotten an act of kindness by Bishop Conry

SIR – I found your report (October 3) on Bishop Conry rather partisan. One person and one issue was given an inordinate amount of space for criticism with no counter-balance.

What do we know about the issue in question? It is reported that Bishop Conry failed to respond to eight letters. All priests and bishops get frequent letters from single-issue people and sometimes, especially, if attempts have already been made to rectify the original problem there is nothing that can be done but to ignore the letter-writer.

It is said that Bishop Conry was “heavy-handed towards priests who wished to celebrate the Extraordinary Form”. Any evidence? Or could it be that those Tridentine-obsessed priests sometimes forgot that the Ordinary Form was just that and should take

precedence. As bishop, he had the responsibility for liturgy in his diocese – or at least bishops used to until 2007!

Then – shock, horror! – he held “meetings with groups who wished to change Church teaching on birth control, sexuality and marriage”. And the point being? Can we not discuss these matters in a mature way without some obscurantists screaming: “Modernist!”? I suppose if he’d met the SSPX, that pernicious and disloyal bunch, all would have been well!

I remember his pastoral letters on Confession very well because it occasioned my first letter to your paper (which you kindly published) in support of him, a letter which opened the avalanche of criticism that my subsequent letters always seem to provoke. Well, I hope this one will not disap-

point the “biretta brigade”! Finally, my memory of Bishop Conry will be at the OGF conference organised by A&B on Church history last year. Although I am a Southwark priest, I was kindly invited to attend and was very impressed by the relaxed and informal atmosphere which he generated with his clergy – hardly a clerical collar to be seen! It was at this conference that a priest told me about an act of kindness and spontaneous generosity on Bishop Conry’s part that I have not forgotten.

I am pleased that I met him and my opinion (and that of others) will remain positive.

Yours faithfully,
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