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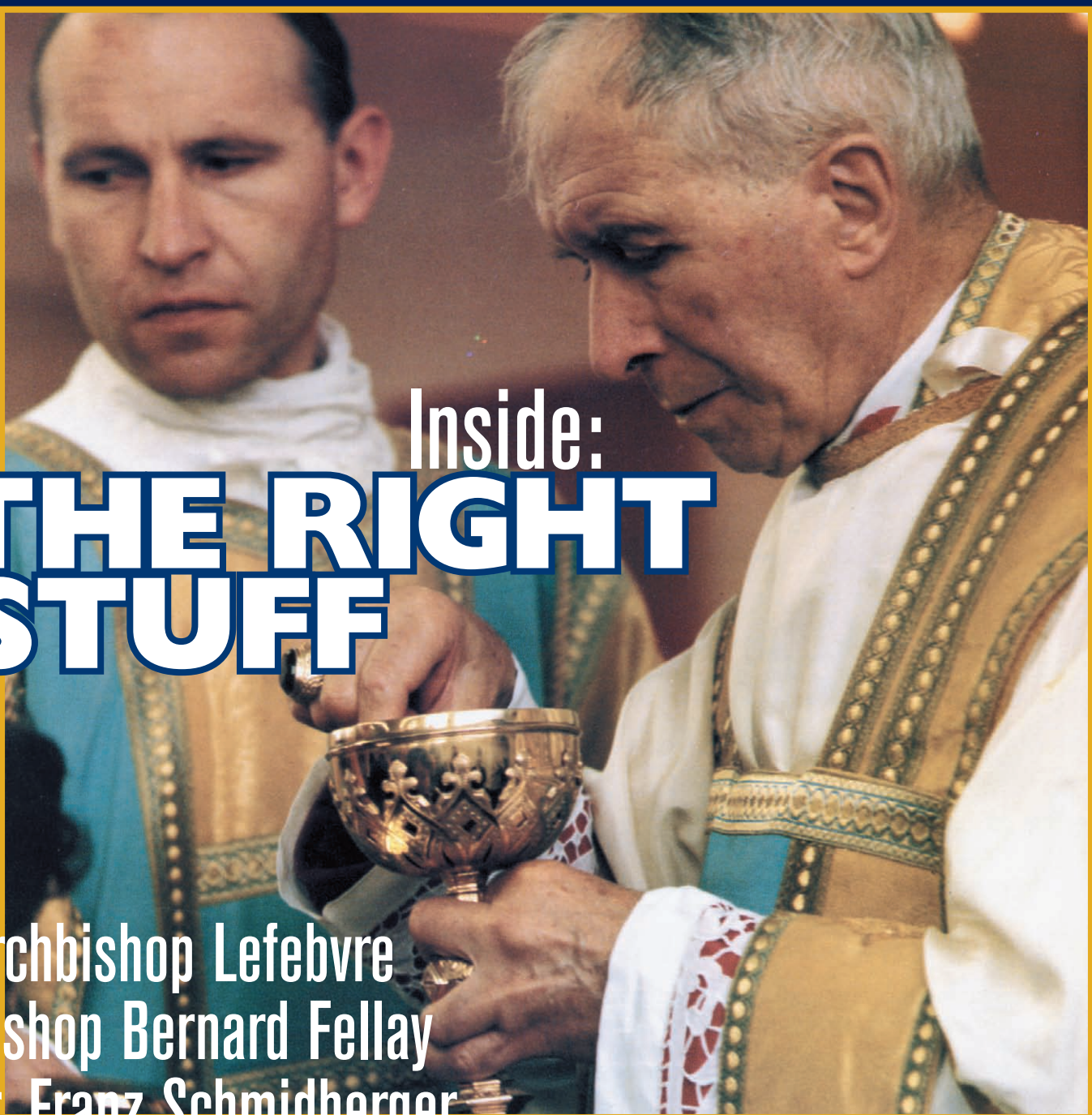
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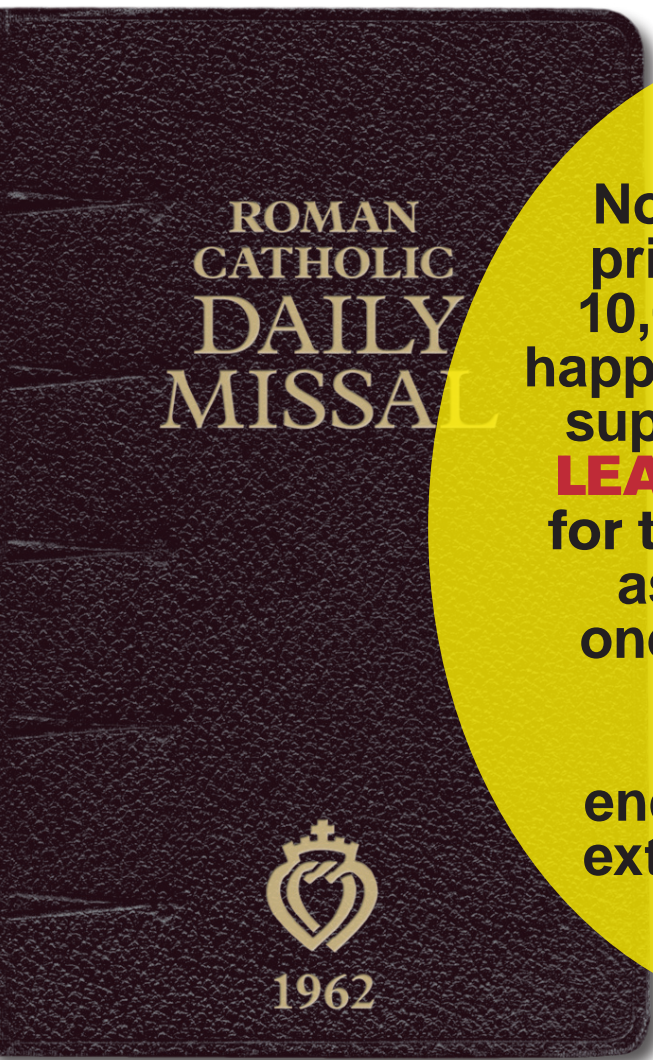


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—Pope St. Pius X

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ON OUR COVER: An undated picture [© St. Pius X Seminary, Ecône] previously published on the back cover of *The Angelus* (May-June, 1991). Fr. Franz Schmidberger, serving as a deacon, helps administer Holy Communion with Archbishop Lefebvre.

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ARCHBISHOP LE the Papacy, the Council, & the Council Popes



Taken from a conference given by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, First Assistant to the Superior General of the Society of Saint Pius X, Bishop Bernard Fellay. Given at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Kansas City, Missouri (Jan. 27, 2006).

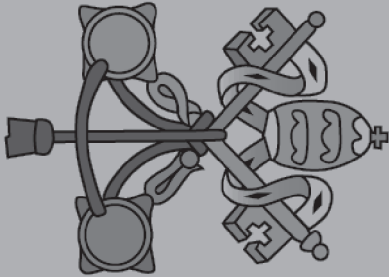
The Papacy—An Institution of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Simon, son of Jona, originally from Bethsaida in Galilee, later lived in Capharnaum at the Lake of Genesareth. One day his brother Andrew, who was also a fisherman “brought him to Jesus, who, looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter [= the rock]” (Jn. 1:42). Now, we know from all sacred history that when God imposes a special name on someone, He imposes with it a special mission connected with this name. Our Blessed Lord has so chosen Peter to be the rock on which He would build His Church, and while looking on him in this first meeting He saw the whole row of popes throughout the history of Christianity.

In all lists of the Apostles, Simon Peter always holds the first place. Our Lord visited his house in Capharnaum, where He healed his mother-in-law from a fever. We read about no other visit of Jesus to the house of another Apostle. One day He preached from a ship; it was the ship of Peter. We understand this ship to be the symbol of the Church; and so does Our Lord preach the enlightening Faith and saving doctrine in and from the Church of Peter, and from no other “Church.”

We see later on how Our Lord promised to Peter the apostolic primacy, to be His vicar on earth. We are in the quarters of Cesarea Philippi, and Jesus asked His disciples saying:

FEBVRE,



“Whom do men say that the Son of man is?” But they said: “Some John the Baptist, and others say Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” But Jesus saith to them: “But whom do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said: “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answering, said to him: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven.”

By divine inspiration, you have said who I am. By my divine word, I will tell you who you are:

“Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:13-19)

The Church of the Incarnate Word would be built on Peter, the Rock, and Peter will have the keys of heaven, that is to say, supreme power in the house of God.

There is another significant event for Peter: Our Lord prayed in a very special manner for him:

And the Lord said: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” (Lk. 22:31)

Nowhere in the Holy Scripture do we read that Our Lord has prayed in such a way for any other of His twelve Apostles; also, we must have in mind that the prayer of Our Lord, High Priest, is always efficient. Already here, Our Lord speaks about a conversion of Peter, and that he would then have the mission to confirm the Apostles and the faithful in the Faith.

After His resurrection, Jesus instituted Peter as the supreme shepherd of His flock (Jn. 21:15ff.). We see some of the disciples of Jesus going fishing, and after a fruitless night, in the morning Our Lord standing at the shore gave them the order to cast again the net, which then was filled with a multitude of big fish. After breakfast, Jesus said to Peter:

“Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?” He saith to Him: “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” He saith to him: “Feed my lambs.” He saith to him again: “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?” He saith to Him: “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” He saith to him: “Feed my lambs.” He said to him the third time: “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?” Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: “Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee.” He said to him: “Feed my sheep.”

So here the Divine Redeemer accomplished what He promised in the quarters of Cesarea Philippi, and instituted Peter as shepherd of the sheep and supreme shepherd of the shepherds.

Going through the Gospels we see the faithfulness, devotion, profound faith, and burning love of this man for the Divine Master. He is even ready to go to prison and to death with Him (Lk. 22:33).

But this man also had his weaknesses. Just after the promise to Peter that later on he would be the rock of the Church, Jesus foretold His Passion to His disciples:

From that time, Jesus began to shew to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying: “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee.” (Mt. 16:21-22)

So he wanted to hinder the Divine Savior from fulfilling the mission His Father entrusted to Him, that is to say, to redeem us by His painful Passion on the cross. Peter expected, as most of the Jews, a more temporal redeemer, he had not yet understood the way of Calvary. Jesus corrected him with words very astonishing for the one to whom He had just promised the keys of heaven:

“Go behind me, Satan! Thou art a scandal unto Me because thou savourest not the things that are of God but the things that are of men.” (Mt. 16:23)

Is it not surprising, even very surprising, that Jesus calls the first pope a Satan?

In the night of the Passion, Peter, having testified his faithfulness with words, then denied his Master three times swearing and cursing that he knew not the man (Mt. 26:74). During three years he had heard all the heavenly preaching, had seen all the miracles, and had been warned several times about this hour of passion—yet he became weak, very weak; but when the cock crew and Our Lord’s gaze fell upon him, he understood his great sin and going forth, he wept bitterly.

Now, we could say that these weaknesses were in Peter before the sending of the Holy Ghost, by which the Apostles were confirmed in sanctifying grace, confirmed in the apostolic mission. But even after Pentecost we hear about another weakness of Peter. There were two sorts of Christians in the early Church: converted Jews and converted heathens, and the Apostles had well established that these converted heathens were not bound to the law of Moses, but they were of the same dignity as the converted Jews, faith having purified their hearts. Peter, living in Antioch, was in communion with both parts until some of the converted Jews from Jerusalem came to Antioch. Then Peter withdrew and separated himself from the converted pagans for fear of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. St. Paul tells us the story in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians:

But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that some came from James [Bishop of Jerusalem], he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And to his dissimulation the rest of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: “If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. 2:11-14)

St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, bishop according to his rank, withstood Peter, the Pope, publicly to his face, because he walked not uprightly unto the truth of the Gospel! What a lesson in the history of the Church!

And still another event is quite remarkable for our consideration: We already heard about the miraculous catch of fish after the resurrection of Our Lord at the Lake of Genesareth. When John, who was in the ship with Peter, realized the miracle, he recognized immediately the author, comprehending this person on the shore to be the Lord Himself. Peter did not draw this conclusion, he did not understand. John is the bishop, Peter is the pope. It is John who makes Peter aware: “It is the Lord” (Jn. 21:7). There might be situations in the Church when a bishop has to tell the pope: “It is the Lord.” Buddha is not the true God, nor is Mohammed the true prophet; neither will Assisi meetings bring peace to earth; there is only

one true God, the Holy Trinity. There is only one true mediator between God and man, Our Lord Jesus Christ, God made man, and there can be no peace on earth beside Him, Prince of peace. *Dominus est*—it is the Lord!

Later on Peter died in Rome as a martyr, being crucified with the head downwards, after having founded the local Church at Antioch and the Apostolic See at Rome; that is why the office of the supreme shepherd of the Church for all times will be linked to the Bishop of Rome; the pope can take his residence for a certain time or even for a long time outside of Rome, but always and only the Bishop of Rome will be the Vicar of Christ on earth. That is why the Roman local Church is the first of all local churches in the whole world, she is *Mater* and *Magistra*, mother and teacher of the others. This very fact makes us understand the importance of the Roman Church for our being Catholics. In fact, Divine Providence, which guides all things, prepared the Roman Empire with its capital for the Incarnation of the Son of God and the spreading of His Gospel. When Our Lord was born in Bethlehem, Judea was under Roman domination, and the Roman Empire with all its links of culture and trade covered practically the whole known world. Roman families, among them many from nobility, supported the Apostles, placed their houses at their disposal for the celebration of the Holy Mass, many of which later on were converted into churches. Many of them not only gave their goods for the Church but even their lives. Archbishop Lefebvre in his *Spiritual Journey* [available from Angelus Press. Price: \$7.95] has written some wonderful pages about “the providential choice of Rome as the See of Peter, and the blessings of this choice for the growth of the Mystical Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ”:

I believe I must add some words to draw the attention of our priests and our seminarians to the indisputable fact of the Roman influences on our spirituality, on our liturgy, and even on our theology.

One cannot deny that this is a providential fact. God, Who leads all things, has in His infinite wisdom prepared Rome to become the Seat of Peter and center for the radiation of the Gospel. Hence the adage: *Unde Christo e Romano*.

Dom Guéranger, in his *Histoire de sainte Cecile*, recounts the great part which members of great Roman families played in the foundation of the Church, giving their goods and their blood for the victory and the reign of Jesus Christ. Our Roman liturgy is the faithful witness of this.

Romanitas is not a vain word. The Latin language is an important example. It has brought the expression of the Faith and of Catholic worship to the ends of the world. And the converted people were proud to sing their Faith in this language, a real symbol of the unity of the Catholic Faith.

Schisms and heresies are often begun by a rupture with *Romanitas*, a rupture with the Roman liturgy, with Latin, with the theology of the Latin and Roman Fathers and theologians.

It is this force of the Catholic Faith rooted in *Romanitas* that Freemasonry wished to eliminate by occupying the

Pontifical States and enclosing Catholic Rome in Vatican City. This occupation of Rome by the Masons permitted infiltration of the Church by Modernism and the destruction of Catholic Rome by Modernist clergy and Popes who hasten to destroy every vestige of *Romanitas*: the Latin language, the Roman liturgy. The Slavic Pope [John Paul II] is the most determined to change the little which was kept by the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat. Rome is no longer a sacred city. He encourages the establishing of false religions in Rome itself, accomplishing there scandalous ecumenical meetings. He everywhere pushes for the inculturation in the liturgy, destroying the last vestiges of the Roman liturgy. He has modified in practice the status of the Vatican State. He has renounced coronation, thus refusing to be a Head of State. This relentlessness against *Romanitas* is an infallible sign of rupture with the Catholic Faith that he no longer defends.

The Roman pontifical universities have become chairs of Modernist pestilence. The coeducation of the Gregorian is a perpetual scandal.

All must be restored *in Christo Domino*—in Christ the Lord, in Rome as elsewhere.

Let us love to see how the ways of Divine Providence and Wisdom pass by Rome. We will conclude that one cannot be Catholic without being Roman. This applies also to Catholics who have neither the Latin language nor the Roman liturgy. If they remain Catholic, it is because they remain Roman, like the Maronites, for example, by their ties to the Catholic and Roman French culture which formed them.

It is, moreover, an error to speak of Roman culture as Western. The converts from Judaism brought with them from the Orient all that was Christian, all that which in the Old Testament was a preparation and could be a component of Christianity, all that which Our Lord had assumed and that the Holy Ghost had inspired the Apostles to adopt. How many times do the epistles of St. Paul teach us on this subject!

God willed that Christianity, cast in a certain way in the Roman mold, receive from it a vigorous and exceptional expansion. All is grace in the divine plan and our Divine Savior disposes all as the Romans are said to act, that is, *cum consilio et patientia* or *suaviter et fortiter*—with counsel and patience, sweetly and mightily” (Wis. 8:1).

Ours is the duty to guard this Roman Tradition desired by Our Lord, as He wished us to have Mary as our Mother. (*Spiritual Journey*, pp.71-73)

Peter had his successors as bishop of Rome: Linus, Cletus, Clemens...until Benedict XVI in our days. The first 35 popes were all martyrs, men who offered their lives for the Catholic Faith. But we also see other wonderful personalities on the Apostolic See: Leo the Great with his wonderful theological sermons and the strength with which he drove away Attila; Gregory the Great, sending St. Augustine and his monks to the Anglo-Saxons to convert them; Gregory VII, who withstood to the face the German emperor Henry IV and fought for the liberty of the Church; St. Pius V, who appealed for a crusade against the Turks, the Pope of Lepanto, the Rosary and our Roman Missal; Bl. Pius IX, the Pope of the Immaculata and of the first Vatican Council; St. Pius X, the great pope in his fight against modernism and the enemies of Christianity; Pius XII, with his

wonderful statements concerning all the problems of the social area. They are all the true heirs of St. Peter. But we also see popes with astonishing weaknesses, sometimes in their private life, like Alexander VI; sometimes in their government like the popes in the 10th century, called the *Saeculum Obscurum*—the Dark Century; sometimes even weak in the defense of the Faith like Pope Liberius, who approved of a synod which excommunicated the great defender of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Athanasius. And what must we say about Pope Honorius, who held the Apostolic See from 625 to 638 and was condemned by the third Council of Constantinople and even by Pope Leo II because he was weak in his defence of Catholic truth, teaching us that there are two natures in Our Lord, the divine nature and the human nature with the true human will? After his death Honorius was excommunicated by the above-mentioned Council which Leo II approved, but he was never declared not to have been the pope. He was not declared directly a heretic, but rather favoring heresy.

So we see that not only the faithfulness and the love of Peter for his Divine Master passed on to his successors, but also some of his weaknesses.

Archbishop Lefebvre and the Council Popes

After this rather long introduction let us see the attitude of the Archbishop towards the Popes of the Council, that is to say John XXIII and Paul VI, and the faithful executor of the Council decrees, John Paul II.

Already in 1927, Archbishop Lefebvre had gone through a trial for his devotion to the Roman Pontiff. What happened? Pope Pius XI condemned *Action Française*, which fought for a certain renewal of the French nation; but its leader, Charles Maurras, was at least in this moment not a declared Catholic—more of an agnostic at the time. The Pope, misguided by bad information, thought that Fr. Le Floch, Rector of the French Seminary in Rome, was an adept of *Action Française* and insisted that he should be dismissed from his function. For the young seminarian Lefebvre, who had a profound devotion for the Pope and at the same time a profound veneration for Father Le Floch as a son has for his father, this was a difficult situation. But this did not change or diminish his spirit of Romanity.

When John XXIII convoked the Council, the Archbishop was appointed a member of the central commission for its preparation. He realized the danger and tried in this preparatory work, and still more in the Council itself, to eliminate the liberal influences as far as he could. He succeeded in many points, but the Rhine alliance of liberal Council Fathers and experts was almost almighty, having the sympathy of John XXIII and Paul VI. The Archbishop fought as much as he could against the

decrees on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*) and the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*); he was the motor of the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*, a group of about 250 conservative Council Fathers. He could not hinder the application of these documents, but his devotion for the Pope was too profound to attack him personally. A new situation came about when in 1969 the new missal, the *Novus Ordo Missae*, was published and even imposed. The Archbishop had accepted some previous reforms, but would not celebrate this new Mass; he simply continued with the old one. This same year he gathered some young people around him in Fribourg, Switzerland, sending them to the university for their philosophical and theological studies; the year after he opened the seminary of Ecône with ecclesiastical approval. But the battle was pre-programmed: In 1974 two prelates from Rome were ordered to make a canonical visit to Ecône, making during this visit very strange statements about eternal truth, the physical resurrection of Our Lord, celibacy, and others; the Archbishop was then forced to take a public stand, which includes, not explicitly but implicitly, statements against the orientation of Paul VI. This is his famous declaration of November 21, 1974, which is still very applicable today and our guideline, with no restrictions, even in present talks with Rome:

We adhere with our whole heart, and with our whole soul to Catholic Rome, the Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of those traditions necessary for the maintenance of that Faith, to eternal Rome, Mistress of Wisdom and Truth.

Because of this adherence we refuse and have always refused to follow the Rome of neo-Modernist and neo-Protestant tendencies, such as were clearly manifested during the Second Vatican Council, and after the Council in all the resulting reforms.

All these reforms have, indeed, contributed and still contribute to the demolition of the Church, to the ruin of the priesthood, to the destruction of the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments, to the disappearance of religious life, and to naturalistic and Teilhardian teaching in universities, seminaries, and catechetics, a teaching born of Liberalism and Protestantism many times condemned by the solemn magisterium of the Church. No authority, even the very highest in the hierarchy, can constrain us to abandon or to diminish our Catholic Faith, such as it has been clearly expressed and professed by the Church's magisterium for 19 centuries.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8).

Is this not what the Holy Father is repeating to us today? And if a certain contradiction is apparent in his words and actions, as well as in the acts of various Roman Congregations, then we choose what has always been taught, and we turn a deaf ear to the innovations which are destroying the Church.

The *lex orandi* (law of prayer) cannot be profoundly changed without changing the *lex credendi* (law of belief). The New Mass is in line with the new catechism, the new priesthood, new seminaries, new universities, and the charismatic or Pentecostal church, all of which are in opposition to orthodoxy and to the age-old magisterium.

This reform, since it has issued from Liberalism and from Modernism, is entirely corrupt. It comes from heresy and results in heresy, even if all its acts are not formally heretical. It is thus impossible for any faithful Catholic who is aware of these things to adopt this reform, or to submit to it in any way at all. To ensure our salvation, the only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine, is a categorical refusal to accept the reform.

It is for this reason that, without any rebellion, bitterness or resentment, we pursue our work of the formation of priests under the star of the age-old magisterium, in the conviction that we can thus do no greater service to the holy Catholic Church, to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to future generations.

For this reason we hold firmly to all that has been believed and practiced by the Church of all time, in her faith, morals, worship, catechetical instruction, priestly formation and her institutions, and codified in the books which appeared before the Modernist influence of the late Council. Meanwhile, we wait for the true Light of Tradition to dispel the darkness which obscures the sky of Eternal Rome.

By acting thus we are sure, with the grace of God, and the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and St. Pius X, of remaining faithful to the Catholic and Roman Church, to all the successors of St. Peter, and of being *fideles dispensatores mysteriorum Domini nostri Jesu Christi in Spiritu Sancto*. (Taken from *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican*, available from Angelus Press. Price: \$14.95.)

During time there were, here and there, priests like Father De Nantes in France, and little groups in Europe and America who declared the Pope to be an heretic, or who even said that he lost the papacy or never became the pope. Archbishop Lefebvre wrote to Father De Nantes, who invited him to break with Rome, with these remarkable words: "If there is one bishop who will not break with Rome, I am this bishop." Nevertheless the Archbishop asked himself more and more the question: "How is it possible that the Vicar of Christ supports the liberal forces, introducing a protestantizing liturgy? How is it possible that he works for the laicization of the Catholic States? Is he really the Pope?" Paul VI died on the 6th of August in 1978. Archbishop Lefebvre for one moment doubted the legitimacy of the election of his successor since the cardinals over 80 years were excluded from the conclave. But when he saw that the whole Church, and especially the Roman Church, including the cardinals excluded, accepted the election, he no longer had any doubts about the new Pope John Paul I. Unfortunately, the new Pontiff did not want a crowning ceremony and also defended religious liberty, saying that he changed his opinion on this subject during the Council, and when he was patriarch in Venice he persecuted priests who said the traditional Mass. His pontificate was a very short one: he died after 33 days. His successor was John Paul II from Poland, who granted an audience to Archbishop Lefebvre only one month after his election, on November 18th.

In this meeting John Paul II brought up three points: 1) "It is said that you are against the pope."

The Archbishop clarified his position saying that he accepted fully the first Vatican Council with the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*. The Pope seemed to be satisfied. 2) "It is said that you are against the Council." The Archbishop answered that he accepted the Council interpreted in light of Tradition, as the Pope himself had declared shortly before. Once again the Pope was satisfied. It must be added, nevertheless, that the Archbishop understood Tradition as a criterion: What could be conformed could stand; what was ambiguous had to be clarified, and what was contrary to Tradition had to be eliminated. 3) "It is said that you are against the new liturgy." The Archbishop explained that in fact he had maintained the old liturgy, having reservations about the new one. The Pope said that this was a question of discipline, and that he should settle this with Cardinal Šeper, whom he called immediately. Cardinal Šeper came in with these words: "Holy Father, they make a banner of the old Mass, we cannot grant what they ask for like this." The Pope himself left the meeting excusing himself by other obligations. Cardinal Šeper told the Archbishop that he would call him later on to come to see him in Rome; but the conversations and exchanges of letters showed no result. In 1981 he died, and Cardinal Ratzinger, whom the Archbishop had already met together with other cardinals who were eager to find a solution, took the office as the head of the Congregation of Faith, as successor of Cardinal Šeper. He was also entrusted with the task of being the intermediary between the Archbishop and the Holy See.

So immediately there were letters exchanged which always touched upon the same subjects: The Council and the *Novus Ordo Missae*. If the Archbishop would accept the first one and accept the orthodoxy of the second one, even celebrating it from time to time, there could be a possible permission for the celebration of the Latin Tridentine Mass for everyone. But all these proposals were unacceptable for the Archbishop and the Society. In 1983 the new Canon law was published which is the precise juridical transcription of the Second Vatican Council and its spirit. The Archbishop once again manifested his serious reserves. The same year the Pope visited a protestant church in Rome. In 1985 the Archbishop presented the *Dubia*,¹ that is to say, questions concerning religious liberty, to the Holy See; he was invited by Cardinal Ratzinger to do so. These *Dubia* received a very poor answer which was in no way satisfactory. The Conciliar Church seemed to be really rooted in a new doctrine. In 1986 the Pope visited the Synagogue in Rome and announced a meeting of all religious leaders of the different Christian denominations and world religions in Assisi for October of that year. Archbishop Lefebvre saw in such a meeting a public attack to the first Article of our Creed and the first Commandment of the Decalogue and so, withstood the Pope publicly

in sermons on Holy Thursday and on Easter in his pontifical masses. He had no hope any longer for a quick return of the Roman Authorities to the traditional teaching, discipline and liturgy of the Church.

So then, after the canonical visitation of Cardinal Gagnon in 1987 and some negotiations in April and May 1988 he finally consecrated four auxiliary bishops on the 30th of June that year, who were to continue his action in the Society of Saint Pius X, namely, to give the holy orders to the seminarians and the sacrament of confirmation to the faithful. He never had the intention to give to these bishops a regular jurisdiction or to break with Rome; on the contrary, by this action he wanted to help the Roman Authorities to find the way back to what they have left in the Council and after the Council. He acted out of the state of necessity, not of the Society St. Pius X, but that of the Church which was in danger of losing the Catholic priesthood and the true Catholic Mass. The Roman Authorities declared him to be excommunicated in spite of the fact that the new Canon law of 1983 foresees no censors at all or at least only a minor punishment for those who act out of necessity, even if they are objectively wrong. Archbishop Lefebvre died in 1991 without regretting anything, being convinced that with his heroic action of June 30, 1988, he had rendered the best service to the popes, the bishops and the whole Church.

Are the Council Popes True Popes?

Archbishop Lefebvre, after some questions to himself on this subject and after some hesitations when he heard about the Assisi meeting, nevertheless always considered that the Council Popes were canonically true popes, even if they had a very liberal spirit and did and continue to do harm to the Church. He even expressed the opinion that one day the Church might gather a tribunal in order to examine how far these popes have damaged the Church and could come to a condemnation like the third Council of Constantinople or Pope Leo II concerning Pope Honorius. Nevertheless he always prayed for the Pope publicly and asked his priests to do so.

Now let us give the philosophical and theological arguments proving that the conciliar popes are true popes in the canonical sense, even if they are filled with false philosophical and theological principles and have done and do a lot of harm to the Church. There are eight such arguments:

1) According to Our Lord's own words related in Matthew 16:18, His Church is built on Peter; so this is a Divine Institution which nobody can change at any time. In every construction the foundations are central to the construction itself. There may be only provisional pillars, holding

the construction for a short time; staying with this analogy, we could say that this is the case after the death of a pope till the election of a new one; but this is never a long and stable situation.

2) For every human society authority, a head, is essential; it is the *causa efficiens* which holds it together. This is still more true for the Church with one billion of members in all parts of the world. It is in open contradiction to the constitution of the Church to think that there has been no pope since 1958 or 1965.

3) The vacancy of the Holy See would be an extraordinary event and situation in the Church. Every well-meaning faithful Catholic would recognize this state of things since the Church is a visible body. But those who claim that the Holy See is vacant are far from being in agreement about the date when this happened. Some say that after the death of Pius XII there was no longer any legitimate pope; others say that with the approval of the Council, Paul VI fell into heresy, and so the Apostolic See has been vacant since 1965; others say that the determinant event was the publication of the *Novus Ordo Missae*; once again, others say that it was the Assisi meeting by which the Pope ceased to be pope. If there is no unity among these sedevacantists in this important question, it is the best proof that the event itself never happened, otherwise everybody would agree that from this or that concrete date, we have no pope.

4) If the Pope is not pope, all the bishops he appointed might be true bishops according to their orders, but they would not be legitimate bishops with jurisdiction. Now, there is no longer any resident bishop in the world who was not appointed by the conciliar popes, and so there would be no longer any legitimate bishop in the whole world, which is absolutely contrary to the constitution of the Church itself, to her indefectibility promised by Our Lord Himself: "The gates of hell will not prevail against her."

5) Not only would there no longer be any legitimate residential bishops, but also all the cardinals are all now appointed by Paul VI or John Paul II, so now they would not be true cardinals. But the cardinals are the electors—and the only electors—of a new pope. How then can a new pope be elected at any time? Now, the Church is a perfect society, which means that it can at any time reach its aim by its own means. To have a pope as head is essential for the Church; but if the cardinals are not cardinals, it cannot reach this aim by its own means and so this state of things would be in contradiction with the Divine Constitution of the Church as a perfect society. For the sedevacantist

groups, only a direct intervention of God would be a possible exit from the crisis.

6) It is not up to the faithful nor even to priests and bishops to judge the pope: *Prima Sedes a nemine judicatur*, says Canon 1556 of the canon law of 1917; but it is up to us to keep the faith at any cost whether the Pope has a good Catholic spirit or whether he be a liberal.

7) What are the fruits of those sedevacantist groups and persons? They are all divided amongst themselves, and their main activity is to criticize those who believe that John Paul II was and that Benedict XVI is a true pope. Moreover, by their own logic, some of these groups have elected their own pope and so we have at this moment about 15 of them: Peter II in France, Gregory XVII in Spain (who died recently), Linus II in England, Pius XIII in America, etc. You see how such a position ends in a terrible sectarian spirit.

8) The liberal mentality of the Council popes explains perfectly and sufficiently the drama of the papacy in our days, and we do not have the right to look for stronger explanations if those are sufficient to explain the situation. In a very famous sermon delivered on the occasion of the priestly ordinations in 1982 at Ecône, Archbishop Lefebvre compared the Church and the drama of our days with Our Lord and His Passion. He said the following:

We see Our Lord humiliated and annihilated to a certain point and ask ourselves how this is possible for Him, being true God and true man. Now, one part of the people say that, since this humiliation to such a point is a reality, He cannot be true God because for God this is impossible. These are the Arians, followers of Arius, who denied the Divinity of Christ. Others say: Since He is true God, His annihilation cannot be real, His Passion certainly was only in appearance; He only had taken a body in appearance, but He was not really man.

And the Archbishop made the application to the Church.

There are people who see the passion of the Church and the tragedy of papacy, so they conclude that such a degradation of the papacy is not possible, and so the Pope can not be the pope. Others draw the contrary conclusion, saying that since the Pope is pope, all the reforms coming from Rome must be good; there is only an appearance of bad. And so they swallow the poison.

Then Archbishop Lefebvre concluded:

We are certainly in front of a mystery. Nobody in the time of Pius XII would have believed that the Church one day would undergo such a passion; it even would be absolutely impossible for her to go through such a passion. But we have to face the reality, and so we have to maintain the Divine Institution of Peter on the one hand, and on the other we cannot deny that these reforms coming from Rome are destroying the Church.

And that is why we hold with all our hearts to these words of the Archbishop: “Neither liberal nor modernist on the one hand, nor schismatic on the other, but Catholic, Roman Catholic.” We want to preserve and maintain the Catholic Faith, and by no means do we want to fall into the conciliar and postconciliar errors; but on the other hand we want to stay attached to the Holy See forever. Our way is like a walk on the top of a high mountain with an abyss on each side. On the occasion of the episcopal consecrations Archbishop Lefebvre prophesied that one day Rome will recognize our attitude and thank us for our action. This is already becoming reality: In the audience of August 29, 2005, given by Pope Benedict XVI to our Superior General, Bishop Fellay, the Pope spoke about this “venerable Archbishop Lefebvre, this great man of the universal Church.” Also, the then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote three years ago to one of our best friends in Germany that he thanks him for his articles, books, and conferences. There is, however, terrible damage done to souls and Christian institutions like the Catholic family, parishes, seminaries, monasteries, and Catholic States by this liberal spirit. But there is also a certain danger of a schismatic spirit, as we see it clearly among the sedevacantists who no longer have the spirit of the Church, the *sentire cum Ecclesia*. A spirit of separation from Rome always ends very badly as we see for the Greeks, the Russians, England under Henry VIII, or the Old Catholics after 1870. We are seeing here an old general principle, very easy to understand in theory but often difficult to apply: We must always hate sin, but love the sinner. Sometimes we hate the sin so much that we are also inclined to hate the sinner; on other occasions, we love the sinner so much that we tend to excuse the sin.

CONCLUSION: Our Expectations


The new Pope Benedict XVI will certainly not be the great reformer of the Church as was Gregory VII or St. Pius X. He is a man full of the ideas of the Council to which he contributed as an expert, and he continues and will continue in this line. His address to the Roman Curia on December 22 is a true manifestation of how much he defends religious liberty and the assimilation of the Church to the modern world with its errors, always condemned by the popes, especially since the French Revolution, until the Second Vatican Council. Secondly, he is not a strong leader and a man of government, but more a cultivated man of the arts, a university professor. We must realize that if he would really like to bring about a reform, then he would meet a lot of objections and resistance by the liberal forces in the Church. And, finally, if you want to bring about a reform you need the men who will carry it out in their function, in their place. But where are these men today? Where

are the saints, and where are the great bishops and theologians?

What we can expect of the new Pope is some sympathy for the more conservative forces in the Church and certain favors for the Traditional Mass. Moreover he might make one or more good appointments in the Roman Curia and to the bishops' seats, even among bad ones like the appointment of Archbishop Levada [as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith]. Concerning the present ecumenism, we should ask him to show himself to be the true successor of St. Peter, who on the first feast of Pentecost told the Jews who asked him what they would have to do in order to be saved, that there is a threefold condition: Regret your sins and convert, believe in Jesus Christ and His Divinity, and be baptized, otherwise, there is no salvation and no hope of it. Doing this, the ecumenical meetings would very soon come to an end.

We must all together pray for the Pope, and pray a lot. You remember that Peter was imprisoned by King Herod, who wanted to execute him as he had done with St. James, the first martyr among the Apostles. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the whole Church stayed in constant prayer for Peter, who was delivered by an angel and so escaped from the hands of Herod. The Council Popes, even Benedict XVI, are today in a kind of spiritual prison, the prison of the Council Ideology. We must pray for the Holy Father since the Church depends almost entirely on the Pope. A truly Catholic pope is an enormous benediction; a liberal one is more like a punishment for the Church.

Let us neither be discouraged nor be of little faith, seeing the passion of the Church; but neither let us have illusions about the state of things. The overcoming of the crisis of the Church depends much also on each of us; it must be surmounted in ourselves first. We must persevere in our battle like Gedeon, who fought a large army with only 300 courageous men; or like the Machabees, where one father with his five sons restored the religious order in Israel; or like Gregory VII, who died in exile with these words on his lips: “I have loved justice and I have hated injustice; that is why I die in exile.” He himself did not see the results of his courageous action, of his efforts, labors and prayers, but later on his reform bore its fruits and granted full freedom to the Church.

Virgo fidelis ora pro nobis—Virgin most faithful, pray for us. 

This conference was given by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, First Assistant to the Superior General, at various chapels of the Society of St. Pius X during the month of January, 2006. Angelus Press thanks Fr. Schmidberger for his assistance in editing this written version of his speech.

¹ The complete title of this study was “Dubia about the Conciliar Declaration on Religious Liberty.” An English version has been published under the title *Religious Liberty Questioned: Archbishop Lefebvre's Objections to Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2002. Price: \$12.95).

On January 13, 2006, Bishop Bernard Fellay was invited to Paris by the journalists of the Association of Journalists for Religious Information (AJIR). Over the course of an hour and a half, he answered the questions of some 20 journalists specialized in religious information for the main European press agencies. The dispatches and articles, for brevity's sake, could only report what was said during the press conference very synthetically. This sometimes gives rather striking summaries. For instance, APIC collected bits and pieces of what Bishop Fellay said and presented them as the answers to a three-page interview, whereas the transcript of the conference is at least 20 pages.

You will find here below some of the texts of the journalists alongside the words of Bishop Fellay, transcribed word for word from the recording of the conference. The comparison between the two is enlightening: it shows, if this is still necessary, that information which must of necessity be short does not do justice to every aspect of a complex situation. We must add that this kind of exercise does not allow the speaker to develop his thoughts as he would during a conference given to the faithful. In these days of fast information and swirling rumors, traditional Catholics must keep these realities in mind.



The Holy Father's Speech to the Curia

What the Press wrote:

Concerning the address of the Pope to the Curia on December 22 [See analysis starting on p.36 in this issue—*Ed.*], *La Croix*, in its January 15, 2006 edition summarized the answer of the Superior General of the SSPX in this way:

"It is a capital text," remarked Bishop Fellay. "We see clearly that the Holy Father is trying to shed a new light on the Council. At the same time, he concedes that there had been a discontinuity, at least in the presentation." On the whole, this address "gladdens" the Superior General of the Society. "Even if I think it does not go far enough," he adds.

For its part, France Press Agency wrote:

Bishop Fellay "rejoiced" over the address of the Pope to the Curia on December 22, 2005. The Pope had acknowledged that "in vast areas of the Church the Council had been rather laboriously implemented," stressing that "before as after the Council, the Church remained the same Church."

What Bishop Fellay said:

Concerning Benedict XVI, you are not satisfied with the way in which, in his address to the Curia, he precisely set in opposition this hermeneutic [interpretation] of discontinuity; there was a discontinuity between the thinking as it was before and after the Council. And he supported the hermeneutic of continuity, saying: we remain in the same tradition of the Church.

Well, we see very, very clearly in this address an attempt to shed a new light on the Council. I do not know whether we should say an attempt to save the Council—that would be my way of looking at it—but in any case there is a positive will to set a barrier to stop an interpretation, an understanding of the Council, which has now been the usual presentation of the Council for years. We see very, very clearly that the Pope, under the cover of delicate words, is distancing himself from the usual presentation of the Council. So there is a will to present the Council otherwise, at least on the level of the principles. I do not know what will be the end result.

PRESS CONFERENCE Bishop Fellay

You did present it as a rupture, too.

Oh yes, quite so, I surely did! And besides, if you study this address closely, you will see that the Holy Father concedes that there nevertheless was a rupture, maybe not in the contents, but certainly in the way it was presented and implemented. This is what he says when he tries to show that there would have been no discontinuity on the level of the principles, principles which he claims not to be apparent; so he speaks also of continuity in discontinuity....I think we will have there a very, very interesting subject for discussion.

This address, rather, causes you to rejoice or you....

Its clarity, its precision, and also its will to eliminate a certain number of positions which were really causing us problems in the Church, all these cause me to rejoice; but I think it does not go far enough. But it is always a delicate matter to try to determine how far a movement is going to go. It is quite clear that he is opening a new vista. How broad will this vista be? I do not know.

An Apostolic Administration?

What the Press wrote:

Regarding a possible Apostolic administration which would allow a regularization of the canonical situation of the SSPX, *La Croix* wrote:

What form would this regularization take? It could be an autonomous status, for instance a personal Apostolic administration like that created in 2001 in Campos (Brazil) for the faithful of Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer, another integrist Bishop, co-consecrator at the illicit ordinations of 1988. "I am almost sure they will grant it to us," confided Bishop Fellay. "Even if we do not want to be Catholics in a class of their own: we are not asking the old Mass for ourselves but for all. But maybe we will have to go through this transitory stage."

What Bishop Fellay said:

Among the problems still pending, do you still maintain your claim—forgive me for using this trade-unionist vocabulary—for a special status for the Society within the Church?

I think Rome will grant it to us, so in this respect there is no need to claim it. We find ourselves rather in the reverse situation, that is to say, we keep telling Rome: “But we want to be normal Catholics, we have no desire for a marginalized status.” If you will forgive me the comparison, in a zoo; we do not feel at all like playing the part of the dinosaur to whom a special status is granted. Because in the discussions we have been having with Rome for some time already, we are always told: “Very well, your special charisma will be respected.” And we retort: “Now, listen, this Mass we are requesting, we are not requesting it for ourselves. We are requesting it for everybody. In the past it was the Mass for everybody, the Catholic Mass, and we are asking that it be once again the Mass for everybody and not just ours.” So, in this respect, we are not asking for a special status; quite the contrary. Maybe we will have to go through this stage; yes, it is even probable.

Could it be something along the lines of a prelature like *Opus Dei*?

I think it will be somewhat different. We are talking about an Apostolic administration, which is somewhat different. What is the difference? The prelature pertains only to the members, *i.e.*, actually the members of *Opus Dei* enjoy some, let us say, privileges, but only the members enjoy them. You must be a member of *Opus Dei*. The Society, the members of the Society, strictly speaking are priests and religious, that’s all. There is nothing for the faithful. So we must find a way to include also the faithful, obviously.

So this Apostolic administration could be granted to you, but outside of the bishops, guardians of the unity of Catholics in diocesan territories.

I think there would be an exemption.

You are sure?

I said, “I think”; and yes, I am pretty sure.

After the manner of what was done in Campos for instance, or maybe in a broader way?

That’s it, it is along the lines of Campos. That is to say that per force, at some point, there still are some relations; it is not a completely independent status. The status of the faithful, in such a case, is called a status of mixed jurisdiction, that is to say, Rome does not withdraw those faithful from the authority of the bishops, but it allows them to benefit from the parallel authority found in an administration.

The State of Necessity

What the Press wrote:

Concerning the state of necessity which the SSPX invokes to justify the bishops’ consecrations of 1988 as well as its present apostolate, *La Croix* and *La Libre Belgique* differ. Indeed, the French daily wrote:

We are thus heading still more towards a “regularization” of the Society, rejoices Bishop Fellay, even if the question of the lawfulness of the bishops’ consecrations of 1988 remains pending. For Rome, there was no “state of necessity” that would have justified these ordinations, deploras Bishop Fellay.

Whereas the Belgian daily summed up:

The “state of necessity” invoked by the Lefebvrists to remain on the fringe of the Church would have been implicitly acknowledged by the Pope, to whom the SSPX attributes the desire “to shed a new light on the Council Vatican II and to distance himself from its usual presentation.”

What Bishop Fellay said:

As a matter of fact, Bishop Fellay stated that Benedict XVI did not admit the argument of the state of necessity, while conceding some reality to this state of necessity at least in two countries:

The terms used will be rather words like ‘regularization of a situation’ because, actually, in this respect, there is the problem of the consecrations themselves, which are censured by Rome; on our part, we try to explain that the censure does not apply because of the circumstances, and, let us say, on the basis of canon law. Rome will say or has attempted to say through the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Laws that our argument, *i.e.*, the argument of necessity, was not valid in that case. To express things more pointedly, let us say that there is a canon of the new Code of Canon Law which says that if someone acts out of necessity, he does not fall under the law; and another canon says that if this necessity was purely subjective, *i.e.*, if the necessity did not exist objectively but the person thought there was a necessity, well, he should not be punished with the maximum penalty foreseen by the law. These are the arguments we are using to say, on the one hand that we believe there is a necessity, and even an objective state of necessity; but, at least, that even if Rome does not want to acknowledge this objective state, there remains the subjective point of view; and consequently we should not be punished with the maximum penalty. There was a thesis on this subject, a master in Canon Law written on this theme, and it was received by the Gregorian University. Then the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Laws intervened to say that, in this case, they could not speak of necessity because otherwise, of course, it introduced a principle of possible anarchy in the Church.

Nevertheless, and this is very interesting too, during the private audience with the Pope, the Pope re-used the argument saying: “You may not justify your activity by referring to a state of necessity” giving as an explanation: “I am trying,” he said, “to solve the problems”; such were his very words. It is at the same time an avowal: it means that there are problems; if he tries to solve them, it is because

the problems still exist. And a few minutes later, in his explanation, he himself said: “We should see if there is not a state of necessity in France and in Germany.” This shows that after all our argument is not so bad. This was just a very small development to say that.

In what would there be a state of necessity in France and in Germany?

He did not tell me; he did not say what. First, I wondered, “Why these two countries?” Now, this is a purely personal explanation. I think that the Holy Father, at that point, was referring to the liturgical problems and the opposition that freedom for the old Mass can meet in these two countries. I am not sure this is it, but it is my attempt at an explanation. Because, if I compare France and Germany with the other countries in the world, truly I, for my part, cannot see much difference. It is true that from the liturgical viewpoint, in the United States, for instance, there is much more freedom from many more bishops; there are at least 150 dioceses where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, where it is called the Indult Mass, *i.e.*, the bishop give the permission. But when we speak of a state of necessity, we consider something else. There is not only the liturgy, there is all the life of the Church, there is the teaching of the Faith...

The Future

What the Press wrote:

Concerning the determination to proceed by slow or rapid stages, in the relations between Rome and Ecône, *La Croix* reported:

The integrist leader, who met Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, president of the *Ecclesia Dei* commission on December 15, states that he can even feel from the Vatican a determination to solve the problem as quickly as possible. “Rome wants to go fast, but we are not so sure that we want to go that fast,” nevertheless tempers Bishop Fellay, who considers that “if we were to sign today, all our faithful would not follow us.”

What Bishop Fellay said:

Did you set a time line with Rome?

We are working on it. I cannot say it already exists. The only thing I can say precisely is that Rome would like to go fast, and it seems to us that we cannot go that fast.

Rome would like to go fast. Does that mean that they set a time line?

No. At the very beginning, in the year 2000, I met Cardinal Castrillon on December 29th. At that time, he said “The Pope would like everything to be settled for Easter,” so Easter 2001; and see, we are now in 2006.

I think we are making progress, but slow progress. This is due to several elements. I think that one of the elements that is slowing things down is the psychological element. I tried to explained that to Rome, saying: “Listen, the people who come to us are persons that have been hurt, scandalized, and who, at a given time, took a step that cost them a great deal. That is, they found themselves before a choice, and the choice was either to carry on with a situation that was scandalizing them or to join us knowing that they would find themselves under Church censures. And that is never pleasant to find yourself censured by the Church. Nevertheless, they rather took that step than remain in the situation they were in. Now, how can you imagine, how can you think that these faithful find themselves again in their previous situation as if nothing had happened in between?” That is one thing, and there is also what I would designate under the word “mistrust.” In our circles we “do not trust” Rome, and it takes quite something to overcome this mistrust, to take stock of the present situation to see what did move, what changed, in which direction it is heading. And all this takes time.

Many questions prevented Bishop Fellay from completing his answer. He was about to add what is summed up in the following paragraph taken from his conference of December 11, 2005, at St. Nicolas du Chardonnet:

With the Roman authorities, I concluded saying: “If you want to regain our confidence, words will not suffice. It will require acts. You must regain control. You must condemn what must be condemned, the heresies, the errors. Whether they pertain to faith, to morals, to discipline, to the liturgy, these acts of condemnation must be known. Now, there must also be positive acts. Catholic life, which is presently made impossible in the official Church, the normal, traditional life must be made possible again. And this can be done only by fostering Tradition.”

At the very beginning of the conversation with the journalists, Bishop Fellay had already declared:

On Rome’s part, we can feel a desire to settle the problem, if I may say so, the problem created by the Society, as soon as possible. This is certainly what the Pope, the Holy Father, wants. Concretely, what does this mean? It means that Rome advocates a regularization relatively soon.

On our part, for once, if I may use this term, we somewhat put on the brakes. This does not mean that we will oppose a regularization, but we would not like to short-circuit on important issues which would remain, which would cause problems later on. It is better to try and solve the problems before rather than after.

After the conference, to a journalist who privately asked him if he nevertheless foresaw a date for a reconciliation with Rome, Bishop Fellay jokingly answered, “Yes, ten years from now!” 📄

These excerpts from Bishop Fellay’s press conference are taken from *DICI* (Feb. 4, 2006), the press agency of the Society of Saint Pius X. Angelus Press slightly edited some of the grammar to make it more accessible to English readers.

It's Not About Person. It's About Principle.

A CATECHISM OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Part VI

HEADING TWO:

THE FAMILY SOCIETY

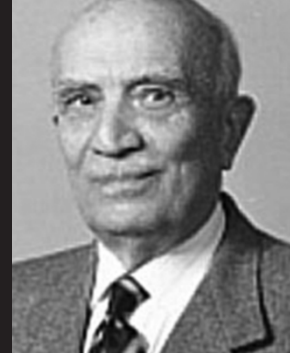
CHAPTER 4. The Family Society

49) Is the separation of couples permissible?

For grave reasons, and when all other remedies have failed, the separation of couples is allowed.

Leo XIII: When, indeed, matters have come to such a pitch that it seems impossible for them to live together any longer, then the Church allows them to live apart, and strives at the same time to soften the evils of this separation by such remedies and helps as are suited to their condition; yet she never ceases to endeavor to bring about a reconciliation, and never despairs of doing so. (*Arcanum*, §25)

With another installment, *The Angelus* continues the serialization of the book *Catechism of Catholic Social Teaching* by Amintore Fanfani (translated by Fr. Henry J. Yannone, The Newman Press, 1960), which will run monthly until its conclusion. He was the author of articles and books on economics, including *Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism*, available from Angelus Press for \$14.95.



A M I N T O R E F A N F A N I

(1908-99) Former Prime Minister of Italy and a professor of Economic History at the Catholic University of Milan, Italy.

50) Can a true marriage be dissolved?

Since the marriage bond is by its very nature indissoluble, no authority in the world can dissolve it, if the marriage is ratified and consummated. The annulments, improperly so-called, are verifications, based on certain proofs, of the non-existence of the bond.

Leo XIII: ...that no power can dissolve the bond of Christian marriage whenever this has been ratified and consummated. (*Arcanum*, §25)

51) What evil effects are produced by divorce?

Divorce favors inconsiderate unions, renders marriage unstable, encourages infidelity, weakens parental authority, perverts morals, brings damage to the well-being and the rearing of offspring, leads entire nations to ruin.

Leo XIII: Matrimonial contracts are by it made variable, mutual kindness is weakened, deplorable inducements to unfaithfulness are supplied, harm is done to the education and training of children, occasion is afforded for the breaking up of homes, the seeds of dissension are sown among families, the dignity of womanhood is lessened and brought low, and women run the risk of being deserted after having ministered to the pleasures of men. Since, then, nothing has such power to lay waste families and destroy the mainstay of kingdoms as the corruption of morals, it is easily seen that divorces are in the highest degree hostile to the prosperity of families and states, springing as they

do from the depraved morals of the people, and, as experience shows us, opening out a way to every kind of evil-doing in public as well as in private life. (*Arcanum*, §17)

Leo XIII: When the stability which is imparted to it by religious wedlock is lost, it follows that the power of the father over his own children, and the duties of the children toward their parents, must be greatly weakened. (*Quod Apostolici Muneris*, §8)

52) What are the benefits that flow from the indissolubility of matrimony?

The indissolubility of matrimony confers great security to the consorts, infidelity is contained, mutual help enhanced, the care and the education of children is favored, morals are protected, society is placed on the path of tranquillity and order.

Pius XI: [Advantages derived from the indissolubility of marriage are:] First of all, both husband and wife possess a positive guarantee of the endurance of this stability which assures that generous yielding of their persons and the intimate fellowship of their hearts.... Besides, a strong bulwark is set up in defense of a loyal chastity against incitements to infidelity, should any be encountered either from within or from without. Any anxious fear lest in adversity or old age the other spouse would prove unfaithful is precluded and in its place there reigns a calm sense of security. Moreover, the dignity of both man and wife is maintained and mutual aid is most satisfactorily assured....In the training and education of children... it plays a great part....For experience has taught that unassailable stability in matrimony is a fruitful source of virtuous life and of habits of integrity. Where this order of things obtains, the happiness and well-being of the nation is safely guarded. (*Casti Connubii*, §37)

53) What are the guarantees for the well-being of the family?

The family will obtain a full measure of well-being if set up according to Christian principles; it shall receive all possible aids from religion, shall be cemented by the love of parents, prudently directed by the authority of the father, and shall by the free exercise of its rights attend to the education of offspring.

Leo XIII: If the family is governed by the rules of Christian life, each member of it will gradually become accustomed to cherish religion and piety, to reject with horror all false and pernicious doctrines, to practice virtue, to render obedience to the authorities, and to repress the insatiable egotism which so greatly debases and enfeebles human nature. (*Inscrutabili Dei Consilio*, §15)

Leo XIII: They [husband and wife] are bound, namely to have such feelings for one another as to cherish always very great mutual love, to be ever faithful to their marriage vow, and to give to one another an unflinching and unselfish help. The husband is the chief of the family, and the head of the wife...[who] must be subject to her husband and obey him; not, indeed, as a servant, but as a companion, so that her obedience shall be wanting in neither honour nor dignity...both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heavenborn love guiding both in their respective duties. (*Arcanum*, §8)

Pius XI: The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth. (*Divini Illius Magistri*)

54) To achieve its perfection, does the family need to be integrated in civil society or the State?

The inadequacy of the means necessary for the family to reach its ends, makes the integrating action by the State useful and sometimes absolutely indispensable. This action, however, must be contained within the limits of the well-being of the family itself and must enhance, rather than infringe upon, the rights of the family or diminish its possibilities.

Leo XIII: Wherefore, provided the limits be not transgressed which are prescribed by the very purposes for which it exists, the family has, at least, equal rights with the State in the choice and pursuit of those things which are needful to its preservation and its just liberty. We say, at least equal rights; for since the domestic household


is anterior both in idea and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth, the former must necessarily have rights and duties which are prior to those of the latter, and which rest more immediately on nature. If the citizens of a State, if the families, on entering into association and fellowship, experienced at the hands of the State hindrance instead of help, and found their rights attacked instead of being protected, such association were rather to be repudiated than sought after. The idea, then, that the civil government should, at its own discretion, penetrate and pervade the family and the household, is a great and pernicious mistake. True, if a family find itself in great difficulty, utterly friendless, and without prospect of help, it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid....In like manner, if within the walls of the household there occur a grave disturbance of mutual rights, the public power must intervene to force each party to give the other what is due....But the rulers of the State must go no further: nature bids them stop here. Paternal authority can neither be abolished by the State nor absorbed. (*Rerum Novarum*, §§10-11)

Pius XI: Now, since it is no rare thing to find that the peculiar purpose, the generation and formation of offspring spring...has priority of nature and therefore of rights over civil society. Nevertheless, the family is an imperfect society, since it has not in itself all the means for its own complete development...[but] finds its own suitable temporal perfection precisely in civil society. (*Divini Illius Magistri*)

Pius XI: Now, since it is no rare thing to find that the perfect observance of God's commands and conjugal integrity encounters difficulties because husband and wife are in straitened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible. And so, in the first place, every effort should be made...namely, that in the state such economic and social methods should be adopted as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as, according to his station in life, is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children....

Care, however, must be taken that the parties themselves, for a considerable time before entering upon married life, should strive to dispose of, or at least to diminish, the material obstacles in their way....Provision must be made also, in the case of those who are not self-supporting, for joint aid by private or public guilds.

When these means which We have pointed out do not fulfill the needs, particularly of a larger or poorer family, Christian charity toward our neighbor absolutely demands that those things which are lacking to the needy should be provided; hence it is incumbent on the rich to help the poor, so that, having an abundance of this world's goods, they may not expend them fruitlessly or completely squander them, but employ them for the support and well-being of those who lack the necessities of life.

If, however, for this purpose, private resources do not suffice, it is the duty of the public authority to supply for the insufficient forces of individual effort....Hence, in making the laws and in disposing of public funds they must do their utmost to relieve the needs of the poor... (*Casti Connubii*, §§129-126) 

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Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)

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TWO KEY POINTS FOR THE CHURCH'S RECOVERY

It seems to us useful to spell out two points necessary for the Church's welfare, the unavoidable paths to follow not only for a recovery, but for a spiritual renaissance that will be solid and fruitful. It must not be forgotten that, however dark the situation, the Church possesses within herself not only the antibodies to resist attacks internal and external, but also all the resources for becoming more resplendent than ever. For the Church is not a human work; she does not have as Founder and Spouse a man, however rich and powerful he might be. The Church was born from the pierced Heart of Jesus: it is there that she dwells, that she is nourished, and whence she receives her whole being. It is this origin and this vital bond with the divine Spouse which found the firm hope of all her true children, and which prevent pain and sorrow from becoming discouragement and pessimism.

Necessity of Returning to the Traditional Definition of Truth

“Necessity of Returning to the Traditional Definition of Truth”: this is the title of a surprisingly timely article by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange.¹ Indeed, it must be realized that the current confusion has not only affected the faith and the supernatural, but it has also blighted the natural domain of reason. Since the act of faith belongs to the faculty of the intellect,² it is clear that any substantial disorder affecting the intellect must affect faith.

The proper and essential end of the intellect is truth, which has been magisterially defined by St. Thomas Aquinas as “*adaequatio rei ad intellectum*,”³ the conformity of thing and intellect. From this adhesion (or even adherence) of the intellect to the real flow the immutable laws (principles of non-contradiction, causality, and finality) which govern reasoning. The dynamic of consciousness, clearly analyzed by St. Thomas Aquinas, originates in this opening of the mind to external reality, to being:

Illud quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit est ens—that which the intellect first conceives as, in a way, the most evident, and to which it reduces all its concepts, is being.⁴

On this passage as well as on others treating of this subject, countless considerations of a philosophical nature might be made; but what interests us here is simply to reaffirm, in face of the confusion of modern thought, that it is in the (Aristotelian) wonder at the verification of the existence of a thing that knowledge or understanding arises, and not in Cartesian doubt.⁵ Knowledge is an opening to being and its laws, which the intellect finds “outside itself” and not by producing or positing it. The intellect is by nature open and in relation to being as sight to colors.

To anyone unfamiliar with philosophy, this discussion can seem to be about matters of little importance and without any connection to the current crisis. But in reality, modern thought has gone astray over this very question: the understanding of the relation between being and thought. Does the former determine the latter, or, as the idealists teach, does the latter found the former? Is it thought which conforms or, so to speak, obeys reality, or the inverse? This is the question St. Pius X profoundly elucidated in his writings against modernism, as Marcel De Corte insightfully affirmed:

The evil which afflicts the individual man...is subjectivism. The intellect renounces its power to know things as they are in themselves, independently of the knowing mind. It deprives itself of the trampoline of reality: why be surprised, then, that it owns itself incapable of rising to the Origin of reality? But by exiling itself from reality, the intellect automatically turns inward upon itself.

Nothing will exist for it any longer but what is manifest within it: no longer the things in themselves, but the ideas which it makes of things. Thus, it is no longer subject to reality, nor to the Originator of reality. The intellect no longer depends upon anything but itself, its power to produce ideas, infinitely malleable entities which are henceforth subject to its creative power. The world is what I think of the world.⁶

If the first action of the intellect is not acknowledged to be its opening to reality; if the intellect does not accept having reality for the rule and norm of its action, then everything is called, at least potentially, in question:

The truth is the matching of mind and reality. If modernism divorces reality from the principle of the real, how could there still be a single eternal and necessary truth in the domain of faith and of social life?...Forms and categories are works which the mind has produced and which it dominates, of which it can, in short, free itself.⁷

It is more urgent than ever to have clear ideas about what Hegel called the “beginning” of thought; without this lucidity, nothing stable can be built. The supreme authority of the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, will sooner or later have to forcefully and repeatedly reaffirm this essential point against those who undermine dogma and truth in their foundation, establishing the bases for the accomplishment of the Satanic project: “*eritis sicut Deus*—you will be as God”:

Coming from subjectivism, the modernist heresy returns to subjectivism, dethroning God and placing man in His place....Since the human consciousness is not linked to anything beyond itself, it can only reach God within itself.⁸

In the domain of theology, accepting the revolution of modern thought means radically undermining the possibility of understanding Catholic doctrine *eodem sensu eademque*, a specific obligation of every Catholic. At the end of the article cited above, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, launched a vigorous, specific appeal:

What is sure is that it is necessary to return to the traditional definition of truth: *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, the conformity of judgment with exterior being and its immutable laws. Dogmas suppose this definition....It is not by an arbitrary option, but by its very nature that our intellect adheres to ontological value and to the absolute necessity of first principles as laws of reality. It is only thus that the traditional definition of truth which the dogmas suppose can be maintained.⁹

This reason, once strong and humble, with all the consequences which flow from it, is the *conditio sine qua non* for building on rock and not on sand, and there are no worse enemies than those who attempt to deny or conceal it: this is the first necessary point of departure for a true reform of the Church.

2 Necessity of Returning to the Foundation of the Faith

The essence of the act of faith is the adhesion of the intellect to truths revealed by God in virtue of the

authority of the One who reveals. One does not believe because the content of the faith is evident, nor because it is in agreement with personal or contemporary aspirations and exigencies; the formal reason of faith is God who has revealed, and the respect of the intellect is owed to Him, because He can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Divine Revelation is transmitted to us and clearly interpreted by the Church's Magisterium, to which is owed humble, filial assent, whether that teaching authority is expressed in its extraordinary form or its ordinary form. It is not possible that the Church could be mistaken when it teaches a truth or condemns an error for centuries. By its divine origin, the faith has a certitude which the most evident human knowledge cannot have (a certitude, we repeat, due to the One who reveals, and not to the intrinsic evidence of what is revealed). And, because of this divine origin, whoever denies a single article of faith saps the faith at its base, as St. Thomas clearly explains:

...whoever does not adhere, as to an infallible and divine rule, to the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Holy Writ, has not the habit of faith, but holds that which is of faith otherwise than by faith....Now it is manifest that he who adheres to the teaching of the Church, as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches; otherwise, if, of the things taught by the Church, he holds what he chooses to hold, and rejects what he chooses to reject, he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will.¹⁰

Now, it is clear that, by reason of the stable nature of truth and of the One who reveals, no one, be he within the Church or without, can arrogate to himself the power to teach something different or even opposed to what the Church received from the Lord and has transmitted over the centuries. To those who feared that such an affirmation would prevent any progress in the Church, St. Vincent of Lerins replied:

But someone will say perhaps: Shall there, then, be no progress in Christ's Church? Certainly; all possible progress....Yet on condition that it be real progress, not alteration of the faith. For progress requires that the subject be expanded on. Alteration demands that it be transformed into something else.¹¹

The second thing necessary for resolving the current crisis and relaunching the Church on its apostolic mission is to disencumber it of all the positions which claim to introduce a change in relation to all the teachings of the constant ordinary and extraordinary Magisterium. Dogma in the Church has undergone great development; but that is due to its intrinsic potentialities (the external circumstances, like the danger of heresy, were but incidental factors). In other words, it was question of a deeper penetration of the truth revealed and received, a penetration which, with the aid of reason, allowed all the logical consequences to be



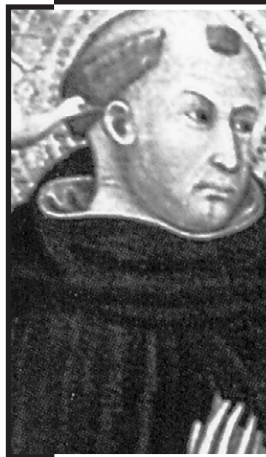
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FR. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE



But someone will say perhaps: Shall there, then, be no progress in Christ's Church? Certainly; all possible progress....Yet on condition that it be real progress, not alteration of the faith. For progress requires that the subject be expanded on. Alteration demands that it be transformed into something else. (*Commonitorium*, XXIII [English translation by the Rev. C. A. Heurtley, D.D.]

ST. VINCENT OF LERINS



...[W]hoever does not adhere, as to an infallible and divine rule, to the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Holy Writ, has not the habit of faith, but holds that which is of faith otherwise than by faith....Now it is manifest that he who adheres to the teaching of the Church, as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches; otherwise, if, of the things taught by the Church, he holds what he chooses to hold, and rejects what he chooses to reject, he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will. (*Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q.5, Art.3.)

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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drawn out. What is happening today, on the contrary—take for example the question of religious liberty—constitutes an alteration caused by the acceptance within the bosom of the Church of the principles of modern thought (in this example, the principle of the absolute liberty of conscience), principles condemned many times by the sovereign Pontiffs. Faced with this, it is necessary to meditate, word by word, on what St. Vincent of Lerins expressed with surprising relevance to the current situation:

On the other hand, if what is new begins to be mingled with what is old, foreign with domestic, profane with sacred, the custom will of necessity creep on universally, till at last the Church will have nothing left untampered with, nothing unadulterated, nothing sound, nothing pure; but where formerly there was a sanctuary of chaste and undefiled truth, thenceforward there will be a brothel of impious and base errors....

This, I say, is what the Catholic Church, roused by the novelties of heretics, has accomplished by the decrees of her Councils,—this, and nothing else,—she has thenceforward consigned to posterity in writing what she had received from those of olden times only by tradition, comprising a great amount of matter in a few words, and often, for the better understanding, designating an old article of the faith by the characteristic of a new name.¹²

Practical Conclusions

It is clear, by the very avowal of the reigning Pontiff, then Cardinal, that the Vatican Council II constitutes, in certain of its texts (*Dignitatis Humanae*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, to name only the most controversial), a novelty that contradicts the past, an opening to the “modern world” to which the Church had been opposed until Pope Pius XII. As long as [churchmen] remain attached to these positions, which can make no claim to a place within the Church’s prior teaching, a true renaissance of the Church will not be possible. They might happen to agree on the condemnation of abuses, on the miserable condition of the Catholic world at present, on the disquieting state of the world today, *etc.*, but on the most important and most urgent point, that is to say, the remedy, they can only be at the antipodes of the true solution.

His Holiness knows well that the question of Tradition cannot be postponed much longer; but the key point consists in understanding that it does not just involve the “problem” of the Society of Saint Pius X. To officially welcome the world of Tradition means recognizing that the solution to all the problems which afflict the Church and the world resides in unconditional fidelity to all that the Church has transmitted to us without alteration to the present. It is only thus, by a humble and confident surrender to God, mistrusting all human calculations and forecasts,

that they will be able to open the way not only to a restoration, but also to a true reform of the Church which will possess all the vigor and dynamism of which she will undoubtedly stand in need.

They must not be afraid to reaffirm all that the Church has always taught; it matters little if these principles ring false in ears deformed by the modern mentality. They must be faithful to the Lord and to His Church, and not to the world and its expectations. The only true charity which we can do to the wayward world is to be faithful to the Tradition of the Church; to fearlessly teach once again all that has been handed down to us, relying exclusively upon God’s help.

Isaias prophesied:

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, trusting in horses, and putting their confidence in chariots, because they are many: and in horsemen, because they are very strong: and have not trusted in the Holy One of Israel, and have not sought after the Lord.

For thus saith the Lord to me: Like as the lion roareth, and the lion’s whelp upon his prey, and when a multitude of shepherds shall come against him, he will not fear at their voice, nor be afraid of their multitude: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight upon mount Sion, and upon the hill thereof...so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem, protecting and delivering, passing over and saving.¹³

It is only by the courage of fidelity to that which the world considers foolishness, folly, and fanaticism, but which is, on the contrary, to paraphrase St. Paul, the wisdom and the power of God, that the Reign of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary will be inaugurated. Faced with such terrible dangers and the pitiful reality which we have before our eyes, there is but one road to take: “Faith, my brethren, more faith!”¹⁴

This act of courageous faith it is that we await from the sovereign Pontiff, which, alone, will enable the Church to be reborn more beautiful and resplendent than ever. ☩

Brunone

Translated by Angelus Press from the French-language edition of *SiSiNoNo*, the *Courrier de Rome* (Sept., 2005).

¹ Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “Nécessité de revenir à la définition traditionnelle de la vérité,” *Angelicum*, 3 (1948), 185-98.

² *Summa Theologica*, II II, Q.2, Art.2, “Cum enim credere ad intellectum pertineat.”

³ *I Sent.*, XIX, Q.5, Art.1. The definition “*adaequatio rei et intellectus*” is equivalent.

⁴ *De Veritate*, Q.1, Art.1.

⁵ [“I think, therefore I am.”—*Ed.*]

⁶ Marcel De Corte, *La grande hérésie*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange, “Nécessité de revenir,” 197-98.

¹⁰ *Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q.5, Art.3.

¹¹ *Communitorium*, XXIII [English translation by the Rev. C. A. Heurtley, D.D.]

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Is. 31:1, 4-5.

¹⁴ L. Orione, *Au nom de la divine Providence* (In the name of Divine Providence) (Milan: Piemme, 1994), 30.

Historic Change of Course in the Liturgical Reform

Interview with Fr. Rinaldo Falsini



A collection of interviews with Fr. Rinaldo Falsini¹ has just arrived in Italian bookstores. The Franciscan tells about the years of his formation, his debut in the liturgical movement, his point of view on the conciliar decree on the liturgy, and his forecasts for the future. One comes across information and reflections that are worth taking into consideration.

It seems especially opportune to pause over the aspects which help to evaluate, on one hand, the distance already covered by the “liturgical reform,” and on the other, to fill in the contours of what is “simmering” while waiting to be assimilated and then put into place without provoking brutal ruptures, and thus without provoking reactions hostile to the progressive strategy.

Continuity or “Historic Change of Course”

Scarcely had it been imposed from “above” when the new rite of Mass provoked disorientation and general discontent. The “people of God” of whom one speaks so much found itself constrained to accept a reform that it had never desired, even though the liturgists affirmed that they had done everything for “pastoral” reasons, to deliver the Christian people oppressed by the tyranny of clericalism and baroque rubricism.

The “reformers” had to begin to make themselves an arsenal to defend their position against the criticisms of the “traditionalists.” The *leitmotiv* of these apologies for the new Mass goes along these lines: no single modification of the Missal of St. Pius V constituted a rupture with the Tridentine Mass; consequently, the reform did not introduce elements contrary to the law of belief, the *lex credendi*, or at least dangerous to it. They justify, for example, the expansion of the Liturgy of the Word as a legitimate emphasis of an element already present in the Missal of St. Pius V.

The most openly progressive liturgists, however, give proof of a greater coherence. They acknowledge that what was born of the liturgical reform is something new, profoundly different

from what existed before. And they affirm this with competence, because they know well that the reform that saw the light of day in 1969 was in reality the fruit of a long work begun in the 1920’s, and which ripened in the bosom of what was called “the liturgical movement.” Falsini is thus right when he affirms:

I believe that very many have not fully understood the main lines of the Council, its innovative purpose. They have not understood that it constituted a truly historic change of course.²

Let us look at the reasons for such an assertion.

The Theocentric Orientation of Catholic Liturgy

In the perspective of the Fathers of an authentically Catholic liturgical renewal, especially St. Pius X and Dom Prosper Gueranger, there is one element that characterizes the physiognomy of Catholic worship: all the liturgical action is oriented towards the glorification and adoration of God, and thus to the forgetfulness of self. Consequently, the active participation of the faithful called for in the first instance by Pope St. Pius X in the *motu proprio Tra le Sollecitudini*,³ then by Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*, consists principally in entering into the dynamic of Catholic worship, which is wholly directed towards God; a dynamic in some sense ecstatic in the literal meaning of the word (to stand outside oneself). One readily understands that in the Catholic conception of the Mass, the didactic and exhortatory ends are subordinate to this first aspect, and, which is even more important, that it takes shape based upon this orientation. Souls that allow themselves to be formed by the Catholic liturgical spirit will adopt the interior conduct designated by the Lord as the only way of approaching the Father: adoration in spirit and in truth. They will advance ever further and better in the permanent adoration which the Church offers her Spouse, and they will orient their

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entire existence towards God, becoming “a sacrifice holy and pleasing to God.”

In January, 1945, in the first issue of the journal *La Maison Dieu*, one of the pioneers of the liturgical movement, Dom Lambert Beauduin, wrote an article amounting to a plan of action which already contained all the elements of a subversion of the Catholic sense of liturgy, a subversion erected upon a false ecclesiology, but which in the space of 20 years was to meet with the assent of the highest ecclesiastical authorities.

It is clear that this conception of the liturgy is rooted in an ecclesiology eminently vertical (as it should be): the perspective of the Church as mystical Body of Christ, where the fundamental essence of each baptized soul is to be united to the Head, the Lord Jesus, and in Him to the Holy Trinity. It is only thanks to this profound reality, Christocentric and theocentric, that one can also speak of the horizontal dimension of the Church.⁴

The Overthrow of Order

What we have witnessed with the liturgical reform is above all the overthrow of order: the didactic and pastoral function of the liturgy was emphasized so much that it became its first end. A simple glance at the new Mass is enough to show this. We do not say that the vertical dimension has disappeared, but it has been, so to speak, dethroned by the pastoral dimension. And when ends are reversed, the result is not the same.

There is no reason to be surprised that the Franciscan Rinaldo Falsini, formed in the theologico-liturgical school which led to the new Mass, comes up with affirmations like this one:

In the celebration, we all seem to be as stiff as statues; often there is no real possibility of expression, there is not the least place for that....In some churches the priests... have provided a space for getting acquainted, after which everyone reassembles and they proceed to the liturgical action. But all that happens in the same place, which is not conceived as “a holy place,” but as a “*domus ecclesiae*.” Entering into the “holy place,” into the “mystical place,” is of no use; on the contrary, it is alienating.⁵

Before dismissing Falsini as a radical, and what he describes as just an abuse of the liturgical reform, it is appropriate to make a brief philosophical consideration. When a subject poses an act, he cannot will at the same time two primary ends; one of the two necessarily tends to prevail over the other, and subordinates it. Let us take a concrete example, alas, only too real. The new theology of Vatican II led to equalizing the ends of marriage. There is no longer a primary end (procreation) and a secondary end (union), but two ends, so they tell us, both of which are primary. This conception, which is both a moral absurdity and a violation of the order established by

God, has led to the foreseeable consequence of the denaturing of marriage, and so of its crisis.

The same thing has happened in the liturgy. By attributing too much weight to the didactic end at the expense of the theocentric end, a disorder has been caused which touches the very nature of the liturgy. The result of this disorder is something that no longer embodies the Catholic conception of the liturgy; what results from it is a different reality. But then, once this passage has been legitimized, what will be the limit of this process? If they give us a positivist answer: “The decisions of the authority,” then it must be said that this is indeed the strategy that Dom Beauduin utilized at that time, and which led to the liturgical reform:

It will be necessary to proceed hierarchically: not to take any initiative in practice other than what is at present legitimate, but to prepare for the future by fostering a desire and love for all the riches contained in the ancient liturgy....We must proceed methodically, by circulating popular but serious works (*e.g.*, on the offices of Holy Week, the Easter Vigil, concelebration). We must also stress the moral and practical aspects, such as frequent Communion, the Eucharistic fast, the times of Mass: the Church is not afraid to modify her discipline for the good of her children.⁶

In essence: gradually create a new mentality and then constrain the authority to take action in light of the situation modified before its very eyes.

To correctly appreciate the liturgical reform, it is thus necessary to realize that it did not simply aim at the introduction of isolated changes, but the modification of the order of ends; a change, therefore, much more profound and radical, with incalculable consequences. It is consequently necessary to acquire an overview of the liturgical reform so that the direction of each particular modification will be revealed, a direction which, without too much ambiguity, was declared to us on several occasions by the precursors and the artisans of the reform itself.

A Non-Catholic Conception of the Church

Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, through the centuries the Church in herself remains pure and without stain; likewise, the dogmas that she guards and the liturgy that she celebrates are faithfully transmitted without alteration, yet at the same time with a homogeneous development. A consequence of this truth is that there cannot be leaps nor “historic changes of course” over the course of time.

The “dogma” of every protagonist of the liturgical revolution would be unthinkable (and unacceptable) for Dom Gueranger as for Pope St. Pius X. This “dogma” was designated by Pope Pius XII as “archeologism.” It involves the assertion—a veritable mania, according to *Mediator Dei*—that, in order to rediscover the truly Catholic meaning of the liturgy, it would be necessary to return to the times

of the primitive Church. Everything that happened subsequently would have been, according to this theory, a departure, if not a betrayal, of the original liturgical spirit. It does not simply involve a love for the origins of the Church, nor simple erudition. The vice of archeologism is, once again, ecclesiological in nature. The Church, in substance, would have strayed over the centuries from the authentic meaning of the liturgy, only to rediscover it today, thanks, of course, to the work of the “liturgists.” In Falsini’s book there are representative pages on this topic, consecrated specifically to the recital of his rediscovery of the Fathers of the Church and the (pseudo) realization of the distance and the divergence between their manner of understanding the liturgy and that, for example, of the Council of Trent.

Perhaps not everyone is aware of it, but the soul of the liturgical reform, that which properly informs all the modifications made to the traditional liturgy, is precisely this false vision of the Church; it is the presumed necessity of having to painstakingly make one’s way back through the historical record in order to be able to reach the pure wellspring of the liturgical spirit, a spring that would have dried up or become polluted over the course of time (a presumption in contempt of the Church’s infallibility).

Faced with the disaster of the new rite of Mass and a more precise knowledge of the dynamic of the liturgical reform, certain people admit that the modality and the intentions of the reform are objectively in opposition to Catholic principles. But, they add, intentions are one thing, another is the result. Now, we ask, if the soul of the reform is vitiated, as we have seen, how is it possible for the result obtained not to be spoiled by this tare. Supposing one were to unite to a body a soul different from the one to which it had always been united, the appearance of the first man would certainly be kept, but the profound identity of the individual, which is imparted by the soul, would be altered. Thus, one would not have the same person, but rather another totally and essentially different from the first. This is what happened in the liturgical reform: they wanted to keep a structure similar to the traditional liturgy in order to avoid stirring up opposition and confrontations, but by introducing a different “spirit,” which diverges frightfully from the Catholic spirit.

The Upsetting of Proportions

We have seen that the modification of the order of ends of the liturgy has produced a different reality; we have equally seen that the same result is obtained when the very soul of the liturgy is struck. The third element to take into consideration in order to understand the liturgical reform is the upsetting of the proportions between the parts. Let us take a very clear example considered by Fr. Falsini himself:

The Council affirms the importance of the Word in the celebration....It is question of *surpassing* the Protestant vision, which places everything on the side of the absolute Word, but *also of the Catholic vision*, being given that it [the Council] stresses the unitary vision which must unite the Word and liturgy.⁷

What is Fr. Falsini affirming? That the modifications brought to the didactic part of the Mass, today called the Liturgy of the Word, have introduced a “surpassing” of the “Catholic conception” of the Mass. In practice, what we have today is something non-Catholic in comparison to what existed before. In everything, indeed, there are proportions, and the proportions exist for a reason (be it in view of function or aesthetics); monstrosity results from the upsetting of this equilibrium. Who would find a man with three heads or one eye or four legs normal? Who would not be aware of the monstrosity of a man who had, for example, ears in place of his mouth?

And yet, faced with the upsetting of the parts of the Mass and their proportions in relation to the whole, they obstinately assert the legitimacy of the result obtained. In this Falsini sees much better than many others: the expansion of the didactic part, the drastic reduction of the Offertory, the elimination of the introductory rites, *etc.*, have led, neither more nor less, to a “surpassing” of the Catholic conception of the Mass. What has been created is something other than what the Church has always kept and transmitted from generation to generation.

Ratzinger, an Enemy of Future Reform

After this series of reflections, which we hope have spotlighted the structural reversal of Catholic liturgy that has taken place, one cannot be surprised at the propositions advanced by Fr. Falsini. He is

convinced that, in the liturgical renewal, an authentic passage of the Holy Spirit occurred. I am not convinced that His action has come to an end; I believe, on the contrary, that it has just begun, despite the natural temptation to resist this action, not only by a reversion to the past, but also by frustrating it because of a superficial understanding and implementation of the Conciliar decree....The historic change of course has just begun, and I hope that God will continue to deploy the same Spirit so that He might further His action. It is to be desired that He not encounter too many obstacles.⁸

And for Fr. Falsini, one of these obstacles would be in fact the currently reigning Pope:

Cardinal Ratzinger is opposed to an “active” notion of participation: he accepts the constitution on the liturgy, but he forcefully criticizes the application of the reform; he only thinks about the past. For him the

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restoration is just a refurbishing of the façade, and the liturgy is something non-historical; for him participation means interior participation, adoration, but not external participation.⁹

Falsini, then, well aware of the real scope of the liturgical reform, opens the way to some new reforms, which today may still seem to be a little excessive but which, as history shows—consider, for example, the case of Communion in the hand—will eventually become liturgical customs, unless there is a radical change of course. One significant idea Falsini brings up is the proposal to reform the celebration of the sacrament of penance:


It is the only sacrament in crisis: the assembly attentive to listen to the Word is totally missing, while that is the primary given; so it becomes a purely juridical event; there is nothing celebratory about it.¹⁰

Another confused “pearl”:

The exercise of ministries by women is another false problem. It suffices to see the question of servers: even today, what the women do is only a concession, it is not a right, there is no recognition of their role. It is the sexist vision of the Church which has prevailed....¹¹

Nor do his comments lack requests asking the “presidents”—for us Catholics, the priest—not to put themselves at the center of attention, taking the place from the “ministeriality” of the lay people; and to arrange a moment for meeting the community after the celebration of the Mass, if possible in the same place where it was celebrated.

To tell the truth, it is not these propositions which are frightening. What leaves us dumbfounded and pensive is the failure to grasp what is happening shown by those who, on the contrary, should understand the real intentions of the liturgical reform, a reform which has already essentially subverted Catholic worship (and which, for this reason, is

unacceptable), and which shows no indication of stopping in mid-course. 

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¹ *Liturgical Reform and Vatican II: An Eyewitness Speaks—Rinaldo Falsini Talks with G. Monzio Compagnoni* (Italian) (Milan: Ancora, 2005).

² *Ibid.*, pp.74-75.

³ See *The Angelus* (March 1995).

⁴ It seems to us useful to remember, in this regard, that it is not by chance that Pope Pius XII, in order to remedy the spread of these errors, preceded the encyclical *Mediator Dei* on the liturgy with the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* on the Church.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.91.

⁶ *La Maison Dieu*, No.1 (Jan., 1945). [English version: Didier Bonnetterre, *The Liturgical Movement* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2002), p.48.]

⁷ Falsini, *Liturgical Reform and Vatican II*, p.64.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.71-72. Fr. Falsini does not spare Ratzinger several other jabs: “I cannot forget the double declaration of Cardinal Ratzinger in 1997 about the interdiction by Pope Paul VI of usage of the Tridentine Missal—described as a tragic error, for this book represents the authentic tradition of the faith and liturgy of the Church; and the judgment of Pope Paul VI’s missal, a product of specialized erudition and legal competence...[Ratzinger’s judgment was] presumption and incompetence” (p.102).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.72.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.73.

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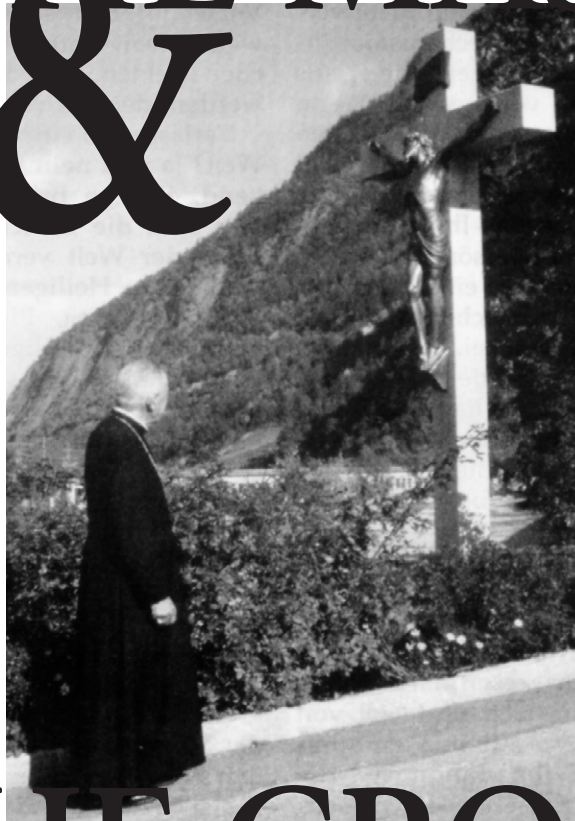
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THE CROSS

The great mystery of the love of God for our souls is the mystery of the Cross. It was for the Cross that all the churches and the great cathedrals were built. The Cross dominates the altar. The Cross is set at the crossroads.

The mystery of our sanctification and our justification cannot be explained without the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, they want to get rid of the cross; they don't want to look at it or have it before their eyes. Why? Because it represents

sacrifice. And yet henceforth, it is only by the cross, by sacrifice, that the Christian soul can regain life. *Mors mortua tunc est quando mortua vita fuit*, the Liturgy says: Death died when the Author of life died. The summation of the spiritual life is contained in this thought: we must die to ourselves in order to regain life. That is justification; holiness is nothing else. It is contained in these two movements: hatred of sin and love of God; death to sin in order to live in God.

We must therefore always be hounding sin in ourselves, and consequently we must make sacrifices, know how to die to ourselves, to mortify our evil inclinations, our desires to disobey God.

But men no longer wish to sacrifice themselves, and that is why they no longer want the sacrifice of Our Lord and of His cross, nor to see it, nor to understand it.

Now, where do we find the living cross, the cross that is always filled with the charity that inspires us to fight against sin in order to live of the life of Jesus Christ? At the holy altar, at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. That is the living cross, that is Calvary renewed.

All the words of the liturgy express precisely this desire of expiation, of the remission of our sins. It is one of the principal ends of holy Mass. This is what the Protestants denied and what priests today have a tendency to deny.

The Mass is not just a commemoration of the Last Supper or of the Cross. It is much more than that. There is an unfathomable mystery in the sacrifice of the Mass: it contains that which the love of God has done for us, for, if it is a testimony of the love of God for us, it is Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified on the cross. One occasionally comes across an old crucifix with these few words etched on it: "Can you say that I did not love you when you see love carved on this cross."

SUFFER WITH JESUS CHRIST: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The crucifix is "love carved," living love on the cross. One can understand the desire of holy souls to find in the crucifix, in the cross, in the sacrifice of the Mass, the source of a spiritual life of compassion for the sufferings of Our Lord; as Our Lady of Compassion, the patroness of our (SSPX) Sisters, to compassionate, but also to make reparation for, all the insults, sacrileges, and numerous sins. It is also the desire to complete the Passion of Jesus, as St. Paul says: "[I] fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24).

Oh, it is a desire that will cost us dearly. It would be too easy to say "Because I am Christian, God will bless me and exempt me from all suffering and sacrifice." That would be to misunderstand the mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ. If He has given us the example of redemptive suffering, then, on the contrary, we must have the desire to suffer with Him, to sacrifice ourselves with Him. And when the pangs of sorrow afflict us, we must be happy to be associated in the redemption of the world.

Such is the Christian life, the reality of our Faith. This is what all the generations of Christians understood, these generations of holy fathers and mothers of families who accepted the difficulties and the sufferings with joy, who set a good example for their children, bearing their sorrows with Our Lord Jesus Christ. It was these generations of Christian families that, by the example of suffering united to Our Lord Jesus Christ, brought forth vocations.


To live with Our Lord, to suffer with Him, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass in this spirit, with this conviction of oblation, as victim with Jesus Christ: how beautiful this Christian doctrine is, this Catholic doctrine! How it completely transforms life! And it is this that prepares us for eternal life: *O crux, ave, spes unica!*—Hail, O Cross, our only hope! The cross is the way towards glory.

St. Paul had no other teaching: "*Jesum, et hunc crucifixum*—Jesus, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). This will also be your teaching. And you will hold up as the model of this participation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Compassion.

SACRIFICE IS MADE FOR LOVING

The Mass being a sacrifice, the whole Catholic religion is marked by sacrifice, by the cross of Jesus Christ. And that is why we must have the cross of Jesus Christ everywhere: in our rooms, our houses, and at the crossroads of our streets, in order to remind us of what Our Lord Jesus Christ, God crucified, is, and the lesson of His sacrifice which He has given us.

WHY SACRIFICE SELF?

Why make the sacrifice of self? For love, for charity. You understand it well: what else do a father and mother do than sacrifice themselves for love of their family and for each other? There has to be sacrifice, or there is no love. Sacrifice is a condition of love, and Our Lord has shown this to us well, His arms stretched out on the cross, His hands and His feet and His heart transpierced. Such is the sacrifice of Our Lord out of love for God His Father and for His neighbor, for the salvation of souls. Such is His great lesson of love by sacrifice! 

This article comprises passages from two different sermons of Archbishop Lefebvre which were selected by the H.E. Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais for publication in *Fideliter* (May-June 2005). The main part is taken from the homily for the beginning of the academic year given at the seminary at Ecône (Sept. 14, 1975). The last two paragraphs come from a homily given on the occasion of a Society priest's tenth anniversary of ordination (May 1, 1999).



Nothing New Under the Sun

D R . J O H N R A O

CONDEMNED BY ROME

No other forces are to be recognized except those which reside in matter, and all the rectitude and excellence of morality ought to be placed in the accumulation and increase of riches by every possible means, and the gratification of pleasure. (**Error No. 58, Pope Pius IX, Syllabus of Errors, 1864**)

A spectre is haunting traditional Catholicism: the cult of Enlightenment capitalism and its ideology of the unrestrained free market. I find the influence of this sect in American Catholic circles to be historically frustrating, intellectually offensive, and spiritually devastating. It is historically frustrating in its blithe indifference to the dramatic 19th-century battle during which the basic Catholic complaints against modern capitalism were first cogently expressed and accepted by the Church. It is intellectually offensive insofar as it neglects the serious Catholic anti-capitalist critique, often reducing it to a purely romantic flirtation with pre-industrial life. It is spiritually devastating, because worship of the unrestrained market drives a stake into the very heart of the Catholic vision, erecting an impenetrable intellectual barrier to the transformation of individual and society in Christ, and turning sincere Catholic believers into schizophrenic practitioners of a blatant practical Modernism.

Yada, Yada, Yada

Allow me to begin by insisting that this short article could easily have been called “Been There, Done That.” This is due to the fact that the entire contemporary debate concerning the acceptability and catholicity of the unrestrained market is in no way a ground-breaking one. It was already conducted in Catholic circles a century and a half ago, and with clearly anti-capitalist results. Anyone looking for the precise details of this old dispute and the names of the people involved in it can consult my book, *Removing the Blindfold* (The Remnant Press, 1999). My goal, here, is a much more modest one; that of merely opening Catholic eyes to the general history of this 19th-century dialogue and the issues which were truly central to it. The sad fact that this needs to be done at all indicates just how complete the victory of the anti-traditionalist position in Roman Catholic circles has been.

Although discussions of the relationship of capitalism and Catholicism began in the first part of the 1800’s, it really took the Revolutions of 1848, and especially the Parisian social and economic uprising called the June Days, to intensify them. Crucial to this intensified discussion was the attempt by certain segments of the liberal capitalist bourgeoisie to forge an alliance with long-time Catholic opponents who seemed to be as horrified as they were by the appearance in June of 1848 of a socialist threat to property. Creation of a unified anti-socialist Party of Order, such liberals argued, should be the overriding goal of all morally-upright and far-sighted men.

One troublesome condition for the sealing of this alliance was demanded, however: obliteration of much of the intellectual and historical record of the previous one hundred years. While Catholics would be permitted by their new friends to pursue criticisms of those Enlightenment and French revolutionary principles which produced socialism, they would be obliged to abandon objections to any of the very same precepts which had fashioned liberal capitalism. Obvious “common sense” was said to dictate a joint liberal-Catholic polemic versus the socialist evil. Continued Catholic anti-capitalist attacks would, on the other hand, represent an inexplicable, pointless, peevish waste of intellectual energy, and merely aid the destructive advance of the palpable Red Menace.

Knee Jerks

Now, some of our Catholic ancestors were only first awakened to the problems of modernity by the disturbances of the “June Days.” Shocked by the open critiques of property accompanying this uprising, they did not investigate its deeper

causes and really quite variegated and often even traditionalist complaints. Instead, many lunged for the liberal capitalist bait with enthusiasm and joined, fervently, in the common crusade against socialism. They obligingly condemned as intransigent obscurantists and shameless rabble-rousers those of their fellow believers who refused to jettison the broader philosophical and historical battle with Enlightenment liberalism.

But such “intransigents” were unmoved by the “common sense” onslaught of the Party of Order. They insisted that any coherent response to contemporary evils had to emphasize the truth that liberal capitalism and socialism were actually blood brothers; that both had exactly the same atomistic, naturalist Enlightenment roots; that the arguments of the liberal capitalists had actually given intellectual birth to the doctrines of the socialists; that capitalist excesses had provided psychological stimulus to the desperate spirit of the June Days.

The Church on Steroids

Catholic social doctrine, beginning with the negative attacks of Pius IX’s Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the positive guidance of Leo XIII’s (1878-1903) encyclicals, emerged out of this intense, post-1848 debate. It is true, as critics of this social doctrine note, that its teaching is in many respects a sketchy and tolerant one. It does indeed allow for a kaleidoscope of practical responses to modern economic conditions, ranging from calls to scrap the liberal capitalist system entirely to acceptance of the basic framework which this system has created and vigorously maintained as a prudential necessity. Still, there is no doubt whatsoever that the Church deemed the “intransigents” to be correct on one absolutely crucial matter: the need to reject the principle of the unrestrained free market as a morally reprehensible standard. This rejection rings loud and clear through every papal statement on social issues. To paraphrase a certain American Catholic weekly, the Church decided that no one could be a sincere Catholic and a supporter of the unrestrained free market simultaneously.

Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and even the United Kingdom were all centers for this 19th-century debate. As intimated above, the bulk of those anti-capitalist thinkers whose ideas *really* had an influence on the Syllabus and the Leonine encyclicals were not at all obsessed with a return to an idyllic life on a feudal manor filled with altruistic barons and voluntarily servile peasants. All realized that capitalist investment in modern industry was yielding a greater productivity than man had ever known before. A number were fully

aware of benefits emerging from industrialization, and convinced that having entered down its pathway there was no easy, charitable way out of it either. Nevertheless, personal experiences with the unrestrained free market and its justification (often obtained in a period of exile in Britain or famished Ireland) convinced them that modern capitalism was an ideologically revolutionary force which also had the capacity for causing an enormous amount of unneeded suffering for mankind.

Let us take the arguments of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the “intransigent” Jesuit journal published in Rome after 1850, as an example of the critique I am relating. Its editors, men like Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio, Carlo Curci, and Matteo Liberatore, examined the Enlightenment capitalist system from many different standpoints and in a massive number of articles stretching over many decades. One line of their criticism, jointly philosophical, theological, historical, sociological, and psychological in character, ran as follows.

History: The Teacher of Life

Western civilization grew up emphasizing the existence of an objective order of nature, the importance of individual freedom within that order, and the need for individuals to be enlightened as to the character of nature and freedom through the guidance of authoritative societies like the family and the State. Western thinkers argued that individuals, left to their own devices, simply could not properly see all that needs to be seen to understand either the objective order of things or the essence of human liberty. Individual knowledge and personal freedom could only be perfected though life in community. Social beings alone could become wise and free. Unaided, anti-social individuals could possess but a fragmented, flawed science of nature and knowledge of their place within it. They would thus be condemned to use their liberty to destroy themselves as well as the people around them.

Such ideas, already shaped by the ancient Greeks, really only gained historical clout due to the Incarnation and Redemption. Christ provided supernatural teaching and medicine to heal the weaknesses and flaws of a natural world which had chosen to mar itself through sin. His message confirmed an order and purpose to things that even the best of non-believers were tempted intellectually to question and practically to contradict. His labors for the salvation of human persons underlined the central value of the individual to the plan of God. His demand for individual submission to Him and to His Mystical Body placed a supernatural stamp upon the importance of authoritative communal

guidance of men. Christ taught that it was only through full membership and participation in supernatural society, only, in effect, by choosing to see Creation through God’s eyes, that individuals and societies could fully understand nature and use it fittingly. The Incarnation gave men the ability to use nature to serve the God who had created it to the utmost degree, raising their consciousness of the intrinsic value and responsibility of all of nature’s specific tools, from its sciences to its temporal authorities, as it did so. Without the supernatural grace of God, imparted through a socially powerful Church, individuals could not suitably understand and exploit what they seemed to be capable of knowing and putting to use even on purely natural grounds alone.

Any economist formed by these influences would know that he could not base his knowledge of the functioning of the market upon his unaided, atomistic reason and desires alone. He would realize that his economic reasoning and decisions must be informed by the deeper wisdom gained by actively living under the authoritative guidance of family, fraternal and professional organizations, and the State; by actively living under the supernatural moral authority of the Church; by ultimately seeing economic needs through the eyes provided by all of nature’s tools and those of nature’s Creator and Redeemer as well.

Such an economist would enter into his studies with his eyes wide open. He would be aware that his discipline is not merely the science of gaining wealth, but of gaining wealth in union with all other natural and supernatural requirements. He would understand that he could not promote behavior which might, at least in the short run, make men wealthier, if it would be better for them and for their neighbors, in the long run, to act differently. Again, he would recognize that what this “better” meant would have to be defined by taking stock of a variety of factors that the collective natural and supernatural wisdom of the ages deemed to be important: a balance of agriculture and industry; neighborhood stability and access to the necessities of life; stewardship of the environment; defense of deeply-rooted customs and the beautiful achievements of high cultures; the demands of justice and charity; the need to transform all things in Christ so as to aid man’s quest for eternal salvation. The truly wise economist would teach that men were not free to gain wealth obtained at the expense of leveling the Roman Forum to create more parking spaces for easier shopping at the Wal-Marts of the Eternal City; of turning patriotic celebrations and sacred festivals into nothing other than elaborate occasions for purchase and consumption; of marketing whatever might satisfy the wishes of revelers participating

in Gay Pride Week. Simply put, the truly wise economist would see that man does not live by bread alone, nor does it profit him if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process. He would encourage wise social authorities to use all their strength to oppose the victory of an economic materialism, even if this were democratically supported by 99% of the population.

The Enlightenment Unenlightening

Enlightenment thought, *La Civiltà Cattolica* argued, is flawed because it violates all the above Western philosophical and Catholic theological precepts, thereby blinding its proponents to the truth. Its atomistic freedom reduces men to precisely that unaided, anti-social condition which the previous development of our civilization had condemned as parochial and self-destructive. Its naturalism compounds the problem by prohibiting consideration of God's plan for His Creation and man's eternal destiny in secular matters as unpardonably invasive.

Enlightenment man thus lives and acts in a world whose every basic daily motions, both mundane and serious, are cut off from their final purpose. The "sciences" produced by Enlightenment freedom and naturalism are, therefore, studies that uncover nothing other than the laws of an incomplete nature, and a fallen one to boot. These sciences are then studied for incomplete, fallen reasons, chiefly to gain power over the world as it is so as to provide some immediate satisfaction perceived as being good by flawed individuals. Such "sciences" obstinately refuse to admit the possibility of learning how to change and heal nature through reason, revelation, and grace; they dedicate their practitioners to the encouragement of limitation and weakness. Ideological and arrogant in their self-sufficient rationalism, they close themselves off to all criticism of their errors, responding to much rational evidence in irrational ways. Hence, the above-mentioned appeal to the dictates of an unexamined "common sense." Hence, their frequent calls for a consciousness raising which would transform the unenlightened into creatures able to distinguish natural data which is acceptable from that which is strictly forbidden. Hence, also, the infallible trump card utilized by every sophist relying on psychological and rhetorical rather than rational tools to influence the mob: consideration of the respective success rates of the enlightened and the obscurantists in exploiting a world governed by unrestrained Original Sin.

All Enlightenment atomists and naturalists teach flawed, iron-clad, materially satisfying "scientific

laws of nature" to which they demand unquestioning submission from the Church and Christian believers. Nevertheless, they differ as to what these laws are, merrily lambasting their fellow illuminati with as much rhetorical disdain as they do the retrograde Catholic community. Prince Otto von Bismarck of Prussia and Count Camillo Cavour of Sardinia saw that the rules of *Machtpolitik* yielded their states an immediately greater power and wealth than any nation following the guidelines of a St. Louis IX or a Pius IX might expect. Therefore, they insisted that Church doctrine bend to its "natural laws" and political science. Piety could be no excuse for neglecting the demands of a *Machtpolitik* whose victories might even be presented to believers as reflecting the higher will of God. Sexual libertines had proof positive that the unrestrained pursuit of physical satisfaction could result in much more immediate carnal rewards. Therefore, Church doctrine had to bend to accept the "science" of seduction, and perhaps encourage experts to raise the sexual consciousness of religious critics to make them, too, act more naturally. Liberal bourgeois capitalists witnessed the way in which the totally free market produced vast wealth for clever entrepreneurs. *Voilà*, a revelation of the infallible framework for a naturalist economic science before which Western philosophy and Catholic theology must kneel and worship. Regardless of such differences in emphasis, the "free" individual operating under the spell of all of these "sciences" is everywhere the same: a self-limiting, parochial being; a willful, passionate child who specializes in learning how to get more toys for himself than the other kids around him, regardless of whether he needs or benefits from them. He wants what he wants when he wants it, and no mommy or daddy is going to force him to give up his rattle and learn the meaning of true virtue.

By now, it should be clear that the kinds of Catholic criticisms represented by journals like *La Civiltà Cattolica* have nothing whatsoever to do with adulating the early morning collection of eggs and the milking of cows. They are partly the product of a philosophical, historical, and sociological study. More importantly still, they are the result of a Catholic Incarnational vision that battles coherently versus all Declarations of Independence from God's creative and redemptive plan, including those concerning economic methodology and morality.

Worse Than Schizophrenia

When applied to the current traditionalist flirtation with capitalism, this 19th-century critique must suggest a whole battery of soul-wrenching concerns: the fact that *Catholics* are separating daily

individual choices regarding economic matters from their impact upon our eternal destiny; that *Catholics* are reducing market issues to the realm of the morally indifferent, and judging right and wrong on the basis of success in manipulating fallen nature alone; that *Catholics* are reading history on the basis of a Liberation Theology of the Market that sees the transformation of all things in capitalism as being infinitely more important, in practice, than transformation in Christ. This is frightening, because it is Modernism pure and simple, and in a realm where everyone has his daily temptations, and most of us, unfortunately, our price. Allow such a vision to triumph in Catholic circles and worries about the morality of *Machtpolitik* and sexual libertinism must logically disappear as well. Christian behavior will eventually mean nothing. Eternal salvation will be viewed as a reward for a lifetime of orthodox recitation of a purely intellectual and inconsequential Creed after our days in a morally indifferent playground have ended.

Many of the early supporters of erroneous ideas do not desire the consequences that flow from them. Martin Luther did not want the principles of Protestantism to aid radical enthusiasts. America's Founders did not plan for the influence of Karl Rove. Cavour and Bismarck might have laughed away the prospect of a Hitler, and sexual libertines the universal spread of gross pornography. Liberal bourgeois capitalists of the mid-19th century would, perhaps, have run headlong from massive shopping malls destructive to more restrictive forms of village and city economic life. And, certainly, most recent traditionalist defenders of the unrestrained market whom I know do not wish to destroy what remains of Christian morality and Christendom.

The fact that so many heretics and ideologues do not wish bad things to happen is a proof of the continued hold of traditional beliefs and conservative presuppositions regarding personal behavior upon them. But it is also a demonstration of the failure of their logic. Regardless of the will or the choice of the Founders of any erroneous school of thought, the ideas that they espouse are what they are and spread their inevitable subversive poison. Some men, like the Anabaptists and Unitarians of Luther and Calvin's days, accept that logic straightaway. Nevertheless, the bulk of humanity requires time to do so; time, the slow dissolution of the beliefs and behavior which block radicalism, and the construction of a society which fully shapes people not on the basis of its Founders' irrational conservative scruples, but their corrosive rational principles.

Enlightenment freedom and naturalism lead, logically, to the creation of radical, passionate men who care nothing for long-standing traditions and

objective morality. The logic of Enlightenment capitalism, as men like Michael Novak exult, is to create a new kind of man who thinks and acts differently than citizens of traditional western Christendom. These new men will ensure that the pattern of capitalist industrial development in 21st-century Africa and Latin America is different than that guided by more traditionally-minded individuals still shaped by the Christian remnants of 18th-century Britain. These new men will not define or practice a "charity" that can correct social imbalances in the same way as older Catholic believers could. These new men will adore the anti-social, anti-historical, materialist way of life, and, if they are Catholic in name, make of the Traditional Mass and the Traditional Faith an after-hours parlor sport for those engaged in what really counts in a democratic, capitalist universe: making big time bucks and spending them on often useless or destructive toys.

For a Wrong Vision, the People Perish

One of the sad realities of life today is that this new capitalist man seems already to dominate the global scene through a version of the Enlightenment revolutionary vision which cannot be altered without untold dislocation and horror. I believe that that dislocation will nevertheless come, and not from the outside, but from the system's own implosion. It is understandable that many may find this notion difficult to accept, both because the system, by its very nature, discourages intellectual investigation of its problems (See "Why Catholics Cannot Defend Themselves," www.romanforum.org), and because a mere 200 years of Enlightenment capitalist history may not yet have been enough time for its full disruptive potential to display itself. Both Reason and Faith indicate that its judgment day must come. In the meantime, traditionalist Catholics can at least be put on warning against praising a force that barter away their true freedom, their true knowledge, the true, redeemed order of nature, and the moral concerns of their true Faith for a killing on the market. Christ came to save us from the Fall; not to preach encouragement of Original Sin as the only sound basis for economic security and personal liberation. 📌

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Fifteen Minutes with Fr. de Chivré:



The Woman of Today before the Woman of Eternity

The soul of a woman!...

The subject we are about to broach is so profound and so vast that I am bound, by lack of time, to evoke more than to explain, which will leave me open to objections which are certainly valid materially, but which do not discourage me from believing that I am fundamentally correct in founding my reasoning on the soil of paradise lost, in the light of Calvary.

No author, no man of science or of letters, can claim to rival in profundity or in clarity the explanation of the problem of man and woman given by the Spirit of God in the first pages of Genesis. From this account of the creation of the world flow the relations between man and woman such as they still stand in our day and age. It falls to my priesthood, servant of God and repairer of the human catastrophe, to attempt to show you the path traced out by God in order for man and woman to be worthy of the true happiness which is proper to them and from which they are moving farther and farther away.

If you permit, let us broach the subject from a higher point of view: What is a symbol? A symbol is not an absurdity imposed on reason; it is the meaning given by reason to different realities totalized in a single, symbolic reality. Take the symbol of the flag: deep down, what is a flag? It is all of the geography of a country, all of its history, all of the family affections, all of the services rendered to the homeland: an entire past and future reality, all symbolized by the flag. *A symbol is the sign of power and spirit in the service of superior realities.*

Power and spirit: the privilege of God, realizing in one and the same creature a great variety of spiritual riches tied up in a single creative act: the nature that is the secret of God expressing His power, such that man becomes the mirror of that power, a microcosm representing all of creation. But man, the image of God, lacked what God does not lack: companionship, and, for God, what a companionship! That of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love.

“Let us make man in Our likeness.” Man’s mission is to resemble God, enjoying creation, dominating it, but without seeing himself in it. God created man at the end of the sixth day. He said: “Now, look around yourself: see all of creation, the plants, the animals; govern, name, construct.” Yet, God knew that this governance of creation, this role of administrator of creation which man has not ceased to fill, would not satisfy for him the mystery of his life. He had power, but that power did not reveal to him the secrets of his heart. So God said: “It is not good for man to be alone.” He has in his nature certain traces of something beyond matter, extraordinary traces of sentiments which he cannot find in animals or in creation. “Let Us give him a companion like to himself,” and what I have made of man by making him a symbol of My power, I will do also for woman: her nature will be to seek, in a higher, unseen reality, an entire state of soul, of heart, of sentiment, of supernatural possibility.

We can understand now that man and woman are two mirrors, one of which reflects the power of God while the other, upon that power, mirrors and reflects the spirit of God. This is the whole history of the relations between man and woman throughout the history of humanity, the whole history of art and of literature; it is the whole history of human distress since the Fall, the desire of all of youth through its passions; it is the whole business that we can neither pass over nor do without since it is inscribed in the nature of man, in the nature of woman; it is the secret of man and of woman: to keep each other company.

How can two mirrors keep each other company? Apply the law of physics: for a mirror to keep another mirror company, it has to be at a certain distance. This distance is what will allow the light of the one and the light of the other to penetrate the heart of each mirror to make it even more of a mirror. This is the heart of the problem between man and woman: finding the exact distance, the respect, the intimacy through the light. It is the mystery of the relations, sanctifying or criminal, between man and woman, understanding their own nature through one another.

Woman is responsible before God that her nature be able to introduce everywhere the life of the spirit which God placed in her soul. Such is her responsibility. We begin to realize that, psychologically and socially, woman is the pole around which turns all the solitary power of man wandering through creation, always in search of woman but today, alas, seldom the woman he needs.

For, unfortunately, the two mirrors have been broken. Broken by the sin of nature, the cracks have not destroyed the mission of nature. The mission given to woman by her nature is to re-establish the proper distance combined with the proper closeness. Because of sin, this re-establishment can only happen little by little, in faltering steps. In faltering steps, with all the extravagances of the brutality of man excited by the sentimental and carnal extravagances of woman. Power and spirit are now in conflict, whereas they were created to be combined. The spiritual mirror of woman no longer dazzles the power of man to make him respect the distance necessary for the luminosity that enlightens their closeness. Rather than reflecting each other, the mirrors are juxtaposed; they are no longer companions; they are parallels. Side by side in solitude, which is the worst of all.

Human life has to be restored by the admirable restoration of the “mirrors of justice”: by giving back to woman, through the law of grace, her mission of shining onto the power of man the integrity of a spirit, without which she betrays her reason for being.

Woman is the depository of the mysterious secrets of life which have their origin in God. It is her mission not to compromise that life nor let it be compromised by masculine power; for the nature of power consists in wielding the creative intelligence of the six days, but the nature of spirit is to rise from the immaterial depths of the intelligence to sow in the life of man permanent traces of God. Woman, by her spirit, is the guardian angel of the place to be reserved to God in the work of the six days confided to man.

“It is not good for man to be alone”; now, a person is alone when he has no one near him, but he can also be alone in a crowd, for number, instead of chasing away solitude, can multiply it by forbidding man to express that profundity reserved only to the confidence of union. Whence the beauty of Christian marriage, alone worthy of perfectly setting the two mirrors in a union without which they would be juxtaposed and not keep one another company, as the creative will of God designed it.

“It is not good for man to be alone,” and yet he has fallen back into solitude with a merely carnal companionship, which seems meant to increase his solitude by coupling it with the solitude of vice, whence the excesses of a passion that is never satisfied. The spiritual mirror of woman, tarnished by the greed of her senses, only reflects her own self-centered spirit, expressing itself in the false appearances of a spirit painted to look real by mannerisms and flirtation. Both have returned to a mutual solitude, whereas the heart of God had drawn them together interiorly not only by the passing intimacy of physical love, but by the intimacy of spiritual currents, of an indestructible moral and affective fusion.

O, Adam! What have we done? Look: two broken mirrors. How can we recognize our faces in them, now that yours, disgusted with mine, and mine, receiving from yours only the reflection of fear, can no longer unite in the warm caress of the spirit which you will find nowhere in creation outside of me, who have destroyed it?

Young ladies, young women, who claim the alibi of social, political, or commercial activities in order to draw near to man in his temporal power, you will never bring man’s heart out of the solitude created by your fault. Perhaps you will even add to his solitude the weight of the sensible satisfaction of your presence deprived of the feminine spirit, of the feminine conscience, of the spiritual reserve which is of infinitely greater value to man than the degrading caress of feminine animality. You appeal to the age, to your media, to your animalized literature which bury your spirit rather than resurrecting it. You let

humanity stumble through the shadow of death because you have not assumed the place of woman as God decreed it: in the house of gold of her spirit repaired by the Redemption in making her the co-redemptrix of Adam.

Even physically, the modern world lacks the feminine spirit. We see too many faces of women whose spiritual mirror no longer exists, neither in expression nor in word nor in regard; too many women no longer impose the dazzlement of the spirit, emanating the charm of a heart pleasing to God, nor the authority of a presence situated above the carnal, according to the spirit of love. For love deprived of the spirit is a broken mirror.

But, you tell me, we cannot reverse the social evolution of women’s liberation; it is something, after all... Yes, indeed, at the end of it all, we certainly have “*something*”: the reign of organized *things*, scientifically, mechanically organized by the combination of these two *things* designed in the laboratories of democracy: the *thing* “man” and the *thing* “woman.” The Ministry of National Education [that is, a French agency comparable to the Federal Department of Education in the US—*Ed.*] manufactures the *thing* “man” and the *thing* “woman,” stamping them with diplomas to ensure their output. You can see them on the highways: the *thing* “automobile” driven by a *thing* “man” and, next to him, the *thing* “woman.” And it works just fine...for plenty of things, but not for the nature of man and the nature of woman. The mirror of power has become the *thing* “man” subject to his business enterprise and exiled from the great and noble business: the value of the spirit. The mirror of the spirit has become the *thing* “woman,” slave in turn to the business of man. Two *things* that are absorbed, consumed, annihilated in the cult of that divinity, of that absolute *thing*: “money.” A divinity spread everywhere; a divinity which has contributed to the “liberation” of woman, making her participate in the exterior combats of man under the pretext of economic necessity, though in reality enslaving her to the *cult of things* at the expense of the *place of the spirit* without which woman is a broken mirror: namely, the home. The cult of money has ejected your women from your homes and from your hearts.

This said, I hasten to add that the problem is complex and I have no intention of condemning those girls and those women who are sometimes forced to work outside the home to earn their livelihood and support the family. But I do say that for as long as they work on the outside in a renunciation of their nature as a woman, without the spiritual anxiety of reducing money to a minimum, in view of spending a maximum of time in the home, they will not be women. And it is a serious thing to renounce one’s nature as a woman because


it is not only failing in one's own mission but it sows chaos in the mission of the man. The woman is made in such a way that she is the current that comes down from God: the current of adoration and of sacrifice; the current that counsels and the current that raises up; the current that draws toward the summit. If she smothers all respect of this interior current, she will be swept away instead by the current of her sensibility, and God knows what she makes of it.

You want to accompany the man? Accompany him according to your nature: stay in the home. And the man will perceive in the darkness a light which is warm. After his crushing work in which solitude gnaws at his heart, he sees that light: "Ah! She is there!" She is there, the cool spring, with all the tranquility of a spring, with all the joy of bringing what a spring gives without ceasing: refreshment. And the man enters the home and finds himself with companionship. As in the Bible, he says: "Here is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh"; he is in the company of spirit. At that moment, the woman is queen, for the spirit gives dominion; the education of the children gives dominion. And then the man discovers in his home everything that he lacked on the outside; he feels like a man, and she feels the honor of being a woman.

How can you recognize a genuine home? By two signs. Firstly, the fact that the children do not desert it; I mean the children who in turn have not renounced their true nature as children and who know how to resist the pressures of social life outside the home. For if the home preserves the children, the children in turn have the duty to preserve the home. Secondly, there is something else which we no longer see today, which proves the kind of avarice that money develops in each one of us. Once upon a time, Christian homes were the refuge of life's outcasts. The wretched could stop there, they were nourished, perhaps even given a bed. We do not have as many poor people now, you tell me: while that remains to be proven—for the poor you will always have with you, and you only have to open your eyes to see them—there are still life's outcasts in suit and tie, those who are rich in worldly goods but outcasts psychologically. Once upon a time, they accepted the invitation of Mrs. So-and-So because they knew that in her home they would have, during the visit, a moment to confide their worries, to regain hope and courage near to someone who would give them new reasons to stand back up, to set out again happier. The joy of the woman is to feel the honor of welcoming in order to save, for woman is designed to save life's outcasts.

"The Value of Human Life in Parallel with Women's Liberation": what a subject for a philosophy thesis! The major expression of feminine nature consists in conserving her mystical nobility to the benefit of the life of society by remaining in the home, of which she alone knows the social mission and of which she alone is the queen. Allowing the woman to remain in the home is the formal obligation of rulers who would not be governed in turn by sectarian, inhuman orders, charged with assuring obligatory disorder by raising over all things the cult of money, cause of the devaluing of woman, cause of the paganizing of man, cause of the destruction of the home, and cause of economic crises. When that day comes, it will be the return of Christendom.

If she wished, woman could play a preponderant role in this restoration. It is the specialty of her spirit to uphold the cathedral that is the home, by sheer sacrifice and endurance, so that we might visit the home as we would visit the cathedral of Chartres: taking off our hat in respect and letting ourselves be washed over by the ambiance of beauty it emanates, revealing a spiritual presence that draws the heart to prayer.

In the mechanical circulation where the "human things" that many have become are jostled along without pity—deprived of any means of repose or of refreshment under the sign of a Home inhabited by a spirit, source of peace; their heart befuddled by a confusion of faces without spirit but not without make-up, encountered at every turn—humanity throws itself upon a sack of coins, while the animals, watched over by the Creator Spirit, prove they know more than we do when it comes to the respect of their nature. With a great deal of art and science, humanity is in the process of losing woman, as a just reversal of things for having been lost by her. Woman refuses the diadem which God would place on her brow; all we can do now is bless the most beautiful of women, she who, virgin, mother, spouse, widow, will always be queen because she is wreathed with the most beautiful reflection of the Holy Spirit—Mary. 

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THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Last December 22, Pope Benedict XVI gave a crucial speech on the interpretation of Vatican II. At first glance, this text seems to take into account the objections of traditionalists. But a more thorough analysis reveals in the current Pope's thought a strong attachment to the most serious errors of the Council, as well as a desire to anchor Vatican II in the Church as a key element of a "new tradition."

The speech of December 22, 2005, of capital importance for understanding the current evolution of ideas in the Church, was preceded by several interesting acts.

On November 9, by a *motu proprio*, the Pope suppressed the decision taken by Pope Paul VI in 1969 according a large measure of autonomy to the Franciscans of Assisi. They used this autonomy to immerse themselves in liturgical and pastoral innovation. From now on, they must once again defer to the local bishop and must follow the canonical and liturgical norms.

On December 1, there was a letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship that, "in the name of the Holy Father," reminded the Neo-Catechumenal Way, this movement that had the strong support

of John Paul II, of their obligations. The most remarkable point was the directive to "not use Eucharistic Prayer II exclusively, but to use the others contained in the Missal as well."

On December 8, the 40th anniversary of the close of Vatican II, the Pope made a decisive gesture... he did nothing. In a situation where Pope John Paul II would have certainly arranged a triumphalist gathering to celebrate the success of the Council, Benedict XVI dedicated the main part of his sermon to the Blessed Virgin, even though he did devote his introduction to Vatican II.

But these acts, although eliciting much interest from observers, are far from having the importance of the speech of December 22.

A "Game-Plan" Speech

The occasion for this speech is a tradition begun by Pope John Paul II. Every year, just before Christmas, the Pope receives the Curia to exchange Christmas wishes, taking advantage of the gathering to sum up the past year.

A little less than half the speech was thus devoted to reviewing the events of the year 2005: the death of Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day, the Synod on the Eucharist and, of course, the election of Pope Benedict XVI. We can note in this review the severe censure of the Pope with regard to one of the essential theses of the promoters of the liturgical reform:

In the period of liturgical reform, Mass and adoration outside it were often seen as in opposition to one another: it was thought that the Eucharistic Bread had not been given to us to be contemplated, but to be eaten, as a widespread objection claimed at that time. The experience of the prayer of the Church has already shown how nonsensical this antithesis was.

Pope Benedict XVI continued his reproach of this derisive critique of Catholic Eucharistic tradition. But the “nuclear heart” of the speech was a return to Vatican II. This text deserves our attention, for it clarifies the thinking of Pope Benedict XVI on a crucial subject.

A Key Text

The analysis is thorough and the thought expressed is quite dense. We can sense that the Holy Father put considerable effort into it and expressed in it a reflection which is close to his heart, one that represents without doubt a major axis in his thinking and life.

In comparison with Pope John Paul II’s writing, which was diffuse and somewhat complicated, Pope Benedict XVI is enjoyable to read, even if the precision of the speech requires close attention. The reproaches often made with regard to German philosophy of being unreadable because of obscure neologisms are not too warranted here.

The ideas of the Pope are in the same line as the book *The Ratzinger Report* (cf. Fr. Loic Duverger, “Le Retournelement,” *Fideliter*, No.169). The two major advantages of the present text are, first, a synthetic character, and above all the fact that it is no longer the writing of the theologian Ratzinger, but an act of Pope Benedict XVI.

A Desire to Clarify

The Sovereign Pontiff—and this is what’s interesting about his intervention—takes head-on the question of the exact status of the Council, which has poisoned the Church for 40 years. We sense that he is hoping, through this effort of clarification, to clear the road for the Church. The questions which seem to us essential for the unraveling of the crisis are dealt with squarely, and we notice with interest that the Pope is at least somewhat aware of the objections made by the traditional movement.

Moreover, we cannot but underscore the praiseworthy intention of the Pope to identify himself with Catholic Tradition, to want to follow this path. As

we shall see, he doesn’t really succeed, but the simple fact of wanting to is already progress.

Also (and this is an established fact), Pope Benedict XVI has the courage to vigorously condemn certain errors.

Nevertheless, we must not take this text for something it is not: the end of the crisis in the Church. The Pope proceeds like a surgeon coming to a wounded man. There is blood everywhere, his clothing is torn, *etc.* The doctor begins by clearing and cleaning the wound, so that the real problem can be seen. Such is the work accomplished by Pope Benedict XVI in this speech of December 22.

But, at this moment, the wound appears in all its severity, and now begins the much more long and complicated stage of healing. In the second part of his speech, which we highlight in the Appendix [see sidebar on pp.38-39 of this article—*Ed.*], Pope Benedict XVI shows himself to be attached to certain of the most serious errors of Vatican II.

The Desire to Identify Vatican II with Tradition

The Pope’s intention in this text is quite clear: to show that the Council can and must be understood as being, despite certain appearances to the contrary, in conformity with Catholic Tradition, in conformity with all the councils.

To try to thoroughly demonstrate this point, Pope Benedict XVI takes up a number of connected themes. Some are somewhat brief: for example, only a phrase evokes the “relationship between the Church and the faith of Israel,” which is nevertheless an important theme of Vatican II and of the thinking of Pope Benedict XVI.

Others are presented in a more developed manner: religious liberty and the relationship between the Church and the world. The heart of his thesis is a distinction on the way of interpreting the texts of the Council. This speech of December 22nd is of such importance and density that it requires several penetrating theological studies.

Here, we are only going to consider the theme of the “wrong” interpretation of the Council, which allows us to grasp the main interest of this attempt by Pope Benedict XVI to resolve the problem of Vatican II, but also its limits and incoherence.

A Crisis After the Council

In his analysis, the Pope begins by frankly admitting the existence of the post-conciliar crisis: “No one can deny that in vast areas of the Church the implementation of the Council has been somewhat difficult.” He returns to this theme several times, for example when he points out the error of those who think the opening to the world would eliminate all difficulties. They “had underestimated the inner

tensions as well as the contradictions inherent in the modern epoch,” as well as “the perilous frailty of human nature.” This in such a way that, even when the Pope wants to recognize the Council’s good fruit, he is forced to use circumlocutions and nuances on top of nuances: “Today, we see that although the good seed developed slowly, it is nonetheless growing.”

The Two Interpretations

In order to explain this crisis, Pope Benedict XVI opposes two interpretations (he uses a more scholarly term, “hermeneutic”) of this event. One, the wrong interpretation or hermeneutic, “caused confusion.” The other, the correct one, “bore and is bearing fruit.”

The Pope undertakes a methodical critique of this “wrong” interpretation, an interpretation of “discontinuity and rupture.” Supported by “the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology,” this interpretation posits that the true Council is not found in the texts ratified between 1962-65, but in the

“impulses toward the new that are contained in the texts.”

This interpretation postulates that we can only be faithful to the Council in bypassing its letter, which is the fruit of punctilious compromises and which only imperfectly reflects the reality of the conciliar event.

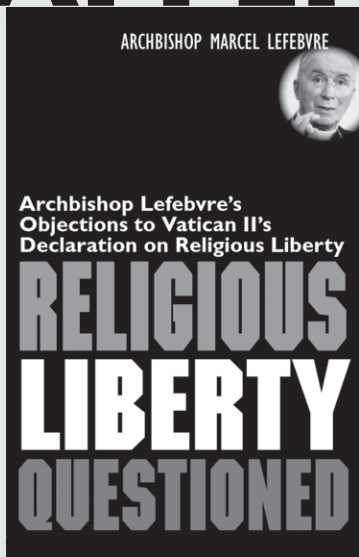
Pope Benedict XVI concludes sternly: “The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending up in a break between the pre- and post-conciliar Churches.”

The Essential Constitution of the Church

At this point in his exposition and critique of the “wrong” interpretation of Vatican II, the Pope takes up a new argument, which is quite interesting. This interpretation, he says, considers the Council “as a sort of constituent assembly that eliminates an old constitution and creates a new one.” He objects,

The Fathers had no such mandate and no one had ever given them one; nor could anyone have given them one

APPENDIX: The Question o



Religious Liberty Questioned. Available from Angelus Press. Price: \$12.95.

To explain and illustrate his “hermeneutic of reform,” the Pope proposed several themes. The notion that he developed the most is that of religious liberty or, as he said, “liberty of religion.”

One can well understand, through this example, how Pope Benedict XVI tried to directly address several of our objections, while at the same time defending one of the gravest errors of Vatican II.

The Logic of the Pope

His analysis goes as follows. In the 19th century, “freedom of religion was thought of as an expression of the incapacity of man to find the Truth” and as “an exaltation of relativism,” “raised in an illegitimate way to the level of metaphysics.” It was the spirit of the “radical phase of the French Revolution.”

Faced with this grave error, which asserts that man is not “capable of knowing the truth about God,” the Church, under Pope Pius IX, rightly produced “severe condemnations.”

But then, “the modern era underwent developments,” a maturation occurred and, from a metaphysical principle, freedom of religion regained its just place as a social and historical necessity, connected to human coexistence in the context of a plurality of religions. This is the “model of the American Revolution.”

Principles of Vatican II

Vatican II also, “recognizing and making her own through the Decree on Religious Liberty an essential principle of the modern state, took up again the most profound patrimony of the Church,” in such a way as to find herself “in full harmony with the teachings of Jesus Himself.” In fact, the Council intended to show that religious liberty not only flows from a social and political necessity, but is rooted in the “intrinsic reality of the truth, which cannot be imposed from the outside, but must be adopted by man solely through the mechanism of conviction.”

“Example” of the Martyrs

To illustrate and support his assertion, the Pope uses “the example” of the martyrs. According to him, the Roman Empire imposed a state religion. The first Christians, adoring only Jesus, logically refused to adore the pagan gods and thus, “through this, clearly rejected the religion of the state.”

The martyrs of the early Church died for their faith in God who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and, in so doing, died also for their liberty of conscience and for their freedom to profess their faith, a profession which cannot be imposed by any state.

because the essential constitution of the Church comes from the Lord.

The argument, we repeat, is striking: a change in the constitution of the Church by the Council is impossible, firstly because the Fathers did not have any such mandate; secondly, because no one gave it to them; thirdly, because no one could have given it to them. In short, in the Church, the Revolution (even a “conciliar” one) is illicit in principle and without normative value.

The “Authorized” Interpretation

To this doctrine of “discontinuity,” to this revolution “in tiara and cope,” to this “wrong” interpretation of Vatican II, Pope Benedict XVI opposes the “true” interpretation, that of “reform.” According to the Sovereign Pontiff, in the process of “reform” (whose perfect example is the Council), “the principles express the permanent aspect [of Tradition],

since they remain as an undercurrent, motivating decisions from within,” while the “practical forms...the contingent matters...depend on the historical situation and are therefore subject to change.”

This “correct interpretation,” intellectually quite debatable (that’s the least we can say), deserves in-depth analyses. We give an example of one such in our Appendix (see below). But let us try here to deepen our analysis of the “wrong interpretation.”

The Pope, it is true, does not use the words “good” or “bad,” “right” or “wrong” to describe these interpretations. Nevertheless, such words as these convey his real meaning. But is the distinction between a “good” and “bad” interpretation the only one relevant to our topic? Concerning a Council, is not the pertinent distinction between the “authorized” and “unauthorized” interpretations? And are not the “authorized” interpreters of Vatican II the Popes?

Pope Benedict XVI is aware of this objection because he cites, to support his “good” interpretation, a speech by Pope John XXIII and one by Pope Paul VI.

f Religious Liberty

Weak Reasoning

The weakness of the current Pope’s reasoning seems obvious to anyone who has studied the question even a little, notably through the work by Archbishop Lefebvre, *Religious Liberty Questioned* [available from Angelus Press; price: \$12.95].

To assert that the condemnation of religious liberty in the 19th century was only based on its relativist foundation and not on its very nature is a countertruth as much historically as doctrinally.

Speaking only of Pope Pius IX regarding religious liberty would mean forgetting, before him, Popes Pius VI, Pius VII or Gregory XVI. It is an even more serious evasion of numerous teachings on this subject of Popes Leo XIII, Benedict XV, Pius XI (*Quas Primas*), and Pius XII.

To affirm that, from now on, the conception which prevails is no longer metaphysical relativism but a simple assertion of necessities in a pluralistic world is to take refuge in an imaginary world. In reality, the more secularism spreads, the more this legal desire to put God out of all social life grows.

It is moreover, quite characteristic, for the Pope, to refer to an “essential principle of the modern state” in this regard. If it were only a question of the assertion of a necessity, he would speak more prosaically of a “customary practice of the modern state.”

However, concerning the coexistence of diverse religions in the same country, the doctrine of tolerance, pushed in its consequences by Pope Pius XII on December 6, 1953, only 12 years before the Decree on Religious Liberty, was amply sufficient. If the Council opted for the “principle of the freedom of religion,” it is because it wanted to join this “essential principle of the modern state.”

Falsified Debate


To speak exclusively, in the question of religious liberty, of the “knowledge of the truth” is to falsify the debate. Everyone agrees, and always did, with this principle of the Code of Canon Law: “No one can be constrained to embrace the Catholic Faith against his will.” But in reality, the issue at stake is knowing if anyone can be *prevented from spreading a false religious doctrine*. This is not the same thing: that someone be *prevented* from acting never meant that he is *forced* to act.

To reject in principle any notion of state religion and to make no allusion to the duty of societies to honor God comes down to consigning to oblivion a constant teaching of the Church, including the Decree on Religious Liberty, which recalls this duty (even if it is somewhat hypocritical, because it was a last-minute addition by Pope Paul VI to “break” the persistent opposition to this text):

[Religious liberty] leaves intact the traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of societies with regard to the true religion and the one Church of Christ.

To make no distinction between the true religion and false ones is to eliminate up front a crucial distinction, for the rights of truth are essentially different from the “rights” of error. As Pope Pius XII said:

What does not correspond to the truth and the moral law has no objective right to existence, to propaganda, nor to action.

Finally, to call to the support of religious liberty *i.e.*, to the support of the refusal to recognize the social reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian martyrs who died precisely for the “Lord Jesus,” is to denature all of history, all Catholic doctrine, all reality. One cannot, on such a faulty foundation, construct a “hermeneutic of reform” of any value. 

The Interpretation of Pope Paul VI

Let's pass over Pope John XXIII, whose thinking on Vatican II is not especially clear. The fragment cited by the current Pope demonstrates this. There exists, in fact, two versions of this fragment, one in Italian, which is obviously more progressive, the other in Latin, which is more traditional. Indeed, on two different occasions, Pope John XXIII used the two versions.

On the other hand, for Pope Paul VI, we have the benefit of an abundance of speeches. Can we exonerate Pope Paul VI of an interpretation of Vatican II as a rupture, at least partially, with the Church's past?

Pope Benedict XVI sees this difficulty. He says of the closing speech of the Council by Pope Paul VI, that in it the Pope gives another reason "a hermeneutic of discontinuity can seem convincing." Speaking of the Council, he affirms that, "some kind of discontinuity might emerge. Indeed, a discontinuity had been revealed," in such a way that the continuity is "easy to miss...at a first glance," an "apparent discontinuity" being more obvious. Actually, a good deal more than the current Sovereign Pontiff wants to admit, Pope Paul VI took the perspective of a certain discontinuity between the pre- and post-conciliar Churches. We shall cite three characteristic examples.

A Certain Intention of Rupture

1) We have seen that, according to Pope Benedict XVI, a council cannot modify the constitution of the Church. Moreover, we know that the Holy Father deplores, in the liturgical reform, the rupture which took place there. But how then should we interpret the phrase of Pope Paul VI on January 13, 1965, if not in terms of constitutional and liturgical rupture:

The new religious pedagogy that the present liturgical renewal wants to establish fits, so as to almost take the place of a central engine, into the great movement inscribed in the constitutional principles of the Church, and made easier and more urgent by the progress of the human culture?

2) Ten years later the "Lefebvre affair" erupted. There also, on two major occasions, Pope Paul VI was going to opt for a form of rupture. On June 29, 1975, writing to Archbishop Lefebvre, Pope Paul VI spoke these extraordinary and significant words:

The Second Vatican Council has no less authority, it is even in certain aspects more important than that of Nicea.

That a pastoral council would be more important than the council which defined the dogma of the divinity of Christ signifies that this Council is, in reality, the foundation of a new Church.

3) This new form of the Church is going to be characterized one year later by Bishop Benelli,

Substitute of the Secretariat of State, in a letter where he notes that for the seminarians of Ecône,

there is nothing desperate in their case: if they are of good will and seriously prepared for a priestly ministry in true fidelity to the *conciliar Church*, we will undertake to find the best solution.

It belongs to Pope Benedict XVI to tell us if this vision of Vatican II was an authorized interpretation, or if it was only the wild interpretation of the theologian Montini. To the distinction "authorized-unauthorized," we must add another, even more important: that of "true" and "false" interpretation.

True and False Interpretation


For, after all, an interpretation is not supposed to be an "imaginative creation"; on the contrary, it should arise from the text itself in a logical and spontaneous way. The true interpretation of Vatican II is that which "springs" from its texts read in their obvious sense.

Moreover, it is characteristic of the problems posed by the text of the Council that, 40 years after its promulgation, a Pope must dedicate such a theological effort to try and explain its meaning.

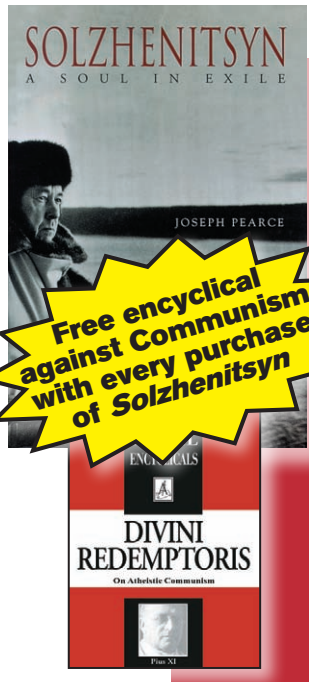
In fact, it is enough to cite reliable observers to realize that the dominant impression of the Council was that of a rupture. Whether one speaks of Cardinal Suenens affirming that "Vatican II was 1789 in the Church," or of Fr. Congar underscoring that at the Council "the Church had its October Revolution," or of Cardinal Ratzinger confessing that "Vatican II was an anti-Syllabus," the list is long of first-class witnesses who perceived it thus. It is necessary that the current Pope tell us clearly where such a dominant impression comes from, if not from the texts themselves.

The Real Debate Is Finally Underway

We must not forget a most fundamental fact: the objective analysis of the texts of the Council shows, on certain points, a discontinuity with the constant teaching of the Church. Nevertheless, the debate is underway, and it is fitting to thank the Pope for having started it so clearly. It is necessary however, in this debate which must be undertaken out of love for the Church, to boldly confront the real.

Actually, we think that in objective reality, "the hermeneutic of rupture" is to be found not only in the media and some of the theologians but is first of all, at least in certain respects, to be found in Vatican II itself, in the letter of its texts. The debate must necessarily shed light on this crucial point. 

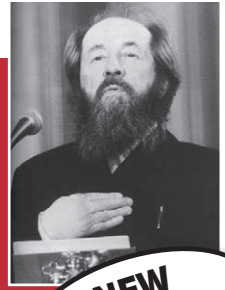
This study by the French District of the Society of Saint Pius X was posted (Jan. 21, 2006) on the French District's website, www.laportelatine.org. It was translated into English for *DICI*, the press agency of the Society of Saint Pius X, from where this edition was taken. Angelus Press slightly edited the text for more accurate expression.



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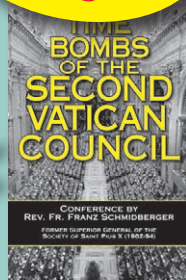
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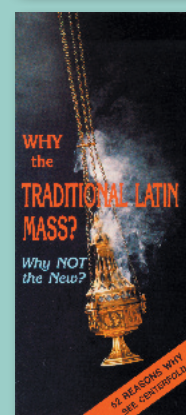


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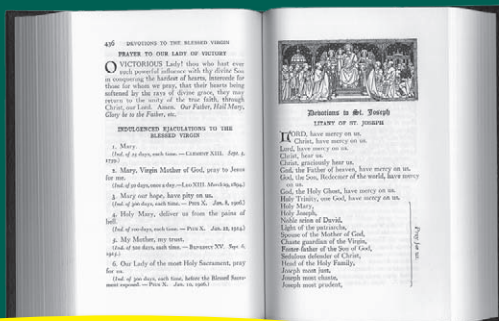
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