

What is happening in the Church?

This column strives to keep the reader up to date with some of the more important statements, events, challenges that confront the Church in Canada, Rome and the world. Keeping in mind the fact that the Church militant does not just consist in the works of Tradition, but in all those who keep the true Faith, even if they do not love and defend it as they ought, it hopes to keep Catholics aware of good and positive developments, as well as the betrayals of modernism, in order to understand the situation of the Church in all the complexity of its reality.

Rev. Fr. Peter Scott

“Excommunications lifted”

There can be no doubt that the most important happening in the Church over the past months was the lifting of the so-called excommunications of the four bishops of the Society of Saint Pius X, last January 21, made public on January 24. Our Superior General, His Excellency Bishop Fellay, did not hesitate to express his “gratitude” to the Holy Father for this “courageous act”, nor to welcome the doctrinal discussions concerning the unprecedented crisis in the Church.

However, since Bishop Fellay has been accused of going “soft” by requesting and welcoming this canonical act, a little background is in order. It was thanks to the very successful pilgrimage of the Holy Year, 2000, that Rome, being very impressed by the magnitude and spirit of the Society’s pilgrimage, showed an interest in reopening contacts and discussions.



Two preliminaries

It was in January 2001 that the Society determined that it could not seek or accept any canonical solution, nor any theological discussions of importance, until two preliminaries had been fulfilled. These two preliminaries were first of all a declaration that all priests have the right to celebrate the traditional Mass, and, secondly, that, by a unilateral act, the so-called excommunications are lifted. There was a very simple reason for both of these. Unless a guaranty could be given to all priests that they had the right to celebrate the tra-

ditional rite of Mass, that Mass could not be said to have a right to exist in the Church, and any priest could be forced to celebrate the New Mass, which is manifestly unacceptable. The reason for the second preliminary was that no doctrinal discussions could exist unless the Society and its bishops are regarded as being Catholic, a first step towards the acknowledgement of the right to contest the errors of Vatican II.

It seemed impossible for Rome to even consider the granting of these preliminaries, and so all negotiations stalled. Meanwhile, the authorities in the Ecclesia Dei Commission and elsewhere determined to do all in their power to divide and conquer the work of Tradition. They did this first of all by offering an Apostolic Administration to the priests of Campos, and allowing them to continue celebrating the traditional Mass (2002). A few years later (2005) came the foundation of the Good Shepherd Institute by several priests who had been convinced to leave the Society by promises, including the exclusive use of the traditional Mass, written into their statutes.

1st: Traditional mass permitted for all priests

Meanwhile, the Society’s General Chapter in 2006 confirmed the demand that the two preliminaries be fulfilled before any further discussions could be made, in particular concerning the canonical status that the authorities in Rome desperately wanted to bestow upon the Society. As a consequence, in October 2006 Bishop Fellay requested a Crusade of Rosaries, to be delivered to the Holy Father, for the intention of freeing up the traditional Mass, so that all priests could celebrate it. A million rosaries were prayed for this intention, and then on July 7, 2007, came the motu proprio “Summorum pontificum” that not only declared that all priests have the right to celebrate the traditional Latin Mass, but also that it had never been abrogated. Although it was issued only for those who do NOT consider “fidelity to the Old Missal” as “as an external mark of identity”, who DO accept “the binding character of the Second Vatican Council”, who DO believe that there is “no contradiction”, “no rupture”, between the Traditional and the New Masses, that

the traditional Mass is only the “extraordinary form” of the same rite, and that they ought to be “mutually enriching”, for “the total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness”—to quote Benedict XVI’s own words on July 7, 2007, nevertheless this universal permission for the traditional Mass has been a great blessing for the Church.

2nd: Lifting of “Excommunications”

In June 2008 Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos delivered an ultimatum to our Superior General, Bishop Fellay, along with a barely disguised threat of a declaration of schism if the Society did not cooperate by June 30. We were being asked to accept a canonical status “without delay”, supposedly as an act of gratitude for the previous year’s *motu proprio*, along with the promise of desisting from any criticism of the Sovereign Pontiff, from considering ourselves as if we were a “magisterium” above him, from opposing the Society to the Church, and from continuing to wound “ecclesial charity”. Thus did Rome attempt to get around the demand of the second preliminary, owed in justice. Bishop Fellay called their bluff, making it clear that he could not accept these conditions, and that he would not be forced into accepting a canonical status that would take away our right and duty of contesting the errors of Vatican II. Silence from Rome was the only response.

Then, on the feast of Christ the King, Bishop Fellay issued his call for another Crusade of one million rosaries, this time for the lifting of the so-called excommunications. He followed this up with a letter to Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos of December 15, 2008, in which he formally requested the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication, pointing out that the episcopal consecrations were nothing more than an “Operation Survival” and in no way an act of rebellion. At the same time as he reiterated the Society’s submission to the primacy of Peter, he also insisted on its right to oppose certain texts of Vatican II on account of their opposition to the Church’s unchanging magisterium. The Crusade was more than successful, for Bishop Fellay was able to hand over to the Holy Father a bouquet of 1,703,000 rosaries in January 2009.

The result was astonishing, immediate, and miraculous, having no other explanation than the power of the rosary. For it is manifestly obvious that the pope does not agree with the Society and has not lifted the “excommunications” because he wants to support our doctrinal positions with respect to Tradition and Vatican II. Benedict XVI himself made this very clear in the declaration made at the General Audience of January 28, 2009, when he explained his reasons for lifting the “excommunications”, against those who criticized him for it: “I fulfilled this act of fatherly mercy because those prelates repeatedly manifested to me their deep suffering for the situation in which they found themselves. I hope that

this gesture of mine will be followed by the solicitous effort by them to accomplish the ulterior steps necessary to accomplish full communion with the Church, thus testifying true fidelity and true recognition of the Magisterium and of the authority of the Pope and of the Second Vatican Council”.

By this statement, he made it clear that he expects traditional Catholics to accept the errors of Vatican II, and that to do so is to accept the Church’s magisterium, although they are in contradiction with previous teachings. You might wonder how this can be possible. It is only because the magisterium is now considered as “living”, and so accepting the magisterium means accepting the present day expression of the way of collegial thinking of the pope and the bishops, including religious liberty and ecumenism. This the Society will never do, for it sees the “discussions” quite simply as the opportunity to present Catholic truth, in radical opposition to the “modernist” way of thinking concerning the Church.

The great advantage of this decree is not its canonical effect but rather the lifting of the opprobrium that was directed against the Society, namely that of supposedly being punished with a censure that looked like it discredited it as being outside the Church’s communion. Some have expressed the regret that this decree said nothing about Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop De Castro Mayer, whose reputation needs to be cleared likewise. However, the decree does state that the decree of 1988 is withdrawn and that as of January 21, 2009, it is deprived of all canonical effects. This implicitly includes Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop De Castro Mayer, who can no longer be said to be excommunicated. Nevertheless, in continuing our combat for the doctrinal positions that both bishops fought to maintain, we will exonerate them publicly and explicitly, nor will we be happy until we have done so.



CONVICTIONS

number 16



Pope calls for a halt in annulment cases

In a discourse given to the Roman Rota on January 29, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI called for an implementation of two discourses given by Pope John Paul II more than two decades ago, asking for a cessation of the scandal of false annulments on psychological grounds.

The official Vatican website, Zenit, on January 29, 2009, quoted from the discourse of Benedict XVI: "The value of Christian marriage runs the risk of being practically destroyed if the sacrament is declared null because of pretexts," says Benedict XVI Citing the Polish Pope, Benedict XVI lamented that it is still possible to detect the need to preserve the ecclesial community from the "scandal of seeing the value of Christian marriage being practically destroyed by the exaggerated and almost automatic multiplication of declarations of nullity of marriage in cases of the failure of marriage on the pretext of some immaturity or psychic weakness on the part of the contracting parties." ... Again referring to his predecessor's address, the Pontiff noted the distinction between a "psychic



maturity which is seen as the goal of human development"; and "canonical maturity which is rather the basic minimum required for establishing the validity of marriage". He further noted the difference between "incapacity" and "difficulty", recalling John Paul II's assertion that "only incapacity and not difficulty in giving consent and in realizing a true community of life and love invalidates a marriage."

These are indeed very strong statements from the Church's highest lawmaker and judge, and reinforced similar statements by Pope John Paul II, indicating that the Church's sys-

tem of annulment tribunals is simply not working. The pope makes the distinction between psychological conditions that make a marriage null and void because they make the contract impossible, and those that simply make it a failure but which do not nullify the contract. However, the problem is that this distinction is very difficult to make in practice. The end result is that decrees of nullity are very commonly given for lack of due discernment, according to Canon 1095 of the 1983 Code. As the pope himself points out, these have become "automatic". Immaturity or psychological problems (so common in our modern dysfunctional world) become a pretence for a decree that falsely declares that there never was a marriage in the first place.

Annulments = catholic divorce

Annulments have become, in effect, "Catholic divorce". This is precisely what the pope means when he talks about the "scandal of seeing the value of Christian marriage being practically destroyed". There is no doubt that the frequency of false annulments is a cause of grave scandal, for it is now in the minds of all Catholics that if their marriage does not work out, they can always apply for an annulment, and the chances are that it will be granted for lack of due discernment, namely lack of maturity. If the popes have been inveighing about this problem for more than 20 of the 25 years since the 1983 Code was promulgated, why is it that nothing has been done, and that false annulments are still granted? Who really accepts papal authority? Why does the pope not follow up with some disciplinary measures? Here lies the entire contradiction of liberalism, corrupting and destroying the Church from within.

Is there any wonder that the Society of Saint Pius X does not accept these decrees of nullity at face value? Is there any surprise that the Society's priests refuse to marry those who present a decree of nullity in virtue of Canon 1095 (which is the vast majority)? Is there any wonder that the Society of Saint Pius X has set up its own tribunals, to obtain moral certitude, to exclude highly doubtful psychological grounds, and to examine the marriage contract itself? Let the Society's faithful take a lesson from this. Let them refuse to date persons who have Novus Ordo decrees of nullity, and let them not submit their difficult and delicate marriage cases to any other but a traditional tribunal.

Msgr. Wach accepts the New Mass

Msgr. Gilles Wach, founder and superior of the Institute of Christ the King, gave an interview on October 25, 2008, to L'homme nouveau, in which he clarified the positions of his institute, that pretends to hold an intermediary position between the Society of Saint Pius X and the Indult communi-

ties. Certain texts of this interview can be found in Fideliter, #187, in which he professed his acceptance of the "extraordinary form" of the liturgy and his willingness to celebrate the New Mass, which is clearly an immediate consequence of accepting that the traditional Mass is but the extraordinary form

of the Roman liturgy. Asked if his priests are in agreement to concelebrate the Chrismal Mass with the diocesan bishops, he had this to say: "I do not see why we should—if we are asked



to do it—refuse such a sign of communion. Understanding is also a virtue and it is not forbidden to have it; it is even one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the Pope himself is accustomed to concelebrate with his cardinals or with the bish-

ops, in Rome or elsewhere in the world. I believe that all the Ecclesia Dei communities appreciate Benedict XVI very much. Why should we be more papist than the Pope?"

Such a position is the denial of anything objectively wrong with the New Mass and is an open gate to formal cooperation in all kinds of sacrileges. It is the logical conclusion of accepting the compromise that the traditional Mass is only the "extraordinary form" of the Roman rite. The acceptance of concelebration is nothing less than a participation in the revolution in the Church; it is ultimately a compromise and a capitulation, negating the effect of dogmatic resistance. No matter how much a priest professes that "this liturgical form [i.e., extraordinary] corresponds perfectly well to the theological, dogmatic, and spiritual teaching that we have received", as Msgr. Wach does, he is inconsistent with himself and an accomplice with the modernist system for as long as he does not refuse the New Mass as being evil, not adequately expressing this teaching, but rather a contrary teaching that corrupts and destroys the faith. Is it any wonder that traditional Catholics refuse to accept that their Mass is the "extraordinary form" ?

Another priest splits from Papa Stronsay

The politics of compromise of Father Michael Mary Sim, the former Redemptorist superior of Papa Stronsay monastery in Scotland, suffered a great setback in December. This was even before the lifting of the so-called "excommunications" that gave the Society effectively the same situation as the former Redemptorists but without the compromise with the errors of Vatican II and without being under a diocesan Novus Ordo bishop.

This setback was the public announcement of a second priest, Father Nicholas Mary, C. Ss. R., that he was leaving the community on account of its separation from the combat of the Society of Saint Pius X, thus leaving only two priests with Father Sim. The essence of his declaration, published in the December newsletter of the Society of Saint Pius X in Great Britain, is as follows:

"Up until recently our community held that there exists a crisis of Faith so great that it has created a state of emergency which has justified, and even urged us to work as Redemptorists outside the official framework of the Church for the last 20 years. Its superiors and many of its members have now chosen to see in recent developments in Rome an indica-

tion that this state of emergency no longer exists to the extent of justifying such a position, but rather that integration into the official structures is now both possible and imperative. Others—and this is my own position—believe that the situation has not changed substantially even since the Motu Proprio of 2007 (which is nevertheless clearly a step in the right direction), and that the primary cause of the state of emergency is not liturgical, but doctrinal and still unresolved. For my part, I shall continue to support, and work with the Society of Saint Pius X whilst endeavoring to remain faithful to, and persevere in, my Redemptorist vocation as and where Providence indicates.

Addressing my dear Redemptorist confrères, I should like to make my own the words of Dom Laurenc Fleichman, O.S.B. (a Brazilian priest who left the Benedictine monastery of Le Barroux in France in 1988 when his community sought a similar regularization of its status by the Vatican authorities whilst the doctrinal questions remained then, as now, unresolved), to his superior, the late Dom. Gerard Calvet. These words he repeated to the priests of Campos, Brazil, when they too sought to put their own

good above the common good of Tradition in 2001: "Thousands of the faithful anxiously wait for you to confirm them in the Catholic Faith, in the combat that Divine Providence requires of us, without our succumbing to fatigue, weakness, or the siren song of legality. What Our Lord requires is martyrdom endured drop by drop, and a clear and simple profession of Catholic Faith without compromising with the modernists in the Vatican. The Pope, yes; legality, yes; but above all, respond to God's clear call to the combat of the Faith."

This very simple declaration underlines the doctrinal nature of our combat from which the Sons of the Redeemer (as Rome has forced them to call themselves since they are no longer Redemptorists) have separated themselves, much to the delight of the Roman policy with respect to traditional Catholics—divide and conquer. Father Nicholas Mary is to be commended for his courage. He will remain on the island of Stronsay, where he will administer to the faithful there, who, of course, have the Catholic and common sense to trust and follow the Society of Saint Pius X and not the bishop of Aberdeen and his non-Redemptorists.

Vatican thanks muslims for returning God to Europe

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue made the statement in a meeting of theologians in Naples on November 28, as reported in the *Osservatore Romano* and by Reuters. He thanked the Muslims for bringing God back into the public sphere in Europe, now that they have become a significant minority, on account of which believers of different faiths have no option but to engage in interreligious dialogue.

But how can religious pluralism bring God back into Society, when the members of the different religions do not even believe in the true God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, second person of the Blessed Trinity? How can God be brought back into society by those who refuse God's own social kingship, His mercy and the work of unspeakable love and mercy, the Incarnation and the Redemption?

Muslim convert objects

It took a neophyte from Islam to correct the good Cardinal and the Pope who backs him up. It was in fact a journalist by the name of Mr. Magdi Allam who converted from Islam and was baptized in a very public way by Pope Benedict XVI himself on the Easter vigil, March 22 2008, who rightly rebuked both Cardinal Tauran and the Pope. He did it in the form of an open letter to the Pope posted on his website on October 20, 2008, in response to the preparation for the Catholic-Muslim forum last November. Mr. Allam told the Pope of his concern for "the serious religious and ethical straying that has infiltrated and spread within the heart of the Church", and that "it is vital for the common good of the Catholic Church, the general interest of Christianity and of western civilization itself" that the Pope make a pronouncement in a "clear and binding way" on the question of whether Islam is a valid religion.

Mr. Allam told the Pope he specifically objected to Cardinal Tauran telling

a conference in August 2008 that Islam promotes peace but that "some believers have betrayed their faith", using it as a pretext for violence. "The objective reality, I tell you with all sincerity and animated by a constructive intent, is exactly the opposite of what Cardinal Tauran imagines", Mr. Allam told the Pope. "Islamic extremism and terrorism are the mature fruit of following the sayings of the Quran and the thought and action of Mahommed." (www.catholic.org).

The courage of this convert is to be admired. From the very beginning he was abandoned, when he used his newspaper column to condemn Islam as soon as he was converted from it, for when he did this he not only did not receive any support at all from the Vatican, but was rather pushed aside with a statement from Father Lombardi (Vatican

Press Secretary) that when the Church receives a new member, this does not mean that it accepts his opinions on every subject.

This undermining of his very conversion from Islam by the very Church that he had just joined would be considered even by the world as backstabbing. But



the modernists justify it, for the sake of ecumenism. Yet he continues to have the courage to actively teach the Pope and Cardinals about the evils of a false religion. May God reward him, for this world will not.

Quebec diocese refuses Motu Proprio

An article in *Le Quotidien* of February 7 documents the refusal by Bishop Rivest of the diocese of Chicoutimi, Quebec, of the traditional Latin Mass based on the motu proprio *Summorum pontificum*, and this despite his having received a petition signed by 140 persons requesting it, and having a priest available able to celebrate it.

The people appealed to the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission in Rome at the beginning of September 2008, and as of early February 2009 had not yet received a response. Most interesting are the reasons for the refusal of this Tridentine Mass, given by the pastor of Sacred Heart parish in Chicoutimi, Msgr. Jean-Roch Gaudin. The 140 persons do not, he says, constitute a stable group, since they are not all from the same town, and some of them are children! However, his real reasons are clearly explained also: "This goes much further than Latin and Gregorian Chant, with which I see no problem. They [the faithful who want the Tridentine Mass] use the Missal from before the Council, the Missal in which prayers can be found speaking of God's vengeance, rather than God who is love. They pray in it for the conversion of the Jews, who are seen as the wicked persons who killed Christ. This is a theology from the past, a false vision from which, happily, we have escaped." He went on to explain that if Rome did not back up the bishop on this question, he would recommend for him to resign as bishop. The question of the traditional Mass is consequently of great importance for the entire Church.