

Keep the Faith of all time, ... denounce the errors of Vatican II

It was obvious for Archbishop Lefebvre - and this is simply Catholic - that in order to keep Catholic doctrine, it was necessary to fight against the modern heresies. It is only a matter of fidelity to the Faith of all time: the Catholic Faith. This fidelity necessarily implies criticism and rejection of whatever is opposed to it: "The novelties of the Council, and the reforms issued from it."

Conference given by Fr. Alain Nély at Nanaimo on Monday 6th of April 2009

No hurry!

We may say, without too many risks of error, that since the year 2000, shortly after the major pilgrimage organized by the SSPX on the occasion of the latest Jubilee, Rome has changed its policy toward Tradition. Henceforth, it will urge a practical solution for the conflict, a canonical solution: hence the proposition of the famous "practical agreement."

Since the publication of the Motu proprio "Summorum Pontificum," there is much talk about the "position of the SSPX." It is strongly

criticized, especially by those who consider the Motu proprio as a trap to "bring back" the SSPX into the conciliar system and thus annihilate any resistance on the part of Tradition. These same persons add that, Roman authorities being modernist, we cannot have any contact with them, for any contact would only result in our getting contaminated. Others say that we have a good pope, who might even be perfectly traditionalist, as those who oppose him tend to make it believe. For these latter, even if everything is not perfect, we should sign a practical agreement without delay and work together, united in one and the same Church.

Without agreeing either with the ones or the others, the SSPX is in no hurry to respond to the effort made for this return "to full ecclesial communion." And it does not intend to run the risk of making a practical agreement which would resolve the problem only from a canonical point of view, leaving aside the doctrinal problem. Is it not reasonable to wait thus?

This stand seems justified by the very principle of our combat: while keeping in contact with Rome, and after having obtained, even in an imperfect manner, the two preliminaries we had asked for, before taking any other step, we want to begin the famous doctrinal discussions. As Archbishop Lefebvre already stated: "Our opposition is not only about the Mass, but also



about doctrine." The whole fight opposing us to what we can call "the new Rome," boils down to our opposition to the Second Vatican Council and to the "new theology" which was the instrument making it possible to coin the errors which we denounce. From the beginning, the combat waged by Archbishop Lefebvre was a twofold combat: in the Church and for the Church. To keep the faith of all time means to oppose "the Second Vatican Council and all the reforms issued from it."

A work of the Church

Archbishop Lefebvre wanted to achieve a work of the Church: he wanted to train priests according to the Tradition of the Church for a necessary renewal of the Church. He wanted to continue to hand down Tradition, i.e. the Faith, the sacraments, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Catholic priesthood. For this reason, the approval of his Society by Rome was for him the requisite sign from divine Providence and a condition sine qua non of its legitimacy. This he received in 1970 with the approval of the constitutions by the local Bishop, Mgr. Charrière, and in 1971 with a letter from Rome. With these two elements in his possession, the founder of the SSPX had the certitude of acting in the Church and for the Church, and thus silencing any accusation of sectarianism.

This definite will to hand down Tradition is the reason why the work of Archbishop Lefebvre found itself so soon, and unavoidably so, in public opposition to the Second Vatican Council and all its reforms. The opposition was not so much against the Roman authorities themselves, but against the new Church born of the Second Vatican Council: the conciliar Church. The opposition became manifest in facts first with the French bishops, and later more directly with Rome. The opposition was hard, brutal and ruthless.

To keep the Faith of all time, and hence to denounce the errors of Vatican II in order to serve the Church, such were the two elements clearly expressed in the Declaration of November 21, 1974: "We hold firmly with all our heart and with all our mind to Catholic Rome, Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary to the maintenance of this faith, to the eternal Rome, mistress of wisdom and truth.

We refuse on the other hand, and have always refused, to follow the Rome of Neo-Modernist and Neo-Protestant tendencies, which became clearly manifest during the Second Vatican Council, and after the Council, in all the reforms which issued from it."

Fidelity to the Faith called disobedience

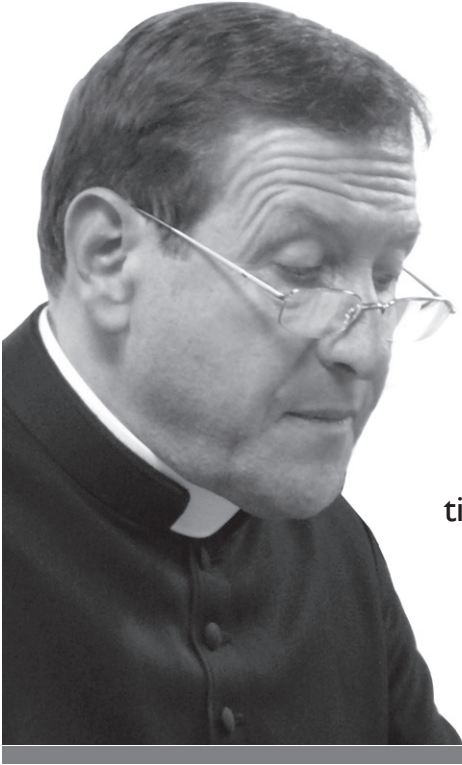
It was obvious for Archbishop Lefebvre - and this is simply Catholic - that in order to keep Catholic doctrine, it was necessary to fight against heresies, now the modern heresies. We cannot separate the two sides of the same medal. Consequently, we can say that there is neither "problem of Ecône" nor any "problem with the SSPX." It is only a matter of fidelity to the Faith of all time: the Catholic Faith. This fidelity necessarily implies criticism and rejection of whatever is opposed to it: "The novelties of the Council, and the reforms issued from it." This is the whole tragedy of the present crisis. As Paul VI said: "The Church has come to the point where it is inflicting blows to itself."

Until 1988, the fight seemed clear for everybody. However, after the episcopal consecrations and the publication of the *Motu proprio "Ecclesia Dei Adflicta"* some thought it possible to be both for Tradition and with the Council and its reforms. This is the grave error of the "conservative" *Ecclesia Dei* movements. Archbishop Lefebvre's combat "for the Mass of all time," which he could not separate from a genuine predication of the Faith, implied an analysis, and an opposition to errors and to the new doctrines of Vatican II. This resistance, called disobedience, first became manifest in the 70's and focused around the combat for the Mass: it was a refusal and a criticism of the new Mass. In the 80's, the fight consisted mainly in denouncing the scandals given by Rome and by the pope: visit to the synagogue of Rome, predication in a Lutheran church, repeated acts of false ecumenism with the Protestants and the Anglicans, and especially the great Assisi scandal, which Archbishop Lefebvre considered as the apostasy of Rome, and which was the determining reason for the consecrations which he had envisaged for a long time, and which took place two years later.

In a joint letter with Bishop de Castro Mayer, Archbishop Lefebvre wrote: "These past twenty years... sufficiently proved that the situation is resulting in a real self-destruction of the Church,

except in the circles where the ancient Tradition of the Church was kept..."

After the Assisi scandal, he specified: "For us, we remain unfailingly attached to the Roman Catholic Church of all time, yet we are forced to observe that the new modernist and liberal religion of modern and conciliar Rome is always moving further away from us."



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The consecrations of 1988 were the apex of this twofold combat for the Church and against modernist errors. They expressed both the conviction and the necessity of transmitting the full sacramental force of the Church contained in the episcopacy to resist and fight against modernist errors. The four bishops were consecrated to hand down the Faith and to continue the Church.

In his sermon, Archbishop Lefebvre said: "It seems to me, my dear brethren, that I am hearing the voices of all these Popes - since Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII, St. Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, Pius XII - telling us: 'Please, we beseech you, what are you going to do with our teachings, with our predications, with the Catholic Faith? Are you going to abandon it? Are you going to let it disappear from this earth? Please, please, continue to keep this treasure which we have given you. Do not abandon the faithful, do not abandon the Church! Continue the Church!

Indeed, since the Council, what we condemned in the past the present Roman authorities have embraced and are professing.' ... I am simply a bishop of the Catholic Church who is continuing to transmit Catholic doctrine. I think, and this will certainly not be too far off, that you will be able to engrave on my tombstone these words of St. Paul: 'Tradidi quod et accepi - I have transmitted to you what I have received,' nothing else."

Not for the sake of his Society

The consecrations were the result of Archbishop Lefebvre's perseverance in his fidelity to the Church. In his eyes, he was duty-bound, not for the sake of his society, but for the sake of the Church. He said as much when he expressed the conviction that it was the "Operation survival for Tradition."

He also said: "I want that at the hour of my death, when Our Lord asks me: what have you done with your episcopacy, what have you done with your priestly and episcopal grace? I will not hear from His mouth these dreadful words: You contributed to the destruction of the Church together with the rest."

Twenty years after the consecrations, hence, forty years after the Council, this latter has become the absolute criterion of Catholicity, the most significant event in the theology and the life of the Church. We could say that it is the "specific difference" which enables us to distinguish between a pre-council era, and a post-council era. And though the council was merely pastoral, it has become a "super-dogma".

Pope Paul VI went so far as saying in a letter to Archbishop Lefebvre on June 29, 1975: "How can anyone today compare himself to St. Athanasius in daring to combat a council such as the Second Vatican Council, which has no less authority, which in certain respects is even more important than that of Nicea?"

Reading the post-conciliar texts, we have the impression that the History of the Church and its theology began with Vatican II, just like for moderns profane history began in 1789! "Reflections" concerning time and society, responses to new situations oddly become the norm of fidelity, the norm of the Faith. Faith is partly destroyed by these newfangled "reflections". Henceforth is a Catholic he who accepts Vatican II. Two "Faiths", two different conceptions are

confronted. There are two religions, two Masses, and dare we say it? Two Churches. The Church of all time and the new "Conciliar Church" as Msgr. Bugnini loved to call it.

The position of Archbishop Lefebvre regarding the council has never changed: "Because the Council is opposed to Tradition, we must reject the Council," and he used to sum up its ideas and spirit in one word: Liberalism.

These are the liberal ideas condemned by the previous popes, which, after the manner of Trojan horses, entered the Church by means of the Council:

- Freedom in itself, liberalism in the sense of autonomy: religious liberty,
- Equality: principle of collegiality,
- Fraternity: ecumenism.

Are you surprised to find here the great principles of the so-called French Revolution? Religious liberty, equality, fraternity became the constitutive elements of a new orientation which was at the heart of all the new reforms: ecumenism.

Comes from heresy - ends in heresy

In the 1972 manifesto, the Archbishop said: "This reform coming from liberalism, and modernism is completely poisoned. It comes from heresy and ends in heresy, even if all its acts are not formally heretics. Consequently, it is impossible for any conscientious and faithful Catholic to adopt this reform and to submit to it in any way whatsoever."

Indeed, the ideas and the spirit of the Council revealed themselves in the reform of the Mass. Forty years after the imposition of the Novus Ordo, we may raise the question: Why a new Mass, and a new rite?

We can answer with two main reasons: ecumenism, and new theology. To accomplish the dream of Paul VI: re-unite with the separate brethren, and achieve at any cost the unity destroyed four centuries earlier, such was the order of the day for this new Spring of the Church. The creation of a rite, which breaks the opposition, is the great intention of the Council, and the leitmotiv of the commission in charge of the elaboration of the Novus Ordo. The following lines could be read in the *Osservatore Romano* of March 19, 1965: "We must set aside any prayer which could be but the shadow of a stumbling block or of displeasure for our separate brethren."

From 1964 onward, Pope Paul VI entrusted the elaboration of the new rite to Msgr. Annibale Bugnini. Six Protestant pastors were present at the meetings of the Commission in charge of the work. Later, one of them, Max Thurian, belonging to the ecumenical community of Taizé, declared: "There is nothing in the Novus Ordo which would prevent a Protestant from celebrating it." The ideas and novelties of the Council were spread far and wide mainly through the Novus Ordo. According to the saying: "Lex orandi, lex credendi" (The law of our prayer becomes the law for our faith), the Novus Ordo was the living vehicle for the novelties.

Archbishop Lefebvre very rightly called it the "Mass of Luther." In 1975, he said: "We cannot help reaching the conclusion that principles being closely bound with practice, according to the Lex orandi, lex credendi, the fact of imitating the reform of Luther in the liturgy of the Mass infallibly leads to adopt gradually the very ideas of Luther."

Martin Luther denied the Catholic priesthood and the sacrifice.

Archbishop Lefebvre continued: "All these changes in the new rite are certainly dangerous because little by little, especially for the younger priests who do no longer have the idea of the sacrifice, of the Real Presence, of transubstantiation, and for whom all these concepts no longer have any meaning, these younger priests lose the intention of doing what the Church does, and no longer offer valid Masses."

Missa normativa

In 1967, the *Missa normativa* was presented by its author, Msgr. Bugnini, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship, on the occasion of the Bishops' synod in Rome. Most of the bishops rejected it, saying that it was not what the Council intended. But on April 3, 1969, Paul VI imposed the Novus Ordo Missæ, which is nothing but the normative Mass, without directly abrogating the former rite, something he did a year later on the occasion of a consistory, demanding that henceforth only the Novus Ordo Missæ be celebrated. The theology of the Novus Ordo Missæ is based upon the Paschal mystery and universal salvation, reducing the Redemption to Easter Sunday.

The Paschal Mystery took henceforth the place of the sacrifice and became the center of

the liturgy. All take part in the Resurrection of Christ, and by it all are saved. This notion of universal salvation, which was so dear to Pope John Paul II, and finds its basis in the New Theology of Henri de Lubac and of Karl Rahner, became the theology of the Council. It is found again in the separation of Church and State, in ecumenism, and in the new relationship between Faith and science. Everything is based upon human dignity, the autonomy and liberty of man.

The consequences are fatal: for the individual, human reason is no longer subject to divine Faith, the State must be neutral, above the divine law and the natural law. This is the way leading to "the silent apostasy"; henceforth neither the Church, nor the State can force any universal and eternal code of ethics upon the individual. The new theology logically leads to atheism: there is neither positive laicism, nor post-metaphysical thinking, nor continuity. All the discussions with atheism or the so-called dialogue with other religions can lead nowhere. The unique solution remains Our Lord Jesus Christ. The truth shall make us free, not human dignity.

"For almost 20 years," Archbishop Lefebvre said, (see *Fideliter*, n° spécial Rome et Mgr Lefebvre) "we have been trying with patience and firmness to make the Roman authorities understand the necessity of a return to sound doctrine and to Tradition, for the renewal of the Church, the salvation of souls and the glory of God. But they remain deaf to our supplications, even worse; we are asked to recognize the soundness of the whole council and of reforms which are ruining the Church."

Indeed, inspired with an unflinching faith in the primacy of Peter, the Archbishop never ceased to consider conciliar popes as genuine popes. The Archbishop knew that the Church cannot exist without a pope and that the crisis would be overcome only by the pope's return to Tradition in its integrality. For it is to him, and to no one else, that this power belongs.

Consequently, though aware of the danger of these discussions with a Rome which, once again, had no other objective than the integration of the Society into the modern Church, the Archbishop carried them on, in spite of all because he did not see any other means of saving souls than Tradition, and the return of the Church to Tradition. In 1988, he wrote: "We do not have the same manner of understanding Tradition. Cardinal Ratzinger sees it in the sense of reducing us, and leading us back to Vatican II. We see it as the return of Rome to Tradition. We do not understand each other; we are not on the same wave length."

Even after the consecrations, he did not reject possible contacts with Rome, but said that henceforth "I will be the one setting the conditions."

Achieved through prayer

The two preliminaries and the famous doctrinal discussions requested by Bishop Fellay are the conditions set by our Superior General, following in the footsteps of our Founder. This is not done for our own sake but to help the Church return to Tradition.

The essence of our combat remains the same, it is twofold: fidelity to the Faith, to the Mass, to Catholic doctrine, to the love for the Truth. But it is also the propagation of this faith, the missionary spirit, devotion to the apostolate and consequently to the salvation of souls. It is to labor in the Church, in order to show the richness and the power of Tradition. We are convinced that this will be achieved mainly through prayer. But we must also co-operate with grace by our example, by our apostolate with souls who are increasingly ignorant of the least truths of the Faith, by our studies, and by our zeal.

Through the prayer of the Rosary, St. Pius V obtained the victory of Lepanto over the Turkish invaders, whereas for two years he had vainly tried to unite a divided Christendom to repel the enemy. In this same spirit, Bishop Fellay launched the two Rosary Crusades to which you generously took part, knowing that, now again, the victory belongs to Her who being the Mother of the Church is also She who puts an end to all heresies.

