

CONVICTIONS

issue number 16 - March 2009

We have given our lives to the Church,

and so we hope to contribute to the good of the Church

Dear readers,

During the twenty years that followed the consecrations, the majority of the first groups of faithful and the leading figures in the battle for Tradition have entered into eternity. They who stood behind Archbishop Lefebvre, who assisted in the founding of seminaries, priories and chapels, who suffered great attacks during the heated times, who left their parishes, their friends, sometimes even their families, to embark on the adventure of Tradition, they experienced from up close the combat of Archbishop Lefebvre, battered from the crisis in the Church. Conscious of their responsibility, convinced of the reality of Tradition, they gave their life for the Church.



For us, things are otherwise. Perhaps we may even have had the chance to assist at the events of the year 1988. But the origins of the Tradition, we hardly know; they go back too far. A course in the history of Tradition would be useful, perhaps even necessary, to recall the reasons which prompted Archbishop Lefebvre to undertake "Operation Survival".

The third generation is born, so to speak, in Tradition, and this great number of faithful, disappointed by the current situation of the Church and having discovered the treasures of Tradition, never having known Archbishop Lefebvre, they have only the stories of previous generations. They are courageous, they are models, but they have never known the great combat! The danger of closing oneself within the small traditional world is very real.

At the priestly ordinations of June 19th, 1987, Archbishop Lefebvre had announced his intention of providing successors, to continue the work of Tradition. A few days later, he expounded his reasons to Cardinal Ratzinger in his letter of July 8th, 1987: "The practical consequences of the liberal views adopted by the Holy See at the Vatican, following the Council, are disastrous and anti-Christian. It is the uncrowning of Our Lord Jesus Christ, reducing all religions to common law, upholding an apostate ecumenism as that of Assisi. In order to stop the auto-demolition of the Church, we beseech the Holy Father, through your mediation, to obtain the free practice of Tradition by supplying the means to stay in existence and to expand itself; for the saving of the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, [...] to conserve in the Church the graces of Tradition; the only beginning for the renovation of the Church".

Since that time, on the one hand, the situation in the Church has become still worse. On the other hand, the "Mass of all times" has been liberated and the excommunication of the bishops of the Society has been lifted. The combat for Tradition has entered into a new period. It is up to us to continue, perhaps to end this important matter. But we must remember that everything until now has been only a modest introduction to the true combat. Up to this point, it was nothing but the overture. The overture of an opera presents the personages, it introduces to us the subjects to be treated, and it familiarizes us with the various musical motifs. We have arrived at that point! The overture is finished; the opera begins! The discussions with the roman authorities will be started up; the real music will be heard. The issues at stake are of immense importance: The Church could, yes, She must come out of her crisis.

Let us turn towards our Holy Mother of Heaven to implore Her help. We thank our Holy Father, the Pope; let us pray for him. In freeing the Mass and in lifting the excommunication he has undertaken a magnificent step in favor of Tradition. The entire world has criticized him and their criticisms do not cease. It will be up to him to make the decisions on the issues for the forthcoming discussions, to therefore assume the responsibility, and to receive from it all the attacks from those people and organizations opposed to him. He deserves our support!

Father Jürgen Wegner

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480 McKenzie Street, Winnipeg, MB, R2W 5B9
Tel / Fax: 204-589-4524, convictions@shaw.ca

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Publisher:

Rev. Fr. Jürgen Wegner
District Superior

Editor:

Rev. Fr. Patrick Girouard

Chroniclers

Rev. Fr. Emanuel Herkel
Mr. Marc Ratusz, BA., MA.Th.

Translations:

Rev. Fr. Patrick Girouard

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We have given our lives to the Church,

and so we hope to contribute to the good of **the Church**

*Interview with His Excellency Bishop Fellay
Conducted by Fr. Lorans. February 5, 2009. (www.dici.org)*

Bishop Bernard Fellay

Fr. Lorans: Your Excellency, the first question is about the rapidity of the publication of the decree of January 21, 2009. Were you surprised by such rapidity?

Bishop Fellay: Yes, absolutely. I promise you that I was not expecting the decree to come at that time. However, let me clarify this. I was expecting something ever since Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos had said to me (back in November 2005): "Write to the pope and ask him". I think he used the words "withdrawal" or "lifting of the excommunication". So, I said to myself: if Rome recommends that I ask, Rome must be ready to grant it. From that moment, one could say that sometime it would happen.

However, the last six months were rather cold, that is to say, there was the infamous ultimatum, the summons from Rome in the beginning of June. The Holy See was not happy with my latest Letter to Friends and Benefactors in April, and since then, we had been in a statu quo, or even at a deadlock. Deadlock, because of that summons that I never fully understood in all its terms. It was clear that they were not happy because I had said we were against the Council, that there were unacceptable things in the Council, and that it was necessary to discuss such things before envisaging something practical, a canonical solution. I responded to the summons by a letter to the Pope. After that nothing more, no reaction from Rome.

At the end of the summer, beginning of autumn, there were some indirect, little messages, but not a single direct contact; only those through some go-betweens, some priests who

would have spoken with the Cardinal to know what was happening. That shows that there was some expectation, but nothing special. Just before the pilgrimage to Lourdes, there was the first contact with Cardinal Castrillon, whom I informed of a letter that would resume contact, since we had been at a deadlock. This was a letter that took me some time to compose and to let ripen, and finally I sent it on December 15. In this letter I tried to explain: the summons of June shows that we are at a deadlock, and that if we want to get out of it, we need to change our method. I spoke of a status quæstionis, that is to say, that it was necessary to approach the thing from another viewpoint. And that viewpoint, I reminded him in the letter, is that since 2001, we had proposed a "roadmap" with two pre-conditions that would improve the situation from the outside. In other words, for a long time we have had a false reputation... in the official Church, we are looked upon as rebels, with all the pejorative labels that we have been saddled with for some time now. So I wrote: we must succeed in getting rid of all this, so that we can discuss without these labels, without pressure, without mistrust. This is why we have asked for two things: the freedom of the Mass for all priests, and the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication, since it was null anyhow, since there was no excommunication. In this letter, I recognized that the first point had finally been granted, but that the situation of our relations, the way we were treated in the Church, continued to be disparaging for us. What the pope tried to obtain from one side, by reducing the pressure on us, is neutralized or even aggravated by the way we are treated.

The letter does not deal with the root of the problem, but how to approach it. It affirms our position with the Church, by saying that we are attached to the Church, we are Catholics, we have never left her, thus we recognize all the major principles of the Church, and the fact that there is a Pope with his prerogatives. But on the other hand, in that letter, in the name of the other three bishops and myself, I asked for the second point: the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication.

As my letter was relatively severe, I was not expecting a rapid response. It was only a means of renewing contact. Then, in mid-January I decided to go to Rome to see how things were going. There were new cardinals in charge of various congregations and whom I did not know. I had heard that some were favorable to the old Mass. Hence I had prepared this little three-day visit to meet with these cardinals. Now, almost on the eve of my departure, I received a phone call from Cardinal Castrillon: "I must see you right away, to tell you something. It is about the excommunications, and before it is made public, I would like to tell you about it." It came at the right time, though it was quite unforeseen, because I had also planned to make this trip to bring the spiritual bouquet, those 1,703,000 rosaries collected between November and Christmas. But I did not intend to meet with the cardinal, I would just have delivered the letter. Of course, I managed to find time to visit the Cardinal even though my schedule was rather busy. I really had not expected this since I had heard some echoes that were negative. They were rumors, and as such did not deserve too much credit. It was rumored that, in Rome, they were wondering whether they should not reconfirm the condemnations against the Society, and condemn Bishop Fellay for supporting a schismatic deviation in the SSPX. In such an atmosphere, I was indeed surprised by the decree and it is all the clearer that it must be attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

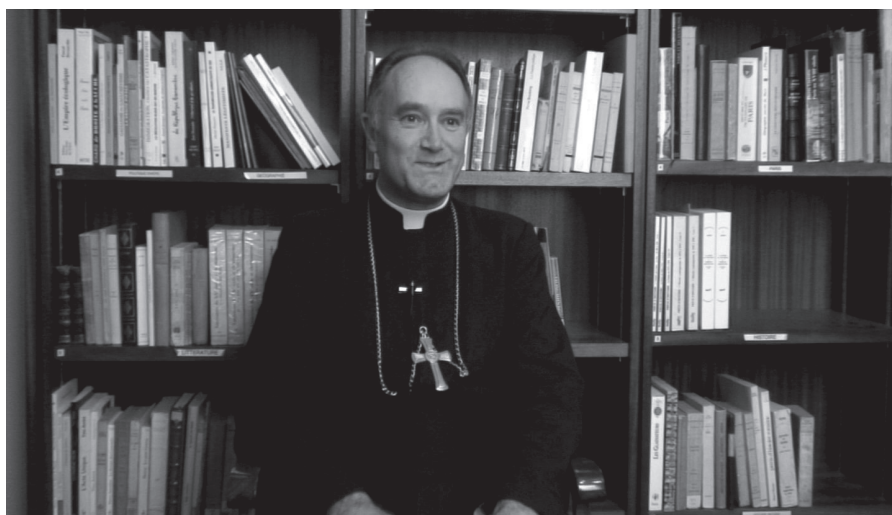
Fr. Lorans: So you thank Our Lady and the Holy Father for the decree?

Bishop Fellay: Yes, absolutely.

Fr. Lorans: Ever since the decree, there has been also what is called the Bishop Williamson affair. Do you, all the while deploring his com-

ments as you have already said, do you suspect a set-up in this affair?

Bishop Fellay: For me, there is no doubt about it, yet it is practically impossible to prove. Yet, there could never be such a coincidence. The Swedish TV recorded Bishop Williamson's interview on November 1st (2008)... and it just comes out now! That, in itself, is already a little queer. I note, in passing, that the television channel, or at least the reporter, used this interview to show it or mention it to certain proprietors of places of worship we had in Sweden, and that as a consequence we lost these places. Hence, there was really a bad and wicked intention, which had nothing to do with a TV interview. We already knew about this. On top of it, there was not just the Swedish TV, but the whole thing was made public in a popular German magazine, Der Spiegel, under the title: "The Pope is Going to Be in Trouble."

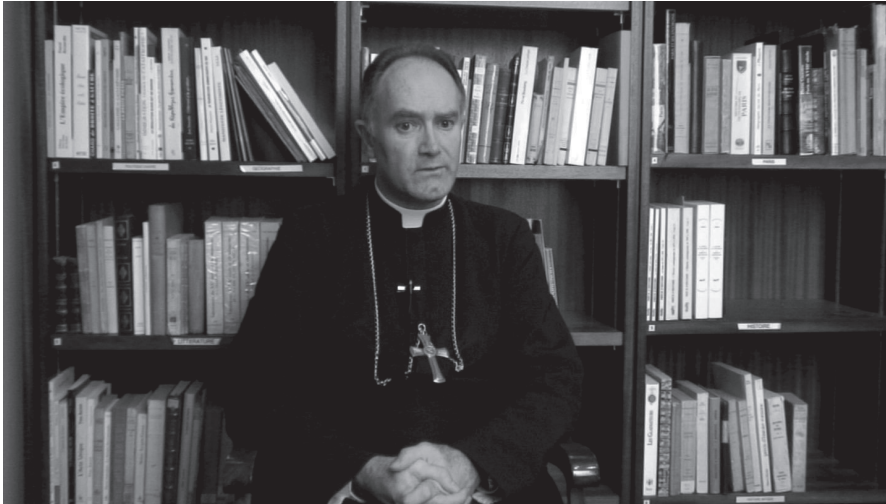


Fr. Lorans: When was this?

Bishop Fellay: Just when I came back from Rome, on January 19, they announced the broadcasting of the interview for the following week. In the article, Der Spiegel shows that the Pope has a conservative tendency, that he has already made several reforms, that he is approaching the SSPX. This is the context in which they announced that: "He was going to be in trouble". Then came Bishop Williamson's statements. It all resembles an orchestrated plan, more than a coincidence. What is interesting is that an Italian newspaper and other "well informed" people on a blog told us that in the upper spheres of the

Vatican a short yet detailed study is circulating, with facts and movements, which destroys the set-up.

What is absolutely certain today is that there is a coalition of all the progressivists or of the left-wing who use the unfortunate declarations of Bishop Williamson. And they use the Society, now branded with a very infamous label, to put pressure upon the pope. And this pressure, obviously does not deal only with the issue brought up by Bishop Williamson's statements. Quite clearly, it is a vengeance, they are lobbying to force Rome to give up the attempt at restoration, or rather the beginning of an attempt... We can see that they are all forming a league against the person of the pope and the Vatican, or at least the pope's close associates. And of course, in passing they take advantage of the situation to tear the Society to pieces.



Fr. Lorans: So after the canonical excommunication, we now have a "catholic" excommunication?

Bishop Fellay: It is a bit like that. We went from one label to the next. We tried to get rid of one sticky label, in the hope of improving our public image... But in fact, it is not only a question of our image, it goes much further. Underneath the excommunication, the whole attitude of Archbishop Lefebvre was condemned. His attitude had become as it were the incarnation of Tradition, this Catholic attitude of a strong and steadfast attachment to the past of the Church for our age. Hence, his famous words: "I have handed down what I have received." You cannot hand down unless you are attached to what

you have received. This attitude of all times is blamed by today's Church because Archbishop Lefebvre is excommunicated. We can call it not the excommunication of one individual but of Tradition itself. That is what we wanted to be rid of. We were not concerned about our own little good name. It is not a matter of our puny public image. It goes much further. Of course, by the same token it was taking a weapon away from our opponents, who always had the easy answer to our requests: "You're excommunicated, you've got no business to be here."

It was an attempt at approaching them with greater serenity and making easier the return to Tradition which is dawning on the horizon of the Church and which is obvious among the younger generations. Of course, we cannot say it is a general phenomenon, but it is important nonetheless. The younger generations aspire to much more than what they are given today. And this "much more", they are looking for everywhere, obviously, but a good number of them look for it in the right place. But it is for them an unknown world, a world blamed and defamed. For all these reasons, we requested the withdrawal or the annulment of the decree of excommunication.

And just as we finally got rid of that one label, and we are not completely freed from it yet, another one is flung into our face, and this last one is much more serious, much more frightening not only for Catholics but for the world at large. It is almost like a hint from the Good Lord telling us: "Look here, I gave you one beatitude, and I'm confirming it: 'Blessed are ye when they shall speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake.'" I am no masochist, and obviously this new label is not at all to our liking, all the more so because it is false, even falser than the first, and terribly unjust. I feel like saying with St. Therese: "I look forward to the last judgment", when everything will be revealed and truth will shine brightly. I can't help thinking that, at that moment, the media will have to render many accounts for what they did, and this in full justice and truth. For the present, it is up to us to prove by facts and actions that this infamous label is both unjust and false.

Fr. Lorans: You were talking about the decree of annulment, withdrawal, lifting. It is true that you had asked for the withdrawal of the decree of 1988, and that they gave you a lifting of

the excommunication. Are you disappointed? You didn't expect that, did you?

Bishop Fellay: Disappointed is maybe not the right word. I think we had no illusion, when we asked that justice be done, i.e. that the excommunication be recognized null and from the beginning. In this sense, we were requesting the annulment of the first decree, of a sanction which had no basis, I have explained this several times. Quite recently, Cardinal Castrillon told me: "Listen, we know well that you are subjectively convinced of having acted rightly, consequently there is no fault, no sanction, and no excommunication. But, understand that from the outside, there was an objective fact which gave the appearance of a 'rebellion' against Rome; and for this there was a censure. So it must also be removed." On our part, we had indeed asked for an annulment, which we call the withdrawal of the decree and which amounted to a recognition that the excommunication was null from the beginning. We were granted the withdrawal of an excommunication, which is not exactly the same thing. In Church language it is called a "remissio, remittere". It seems to me it should be translated as a lifting of the excommunication.

I am not disappointed inasmuch as considering the circumstances in Rome, the enormous power of the progressivists, I doubt that even the pope best disposed towards us, could have done any better given all the elements. So from this viewpoint, I am not disappointed. But I hope that some day, God knows when, once the situation has improved in the Church, the whole affair will be revised and the good reputation of our venerated and most dear Archbishop Lefebvre restored as soon as possible.

Fr. Lorans: When you addressed that letter of December 15 to Cardinal Hoyos, did you promise anything? Did you promise any compensation in return?

Bishop Fellay: From the beginning, we had stated without any possible ambiguity that we were asking for this as a courtesy from Rome, to start rebuilding in an atmosphere of mutual trust. It is obvious that we were asking Rome to act of its own accord, in Latin we would say: *motu proprio*, which presupposes a unilateral movement, and hence no concession, and no

agreement on our part. Rome was to grant our request given our situation, and given the fact that we had not acted against Rome, nor against the Church; quite the contrary, we did it for the Church. I think that is what happened. The pope, with the support of a few collaborators, granted this, but in this act we must recognize a decision of the pope. In Rome, they insisted much on the fact that "it came from the pope".

We have one desire which is to take what was put aside, which now rests on a few shoulders, and to have it rediscovered and shared with all Catholics of the entire world

Fr. Lorans: What does the Pope expect, not from you, but from Tradition? What does the SSPX represent in his eyes, since he sets down this courageous act, especially in the present circumstances. By performing this generous and gratuitous act, what does he expect?

Bishop Fellay: Maybe we should distinguish between what is certain and what is less so. What is certain, is what he himself said. Now, in the words which accompanied his act, there is an insistent request that, on our part, we make all possible efforts to overcome what he calls "division". We must be very careful with the words he uses, which are not very familiar, or which we keep hearing and which are easily ambiguous. In any case, he speaks of coming back to full communion, or something along those lines. These words full communion are never defined. When you see how a number of bishops and cardinals are reacting right now, and the way they treat the pope, you can truly wonder who is in communion, and what is the quality of this communion. These are arguments *ad hominem*. Yet we clearly see that the pope is concerned, and wants to avoid a possible schism, maybe not in the near future. Already during my private audience, he expressed this thought: we were not in the best of terms with Rome. The situation had been dragging on. Consequently there was an objective risk, especially for the generations who never knew a normal state of the Church, and who live in the sort of self-sufficiency in which we are now; this might easily generate an attitude that could become a movement separated

from the Church. His thinking is not wrong. Of course, at present, we exclaim: "No, not at all, we are Catholics, we keep all the Catholic principles and even though we disagree on very serious issues; we take the necessary precautions to avoid falling into schism. For instance, we pray for the pope, we speak about the Church. We do not turn in on ourselves, but look at what is happening around us. Even if we sometimes speak ill of the Church, at least, we speak of it, and we instill into our priests and faithful the concern for the Church which every Catholic must have." So, on the pope's part, this concern certainly exists. He also mentioned it in his *motu proprio* about the Mass. So, this is his first concern, and the first thing he expects from us.



His second point is very interesting, because it corresponds to what we had asked for. He wants that the situation continues through talks. In the Italian original text of the decree it is "colloqui", talks, conversations, which are called necessary. Now we have been asking precisely for that, because considering all that is going on, I think that, even from an ontological viewpoint, we have to follow this route. We may speak of progressing by stages, and it may take a relatively long time to piece everything back together for the good of the Church. For us, there is only one solution: the Church must recover her healthy state, whereas now it is in the midst of a crisis, which has its root in doctrine. The crisis is not only doctrinal, many aspects of the crisis in the Church are now of the moral and disciplinary order. Everything is going crazy in all directions. But I truly think we can affirm that the source of the solution is at the level of a purification of thought. We must rediscover the doctrine of

the Church in all its pristine purity without all the ambiguities, the fuzzy and confusing terms used on purpose and which brought about the crisis we are now witnessing. We may also take the problem from the other end. Actions must be taken somewhat in all directions at the same time. Morals also must be reformed, and for instance, the liturgy is a great help. Liturgy even leads to doctrine. So it is good to have a simultaneous movement at all levels. But it remains certain that we cannot expect a lasting and profound unity in the Church without a clear proclamation of the Faith, devoid of any ambiguity, just as the Church has always done through all ages. Each time doctrine became fuzzy, the result was a crisis. Hence, I think we are heading in the right direction when we try to purify, or to give all its luster back to Catholic doctrine. This is what we expect from these discussions.

Fr. Lorans: And for you, Your Excellency, superior general of the Society, at the head of 500 priests across the world, what do you wish to bring to the Church? What would you like to bring as your contribution?

Bishop Fellay: Well, in the first place, it is not much, just our poor little personal efforts. We have given our lives to the Church, and so we hope to contribute to the good of the Church as much as possible.

But I think we must look beyond our persons, and far beyond. We have changed nothing. We have simply inherited. Once again, we have received all these treasures from the Church. We live according to the Church as it was in the past. So there is not only a doctrinal treasure, but all that has constituted the Church of all times. And we carry all this as best we can. This is not an arrogant or pretentious statement. In the Pontifical, during the ordination to the diaconate, the bishop says to the future deacons: "You carry the Church." This refers to the Levites of the Old Testament who used to carry the Ark of the Testament. I find this expression very beautiful when applied to deacons. Well, we carry this treasure of the Church, which is really the Church's own treasure. We have one desire, which is to take what was put aside, which now rests on a few shoulders, and to have it rediscovered and shared with all Catholics of the entire world, so that we see those fruits of sanctification and holiness belonging to the Church.

People may well come to us who have got...

After the lifting of the excommunication we can expect to see new faces looking into our churches; there will be the curious, there will be the honestly confused, there will be the timid, those who had suspected that tradition was right but feared the censures. How are we to receive these people? There can be only one answer: it must be with charity. And what is charity? Father James Peek in his sermon on January 25 gives us a guideline.

Sermon Delivered by Rev. Fr. James Peek on January 25, 2009

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Today we are celebrating the Mass of the Conversion of St. Paul. It is the year of St. Paul from his feast day of June 2008 till his feast day in June of this year. But rather than speak about St. Paul you will understand that an event has supervened; has come in and caught our attention in the course of the past few days. I am speaking of course about an action of Benedict XVI which we might also call an action of the Blessed Virgin, for it is already an answer to the crusade of prayers – of rosaries – [offered] only the last couple of months [so] that the excommunication of our bishops be indeed lifted. And concerning this, I'd like to just insist upon one thought that we heard Bishop Fellay express when he said that "this gesture would benefit the whole Church." It is a mercy for the whole Church; it is a grace for the whole Church. Yes, not so much for us whom we might call 'dyed in the wool' traditionalists. Not so much for us who understand quite simply that the Faith cannot change, what was true is true because it is the word of a God who is essentially immutable. The practices of that faith whether it be in morals, the observance of the commandments, or the means of sanctification, the old mass and the sacraments (are immutable). They were holy and they are holy because they come from a God All Holy. They do not change. And we have known and do know that the bishops in general and the Bishop of Rome in particular have power from Our Lord Jesus Christ to build

up His Church; they do not have power to destroy it. This is the language of St. Paul concerning his own apostolic power, "We can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth". And again a little later he calls his power "one which the Lord hath given me unto edification and not unto destruction." As for apostolic power, so for the Petrine. He is the Vicar of Jesus Christ: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." His power is there to edify, to build up the Church of Jesus Christ, and we have based our resistance to modern Rome on Catholic Tradition: the Faith, the morals, the practice of the Faith as it always was. Men of the Church may decree against that but they cannot by their decrees make what is right wrong; nor what is wrong, right. So many novelties we have seen. What was not renewed? And in being renewed what was not deformed? What was not denied? This cannot be. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema," says St. Paul himself.

"That is why," said Archbishop Lefebvre already in his declaration of 1974, "that is why we hold firmly to all that has been believed and practiced in the Faith: morals, liturgy, teaching of the catechism, formation of the priest, and institution of the Church by the Church of all time, to all these things as codified in those books which saw day before the modernist influence of the Council. This we shall do until such time as the true light of tradition dissipates the darkness obscuring the sky of Eternal Rome. By doing this with the grace of God and the help of the Blessed

Virgin Mary, and that of St. Joseph and St. Pius X, we are assured of remaining faithful to the Roman Catholic Church and to all the successors of Peter and of being the faithful dispensers of the Mysteries of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

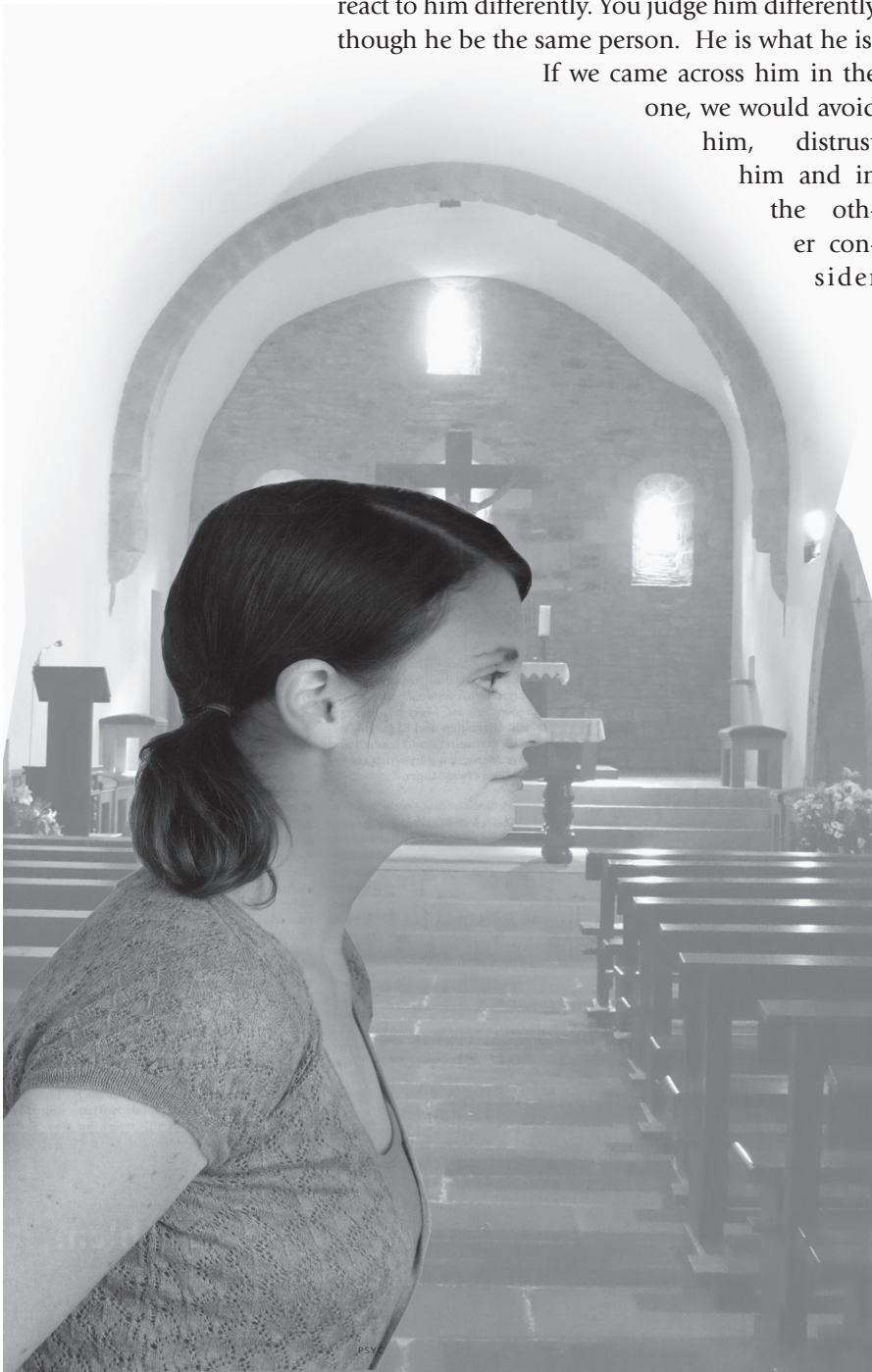
This decree is not so much for us, who have known all of that. But, as St. Paul points out, "There is not knowledge in everyone". So many have been blinded by appearances, and that is quite understandable. For example, if you come across a man wearing prison garb or you come across the same person in his Sunday best, you react to him differently. You judge him differently though he be the same person. He is what he is.

If we came across him in the one, we would avoid him, distrust him and in the other consider

him respectable and honest, whereas we are what we are before Almighty God; nothing more, nothing less. These decrees clothe realities. You may take a modern pope and clothe him with a beatification; you may take a very holy bishop, Marcel Lefebvre, and clothe him with an excommunication. It does not change them in themselves; they are what they are before Almighty God. But they certainly do change them in their appearance before men and our reaction to them is in function thereof. We are what we are before Almighty God of whom it is said by St. Paul, "All things are naked and open to His eyes."

But we go by appearances. So many could not see beyond officiality; "It came from Rome, period." And who can blame them? That is at bottom a Catholic reaction. And so they did not look there where true holiness and truth were to be found. It had been declared unlawful, it had been declared not Catholic, excommunicated. For them, more than for us, this is a grace, this is a mercy. By lifting the excommunications, now all of these souls have an obstacle removed, revealing to them now the right path to Truth, to holiness, to grace, to heaven, to God. They were blinded from looking down this way. It's true that we still have a long, long way to go till all in the Church believe with the Faith of their fathers; till all aspire to what is truly a Catholic life, one of holiness. It will not be attained until heaven; but we still have a long, long way to go even on earth. [Nevertheless,] that is the goal that people are heading towards, and now at least they can start heading in the right direction.

In practice, we can expect to see new faces looking into our churches; there will be the curious, there will be the honestly confused, there will be the timid, those who had suspected that tradition was right but feared the censures. How are we to receive these people? There can be only one answer: it must be with charity. And what is charity? That spirit of wanting to draw all to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to attract all to Our Lord Jesus Christ. To consider the soul across whose path one comes: what is his need? Just what can he receive? Of course, he needs much. If we have been long in tradition we may have forgotten, or not even known, just how needy they are, the souls out there: [they lack] the basics of the catechism, what distinguishes a Catholic life from an ordinary worldly life. We may be surprised at the ignorance, more or less culpable - perhaps not at all, perhaps very much.



They need much and the attitude of charity will be to give what can be received and in a manner that facilitates its reception. As St. Francis de Sales put it, "You will catch more flies," or it may have been bees – I forget, "with a teaspoon full of honey than a barrel full of vinegar." To adapt to the needs of the one in need. This was the attitude of St. Paul, "I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet." "Whereas I was free, I made myself the servant of all that I may gain the more; to the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak; I became all things to all men that I might save all. I do all things for the Gospel's sake that I might be made a partaker thereof."

People may well come to us who have got horrendous ideas, amazing religious ignorance of fundamentals; manners in dress and speech that do not bespeak the Catholic. We are not to jump down their throats after the first "hello". Of Our Lord it was said, "The bruised reed He shall not break and smoking flax He shall not extinguish." Meaning that where there was a little bit of soundness; that Our Lord would build upon. We are to be encouraging and draw to Jesus Christ, not discouraging and chase away from Him. We are to be very patient too, for grace permeates souls slowly. God could do it otherwise; He did in the conversion of St. Paul: from a persecutor to an apostle – so to speak – in one day. But this is extraordinary, this is exceptional – why, that's why there's a feast in the Church about it! It is not the ordinary mode. We have to avoid bitter zeal. You're not going to attract with vinegar. "If you have bitter zeal," says St. James, "and there be contentions in your hearts; glory not. This is not wisdom descending from above - but earthly, sensual, devilish." The best causes can suffer from the way in which they are defended, and if we turn souls away from Jesus Christ, yes, we are doing the devil's work.

We are also to avoid heaping upon a newcomer more than he can take in. Not unknown are those chapels, I'm afraid I speak from experience, when there is a newcomer who turns up, he is jumped upon by those present - each with their own pet theory. The world of tradition is very rich. You get your "no pope" people; you get your "cherries and brandy" or "rosaries-turning-to-gold" people; you get your "water-baptism-only" people; you get your "natural remedy only" people; you get the "Jews-are-behind-it-all" people; and so on, and so forth. You know what traditionalists are like! This, too, is all very under-

standable. When the Head no longer gives a clear direction people look for enlightenment wither they will, wither they can, according to their own lights. Do not jump on the newcomer with all of these, what we might call "personal flavors" of tradition. They are usually presented with the zeal of a crusade, and the outcome? The newcomer is baffled; he is overwhelmed; he is turned off; he is turned away. Is this charity? What do they need? They need the very basics of a Catholic life.

When they come to one of our chapels they should be able to witness there, yes, respect for Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, a sense of the sacred, a spirit of true religion; they say, "Here, ah! People go to confession - and individually - and regularly." No it's these very basics they need. Do not cloud the issue with things that are secondary, personal, questionable; no matter how much you believe in them. For, the solidity of our stance comes from resting upon what is rock solid. And that is what they have to hear again or perhaps for maybe the first time. "We hold firmly to all that has been believed and practiced in the Faith: morals, liturgy, teaching of the catechism, formation of the priest, and institution of the Church by the Church of all time." These they have to receive; these may well be new to them and all they can take in. Should someone turn up wearing pants or no mantilla; you preach by example. Let's face it, it's better to leave admonitions to your priests. Let's face it. Father Faber points out, "The duty of fraternal correction is so difficult in practice that very rarely is it a duty at all." And if you cannot do it with kindness, do not do it at all. "Charity is patient; charity is kind." This lifting of the excommunication I say - or rather Bishop Fellay does - it's a grace for the whole Church. May what is a grace not be thwarted because of our attitude.

Let us turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She did and does all, so that her Son Jesus Christ be better known, be more loved. That's the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she grant us this same grace to have that spirit that Jesus be better known, be more loved. This is true charity; and true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is another one of the very basics that perhaps Novus Ordo Catholics have lost and need to witness in our presence. Let us hold fast to what is sure, what is true, what is holy, what is Divine, what is Catholic.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

“Tyrants” and “Slaves”

Modern school textbooks seem to show with glee how hard, brutish, evil, filthy, life in the “Dark Ages” of Christendom were. Why are the Middle Ages denigrated?

By Nicholas Wansbutter, Esq.

Introduction

Modern school textbooks seem to show with glee how hard, brutish, evil, filthy, &c. life in the “Dark Ages” of Christendom were. This is, of course, perpetuated by movies, television, and all other mainstream media. Why are the Middle Ages denigrated? Simply, because they were the height of Christian (i.e. Catholic) civilization, the Age of Faith. Therefore, an attack on the Middle Ages is an attack on the Catholic Church. Saying people of that time were barbarous, superstitious, and irrational perpetuates the myth that life in modern times is better, now that the nasty, corrupt, tyrannical Catholic Church is no longer a powerful influence on society. Therefore, I propose, in a series of short articles, to dispel some of the most common myths about the Middle Ages and arm readers with some quick facts.

The most persevering and obdurate myth, or pair of myths, about the Middle Ages concerns the supposed misery of the oppressed inhabitants of that age, excepting the nobility, who were, naturally, the oppressors. It is well accepted in modern educational circles that because the people of the Middle Ages did not have democracy, their rulers were of course brutal tyrants, and because they didn't have capitalism they all lived in squalor and poverty. I do not think I am overstating the case to claim this, since the word “serf” (the most prevalent legal state of mediæval commoners) is listed as a synonym for “slave” in most thesauri.

Now, we do not wish to romanticise the Age of Faith in our defence of it, and therefore must first acknowledge that the people of that time lived a hard life, before disproving the myths that it was universally miserable. We may start by observing that between a.D. 1000 and 1340, the population of Europe grew from 38.5 million to about

73.5 million people -- something which would have been impossible if the average person were half-starved and worked into the ground by his aristocratic taskmaster. But to deal with the myth more thoroughly, we shall first look at how much power the nobility really had, and then on the true conditions of the serfs. In this we shall focus mainly on political realities.

The Nobility

Firstly, we may say, from a broader perspective, the powers of the nobility were in most areas much restricted and limited as compared to governments in the western world today. There was no “Child and Family Services” that could abduct children from parents deemed “unfit” by bureaucrats, no traffic laws, no smoking bans, no strict regulations on how and where one may build his house, &c. Moreover, power was not vested absolutely in a federal government. It is true that power was held by a small group of military leaders, and that in theory, the King did reign supreme and his vassals were merely his delegates, but in practice, he had to rule more by persuasion than by fiat, as the power was rather evenly spread. No one lord had complete authority, as he, by necessity, had to delegate authority to subordinates due to the inadequacies of medieval telecommunications.

This made for an interesting government that was most effective at the local level, and as we'll discuss later, meant peasants actually had a fair amount of self government. No lord had absolute authority because of the need for delegation, and competition among the lords. This meant it was very important to have numerous and loyal vassals -- and the best way was to treat them well, making the feudal system rather self-correcting over the long term. This also meant that the wide dispersal of power resulted in a significant per-

centage of the population playing some meaningful role in government.

Lords could thus not do simply as they pleased (at least not for long). In addition to what has already been mentioned, they were bound strongly by custom and religion, and had their own part to uphold in the pledge of vassalage: the lord kept the breeding stock, established ferries, mills, and ovens, secured the peasants from violence, and gave succour from his storehouses in times of famine. In fact, the Mediæval economy was such that it was in the lord's best interest to treat his peasants well, or at least not to treat them brutally and overtax them. For if he did, his serfs would lack productivity and ultimately die off. Since serfs could not be bought or sold or even kicked off of their land, he would be unable to replace them.

It is also noteworthy that it was much more difficult for the nobility to engage in wars -- the most disastrous thing for any civilian population. Unlike today, where presidents wage wars to spread democracy funded by the public purse, kings had to wage wars out of their own pockets. The military at all levels was supported by economic resources (the lords' income from their lands) rather than taxation and it was up to each lord to defend his territory and rights, not the public purse. This suggests somewhat of a less totalitarian society than one might be led to believe.

The Peasantry

As alluded to earlier, the documentary evidence suggests in regards to peasant life in the Age of Faith, labour and toil, but not dire hardship or poverty. They were tied to the land, it was true, but on the other hand could not be evicted from it as long as they paid their manorial dues, and unlike slaves, they were economically very free and were expected to provide their own sustenance. In fact, not only could a peasant not be evicted, nor could his family, but his descendants were entitled to the land as well, thus making the land he was tied to at the same time a patrimony.

As to the manorial dues, this generally took the form of working the lord's land. This was a considerable task, but not crushing. From looking at village maps, the Lord's demesne land

(which was his alone, and worked by the serfs) accounted for about a quarter of a given village. There were no set number of days that serfs had to work this land, per se, as long as what needed to be done was accomplished. On some manors, the lord's land was all in one large piece. On others, it was dispersed as strips in amongst the serfs' fields which they would work together with their own. The Lord's land took precedence and as such had to be ploughed first, sown first, and harvested first. So the serfs would either band together to plough the lord's demesne (if a larger bloc), then work their own; or plough the lord's strip and continue on to his own land after. Even then, on days devoted to demesne work, the lord was expected to provide meals at his manor for the serfs (and it being in his best interests, he would, unless an exceptionally ornery sort).

Mediæval serfs did not have two weeks' paid vacation. They did, however, have many more Holy Days of Obligation than we do today. The Decretals of Gregory IX (reigned a.D. 1227 - 1241) mention forty-five feast days leading to a total of some eighty-five days when no work could be done and ninety-five days when no court sessions could be held. In some dioceses, this total amounted to over one hundred days without work (nearly one in every three days).

Furthermore, mediæval peasants had, for the most part, a significant degree of freedom and self-government. Although the lord ruled supreme in his lands, he delegated most tasks to the people. The manorial court, for example, while in theory the lord's court, was almost exclusively administered by the people in the vast majority of villages. Self-government went well beyond this, however, and an example may be illustrative: one document from the Abbey of St. Michel, penned in a.D. 957, describes how the villagers (enserved to the abbot), without interference from their lord, laid out the arable village land, apportioned lots, located the village site, marked off the demesne land, and built a market hall.

Conclusion

All of the foregoing gives only the briefest of glimpses into the true conditions of mediæval life as it related to the supposedly "tyrannical" nobility and "enslaved" commoners. We have seen that, as in any time, there was no escaping the cross, but on the whole, the Middle Ages were a time of relative justice and freedom.



On some manors, the lord's land was all in one large piece. On others, it was dispersed as strips in amongst the serfs' fields.

May the state educate ?

Rev. Father Peter Scott

Having considered last month who has the right and duty to educate, namely firstly the family, secondly the Church and thirdly schools established by the Church and families, it remains to consider what role, if any, the State may and ought to play in the work of Catholic education. Clear principles on this issue are fundamental to the resolution of a hotly disputed issue, namely whether or not the Church should accept state aid for the running of its Catholic schools. Last September Bishop Durocher of the Alexandria-Cornwall diocese, Ontario, objected to the pol-

icy that the public funding of Catholic schools, so necessary to their survival, had become the grounds for introducing a new aggressive secularism, that excludes public signs of religion even from Catholic schools. The same problem exists in England, where last March the Bishop of Lancaster, Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue, was summoned to appear before the government's "Children, Schools and Families Select Committee" and accused of having "fundamentalist" views because he issued a document that "directed his diocesan schools to instruct their students in Catholic teaching and morality" (Zenit.org).

Cardinal warns against anti-catholic Education

The new religious diversity curriculum introduced in the Quebec school system is a violation of parents' rights and borders on being "anti-Catholic," according to Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, the prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education.

In September 2008, the Quebec Ministry of Education introduced the new curriculum into all public and private schools in the province. The mandatory courses replaced the "Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction," "Protestant Moral and Religious Education" and "Moral Education" programs, between which parents could choose for their children.

In the new program, students are taught a diversity of world religions and secular ethics.

"Talking about all religions violates the right of parents to educate their own children according to their own religion," explained the Polish cardinal, echoing the protests of some parents in the province who say the textbooks are not ideologically neutral. "Talking in the same way about all religions," Cardinal Grocholewski continued, "is almost like an anti-Catholic education, because this creates a certain relativism." He concluded that this approach to instruction could ultimately be anti-religious, since youth are left with the impression that each faith is a fictional narrative.

The Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops have been measured in their criticism of the "Ethics and Religious Culture" program, recognizing in a March 2008 statement that the curriculum would "promote the development of a better mutual understanding between those who have different religious or secular beliefs."

However, the bishops reaffirmed their preference for parental choice and described their stance as "critical and vigilant." The bishops further worried that teaching religion from a purely socio-cultural view could lead to a restrictive understanding of religious experience.

Some Canadian clerics, such as Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Quebec City, maintain that parents should be able to exempt their children from the program for reasons of conscience. Presently, the provincial government has permitted no such allowances for concerned parents.

Quebec's ethics & religious culture program

Then on February 19 last, the Acton Institute in Rome hosted a debate on the question as to whether state aid for Catholic schools is a help or a hindrance, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Grocholewski, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education. He there commented on the Quebec Ministry of Education Ethics and Religious Culture Program, which has become obligatory in all public and private schools in the province, replacing all other Catholic, Protestant and moral education programs, between which parents could previously choose. This new program is based upon pluralism, namely the teaching of a diversity of world religions and of secular ethics. Cardinal Grocholewski rightly objected to this program: "Talking about all religions violates the right of parents to educate their own children according to their own religion... Talking in the same way about all religions is almost like an anti-Catholic education, because this creates a certain relativism... this approach to instruction could ultimately be anti-religious, since youth are left with the impression that each faith is a fictional narrative". (Ib.)

We cannot but agree with the Cardinal's remarks, although he equates Catholic and non-catholic parents, in virtue of the principle of religious liberty, and fails to mention that Catholic parents have the divine obligation and right of teaching their children the Catholic Faith, because it is the one true Faith, whereas the right of Protestants and others of instructing their children in their religion derives only from the natural law. It is also a great pity that he fails to point out that the vast majority of high school religion programs in the post-conciliar schools follow precisely this guideline of pluralism, and are not much less a course in comparative religion than that legislated by the province of Quebec.

It is also very interesting to note that the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, faithful to the principles of pluralism and dialogue promoted by Vatican II failed to condemn the "Ethics and Religious Culture" program itself, rather "applauding the course for highlighting the distinct role played by Catholicism in the French Canadian province's history" and because it would "promote the development of a better mutual understanding between those who have different religious or secular beliefs" (March

2008, quoted by Zenit, op. cit.). Their opposition was not so much to the program itself, as to the fact that it is imposed as obligatory, Cardinal Ouellet of Quebec City unsuccessfully requesting that parents be able to exempt their children for reasons of conscience.

The long term problem highlighted by such programs is whether or not Catholic schools should accept public funding, given the pluralism that has become attached to it. Professor Sam Gregg of the Action Institute states that this is impermissible interference and that the Church ought to be radical in refusing such funding: "Anything that impedes the ability of Catholic schools from maintaining and promoting that which is at the very heart of its inspiration - which is the Catholic Faith - ought to be dispensed with... In our age, if this includes state funding, then it, too ought to be one of those things that the Church casts off..." (Quoted by Zenit.org). How right he is! The problem, however, is that many years and decades of public funding have made the Catholic school system in many countries entirely dependent upon it. Will those who believe in the pluralism of Vatican II have the courage to cast off the yoke of the more radical pluralism of the secular state?

"It is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence...there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education."

(Pope Pius XI)

Principles for the role of the state

The true role of the State in education follows clearly from the principles that are so well explained in the 1929 encyclical of Pope Pius XI *Divini illius magistri*, On the Education of the Redeemed man. He there explains that there is no education that is not Catholic, for "it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence...there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education." The conclusion the Pope draws concerns the excellence and the importance of

Catholic education: “Hence the supreme importance of Christian education... from these same principles, the excellence, we may well call it the unsurpassed excellence, of the work of Christian education becomes manifest and clear: for after all it aims at securing the Supreme Good, that is God, for the souls of those who are being educated” (Ib.)

Pius XI goes on to explain that the State does indeed have a role in education, for the educated person belongs to three societies, two in the natural order, the family and the State, and one in the supernatural order, the Church: “Education which is concerned with man as a whole, individually and socially, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies, in due proportion, corresponding, according to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the coordination of their respective ends”. This principle determines everything. Education belongs pre-eminently to the Church, for it educates in the supernatural order, but under her supernatural authority to the family and to the State, for grace perfects na-

ture. Amongst these two, though, it is the family that has precedence in the natural order, for it is the principle of life. As Pius XI states: “The family holds, therefore, directly from the Creator the mission, and hence the right, to educate the young, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to a strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State...” (Ib.).

State’s duty in justice

The conclusion is that the role of the State in education is subordinate to that of the Church in the supernatural order and that of the family in the natural order, protecting and fostering each one so that it can perform its proper function. “Consequently, in the matter of education, it is the right, or to speak more correctly, it is the duty of the State to protect by means of its legislation, the prior rights...of the family as regards the Christian education of its offspring, and consequently also to respect the supernatural rights of the Church in this same realm of Christian education.” (Pius XI, Ib.) It most certainly cannot interfere with, but must “respect the inherent rights of the Church and of the family concerning Christian education, and should moreover have regard for distributive justice” (Ib.). Distributive justice means the use of public funds, contributed by taxes, to a just proportion of which Catholics have a right in justice, so that it is fraudulent and against justice for a government to deprive Catholic schools of these funds, or worse still to deprive truly Catholic schools of the right to exist, as Communism does. For a government to say that because it pays, it has a right to determine what is taught in the schools it funds, is entirely false and iniquitous, deceptive and unjust. It is the divinization of the State, become a law unto itself. The Pope continues: “Accordingly, monopoly, whether educational or scholastic, which, physically or morally, forces families to make use of government schools...is unjust and unlawful”. It is precisely this communist monopoly of pluralism that secular governments, and in particular the province of Quebec, are attempting to impose by law.

The objection that is frequently made is that Catholic societies no longer exist, and that consequently the State can no longer show any preference for Catholic education. This is the logical conclusion of the damnable separation of

**Cardinal Grocholewski,
prefect of the
Congregation for
Catholic Education.**



Church and State promoted by Vatican II, but not at all a necessary consequence of the divided nature of modern society. Pope Pius XI already answered this objection in 1929 when he stated that in “a nation where there are different religious beliefs... it is the duty of the State... to leave free scope to the initiative of the Church and the family, while giving them such assistance as justice demands.” He further points out there are such countries where “the school legislation respects the rights of the family, and Catholics are free to follow their own system of teaching in schools that are entirely Catholic. Nor is distributive justice lost sight of, as is evidenced by the financial aid granted by the State to the several schools demanded by families.”

Refusal of state funding

The Pope goes on to answer precisely the present day predicament, nor does he leave any doubt whatsoever as to what a Catholic is bound to do in the face of such iniquitous controls by the State. For in countries where there is no government support for entirely free schools, Catholics take upon themselves the heavy burden of supporting “Catholic schools for their children entirely at their own expense; to this they feel obliged in conscience, and with a generosity and constancy worthy of all praise, they are firmly determined to make adequate provision for what they openly profess as their motto: ‘Catholic education in Catholic schools for all Catholic youth’. If such education is not aided from public funds, as distributive justice requires, certainly it may not be opposed by any civil authority ready to recognize the rights of the family...” (Ib.).

There can be no doubt. Catholic schools must refuse state funding in any case where the government attempts to dictate the form and kind of education, inasmuch as it affects the teaching of morality and religion, and in particular when it attempts to impose pluralism. Catholics have no choice in this matter. They must be heroic in their sacrifices or they will lose their Faith and their children. It was what Pope Pius XI goes on to say: “Where this fundamental liberty is interfered with, Catholics will never feel, whatever may have been the sacrifices already made, that they have done enough, for the support and defense of their schools and for the securing of laws that will do them justice.” As traditional

Catholics, we must reasonably foresee, that with the ongoing self-destruction of the Church and promotion of liberalism in public life, will come a progressive increase in the imposition of pluralism, destroying all true education, and consequently the obligation of freeing ourselves from the temptation of accepting government funding.

Allow me to conclude with a quote from Father Edward Leen, C. Ss. P., that expresses the supernatural elevation of Catholic education that justifies any and every sacrifice made on its behalf: “It is plain that for a Christian education, as thorough an initiation as possible into the ‘discipline’ that sets forth in full the nature of the relations established between God and man by Sanctifying Grace is of supreme importance. To live rightly a man must know what is implied by his adoptive sonship of God, and what practical consequences flow from that sonship... The religion of God, that is, the religion framed by God,

“Talking about all religions violates the right of parents to educate their own children according to their own religion,” ...

“Talking in the same way about all religions, is almost like an anti-Catholic education, because this creates a certain relativism.”

is necessarily calculated to forge a complete personality... The formative purpose of Christian doctrine, as distinct from all the other ‘disciplines’ comprehends the whole man. It aims at forming not the intellect only, but the will and the emotions as well. It must, therefore, occupy a central position in the plan of a Christian education. All the other courses must get their inspiration from it. The healthiness of their formative effect corresponds to their dependence on it... On it largely depends what a student is to become.” (What is true education, pp. 157, 158). If the secular State will not support such an education, then let it keep its money unjustly, and let Catholics take the sacred responsibility of funding true education as well as that of imparting it.



The greatest catechists...

Fr. Todd Angele

Did you ever stop to think that altar servers are among the greatest catechists of all? A catechist is a person who teaches others about the Faith. You may well object that altar servers do not teach the Faith, but you would be mistaken. Altar servers teach their parishes a great deal about the Faith.

St. Francis of Assisi had a custom of taking one or another of his brothers on a walk. He would tell the brother they were going in to town to preach. Clothed in their Franciscan garb, they would walk through the streets only to return to their monastery without having uttered a single word to the townsfolk. This is what St. Francis referred to as a walking sermon. When the people of the village saw the friars in their habits, it would make them think of God. The example of the brothers was an inspiration to the people to lead good lives.

The altar server preaches to the congregation in much the same way. Consider how many things the server teaches in his eloquent sermon. The server walks with grace and dignity. Elsewhere he might shuffle his feet, or move from place to place at break-neck speed, but in the sanctuary he carries himself with the re-

financed dignity of a brilliant statesman. This shows the faithful the holiness of the place. When the server moves around the sanctuary in a graceful manner, he reminds the faithful that the church, and especially the sanctuary, is a holy place.

The server guards his eyes during the sacred ceremonies. In this way he teaches the faithful about the recollection one should have during the Holy Sacrifice and other ceremonies of Holy Mother Church. Although often tempted to do so, the altar server refrains from looking around the church. By this means he also teaches the faithful that one should strive to avoid anything which might distract others, for the server who is constantly looking around, so much so that it looks like his head is poised on a swivel that he cannot control, is truly a distraction to those trying to follow the Holy Sacrifice.

The server teaches the faithful that they ought to have an attitude of prayer in church by keeping his hands folded properly. When the people attending Holy Mass see a server who is sloppy with his hands, they rightly wonder what the server is thinking about. When they see a server who keeps his hands folded properly, they see that he is focused on what he should be doing.

The server's attitude of silence in the sanctuary speaks to the faithful about the reverence one should have during the sacred liturgy. The servers do not laugh or joke among themselves, they do not carry on conversations, not even whis-

Tips for Directors and Presidents

The Archconfraternity of St. Stephen is an organization that was founded for the express purpose of maintaining excellence in the Sacred Liturgy of Holy Mother Church. The Directors and Presidents of the Guild chapters have the wonderful mission of helping the servers under their care achieve this end. Let that be the first motivating factor for those running Guild chapters: the servers you train are under your care. You teach them not only how to carry out the Liturgy properly, but you also assist with the Guild's aim of sanctifying the server. It does not take much effort to see an absolute need for the grace of God in fulfilling this sublime mission. Let those dedicated people who look after the leadership of Guild chapters, then, remember to pray for the servers under their care. Ask for guidance in looking after your responsibilities as a chapter Director or President.

pered ones, because they know that what they are doing is very important and worthy of their full attention. This reminds the faithful that they too should be focused on what is happening at the altar; the liturgy is worthy of their full attention.

Altar servers do, then, teach the faithful, and they teach them quite a bit. Now there are good sermons and bad sermons. When it comes to the sermons of the altar servers the same holds true. Let the altar servers strive to ensure that their sermon is the best that it can be.

Letter to an Altar Boy

Fr. David E. Rosage

DEAR JIMMY,

Do you know that as an altar boy you are one of the most important people in the whole parish? At Mass you rate higher than the janitor and the ushers. Yes, you are even more important than the choir.

"Why is my role so important?" you ask. Let us go way back in history to the time of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary to find the answer. Our Lord wanted to come into the world. God sent the Angel Gabriel to ask Mary if she would become the Mother of Jesus. That was the way Jesus wished to come into the world.

Mary paused, and all heaven waited eagerly. Then, humbly, Mary said "Yes" in the most beautiful way anyone could have said it: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." Because Mary gave her consent, our Lord was able to come into the world and do so much for us.

Today, our Lord wants to come to live with us. Each day He wants to come into our hearts in Holy Communion so that He may help us to be good; so that He may help us to live and work as we should. Now, the way our Lord comes into the world today is through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. At each Mass our Lord is born again just as truly as He was born at Bethlehem. Therefore, the Mass is the most important action which can take place in the whole world.

The Mass is much more important than the baseball game which will decide the world series. It is far more important than the touchdown which may determine who will win the conference pennant.

You are so important, Jimmy, because you are helping the priest to say Mass; to bring our Lord into the world each morning. You are the priest's first assistant. In fact, the Church considers you

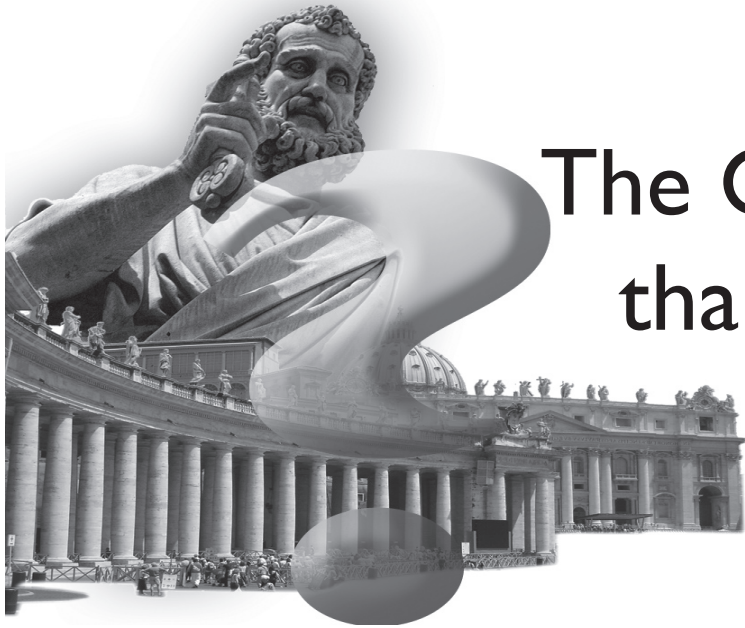
so important that the law of the Church requires a priest to have an altar boy before he may say Mass. A priest must have special reason or permission to say Mass without a server. That's how important the Church considers you.

Whether you realize it or not, you are more important at Mass than your own dear mother, or Sister Superior at school, or a princess in a royal castle, or the mother of a bishop, or even the sister of the Holy Father.

Why? Well, you see, Jimmy, these good and holy women may answer the prayers of the priest at Mass. They may even tinkle the bell at the Sanctus and the Consecration. And they must do this sometimes when you oversleep, but they are never permitted to leave their pews and come into the sanctuary while Mass is being offered. They may not walk up the altar steps during the Mass to change the Missal from the Epistle to the Gospel side of the altar. Neither may they bring the water and wine up to the priest. That privilege is reserved only for altar boys. Yes, you are the only person who may come so close to our Lord during Mass.

So, you see, Jimmy, as an altar boy you are very important. More important, I'll bet, than you thought. Our Lord depends on you to help Him come into the world. Isn't that strange and wonderful? Our Lord, who is the Master of heaven and earth, asks you to help Him come down among men.

Each day when you serve Mass, you can look up at the Sacred Host at the Elevation and smile as you say to our Lord: "Jesus, I have helped You in my own small way to come into the world this morning. I hope my serving Holy Mass has pleased You. Thank You, Jesus, for giving me this wonderful privilege."



The Church is no more than a human invention

Rev. Father Jürgen Wegner

If someone could take a jump back into history, to the year of the crucifixion, he would make astonishing observations. Eleven frightened apostles, who do not know what to do after the shattering of their master. These eleven ran away, filled with anguish, hopeless, and they met again behind closed doors. Only one woman, Mary, the mother of the crucified, seems to hold this poor band together. A little later, the women arrive and say that he, whom they had believed was dead, is living. The rumor begins to spread that he had afterwards shown himself to these poor fishermen. One amongst them, who was not with the others when the master appeared, refuses to believe if he does not see with his own eyes.

Later, the traveler in time heard that he who was claimed to have risen from the dead had ascended into heaven. And again, in ten days time, a new surprise awaits him. He hears a loud noise, sees flames of fire and the men, who shortly before were afraid, come out of their hiding place and climb onto the roofs to preach. The most inept of them, one Peter, who before was called Simon, speaks like a mad person and immediately three thousand people link themselves to this group of eleven charismatics. According to the reports of witnesses, all these people asked for and received baptism. They say that this was the time of the birth of the Church.

The traveler in time can now move ahead more quickly into the future and visit different places: Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Athens and lastly Rome. Everywhere he finds small groups of

people who receive baptism, who gather together to speak of Jesus Christ, of all which he has taught and done, of his miracles and his mysteries, and who afterwards preach the Gospel.

There is no disjunction between the life, the death, the message of Jesus and the preaching of His disciples after Easter and Pentecost. One can never say that Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God, while His apostles afterwards announced Jesus and then, lastly, the Church would start being the center of conversation. The life of Jesus continues in the preaching and the mission of the Apostles who establish the Church to perpetuate the work of Jesus. Jesus was much more than a master, more or less obstinate, and, when He vehemently criticized the scribes and Pharisees' strict and ruthless interpretation of the law, He never wanted to be a revolutionary. He never sought to drive the scribes and Pharisees from their platforms. And never did He rise up against Roman politics.

Jesus – we may thus say – was a surprise! A figure that no one expected. All of Israel was waiting for a prophet, a messiah of this world. But the Incarnation of the Son of God for them was a scandal. Likewise, His death on the cross and the empty tomb three days later. No one expected that. Only through the enlightenment of the Resurrection and from the Holy Ghost who appeared at Pentecost did the disciples learn that Moses and the Prophets of the Old Testament had spoken of Him, just as the disciples at Emmaus had learned it when Jesus accompanied them and spoke to them. After their heart

was inflamed, their eyes finally opened and they recognized Him.

It is impossible to find, during this phase of the Church, "the inventor of Religion". The faithful did not live in a thought factory, whose aim was to formulate a new religion and to invent an alternative liturgical practice. They found themselves in the time of history which sent Jesus on their paths. He helped them to find their bearings in life, to find a purpose in their life. They formed of themselves a community of men who believed in Jesus Christ, in the Church which transmits this treasure that Jesus entrusted to it. Only faith in Jesus Christ makes it possible to know and to understand the nature of the Church and precisely this faith in Jesus Christ makes us enter into the community of believers; our charity for Him incorporates us into His Mystical Body. And this is true even today. The English theologian, Cardinal John Henry Newman, said: "It is not the Church which compels us to have faith; it is our faith which compels us to believe in the Church."

Where could we go, if we seek faith in Jesus Christ, if not to the Church? It is useless to look for the Son of God in our heads, in churches decorated with a layer of religiosity or amongst the gurus, who open up suspicious centers of meditation. Those who would seek Jesus must look for Him amongst the faithful, that is, in the Church.

"Yes, to the God of the Christians; No, to the Church", is a saying that makes no sense. To say: "Yes, to Christ; No, to the Church" is as false as to say: "Yes, to Mozart; No, to his music".

The Church has grown and developed in the course of centuries. There are more than one who believe that She has changed during the centuries, that She has betrayed her promises, that She has transformed the original doctrine of Jesus Christ, that the theologians and the popes, according to their own needs, have made the Church what She is today, but this is not at all in agreement with that which was the initial idea of Jesus Christ.

During the reign of emperor Constantine, Christians could finally leave the cata-

combs. Their faith became – under the Christian emperors – the religion of the state. The Church had to define her place in this new situation. She emerged from the catacombs and constructed basilicas. Though before She was everywhere persecuted and denied, now She brilliantly shone everywhere through her law of faith and charity. But very soon, facing new circumstances, theologians and representatives of the Church found themselves obliged to react. After the conquest of Rome by Alarich, king of the Goths, they had to respond with written guidelines; again it was necessary to readjust, broadening the view of the Church with regard to these events in history. St. Augustine (354-419) wrote "The City of God" to verify how this catastrophe did not come upon the city of Rome because it had turned away from its pagan gods. It is owing to this book, "The City of God", that Christianity has obtained the most profound treatises on the independence of the Church from all temporary circumstances.

When, during this last century, the Church was freed of all dependence on political forces, She consequently merited a new moral authority. Today, She is present in all sorts of governments, always in conformity with her distinctive nature: in monarchies, in democracies, even in countries with a totalitarian government. And the law of the Church – it is Jesus Christ!

We find that this existence of the Church, established by God as a supernatural society, poses an enormous problem for the majority of modern men. In our century, when world conceptions are created in an office, where the ideologies originate from universities, contemporaries have difficulty to accept the idea of an intervention from on high. The existence of the Church, the society instituted by God, the institution which has received all its laws from above, is for them unacceptable. They act as if the doctrine of the Church must adapt itself to modern times, as if we could change her laws like we change the manner of running a Tim Hortons or a McDonald's. The Church is a historical fact; it is therefore concrete, incarnate and real. But over and above its corporal reality, it is a divine institution with laws which men cannot regulate. It surpasses man; it is shielded from man's influence. Jesus Christ instituted it, its clergymen continue it, and no one will ever change it!

The Oblates

in the West of Canada and the Far North

Rev. Fr. Roger Guéguen

Missionaries were sent

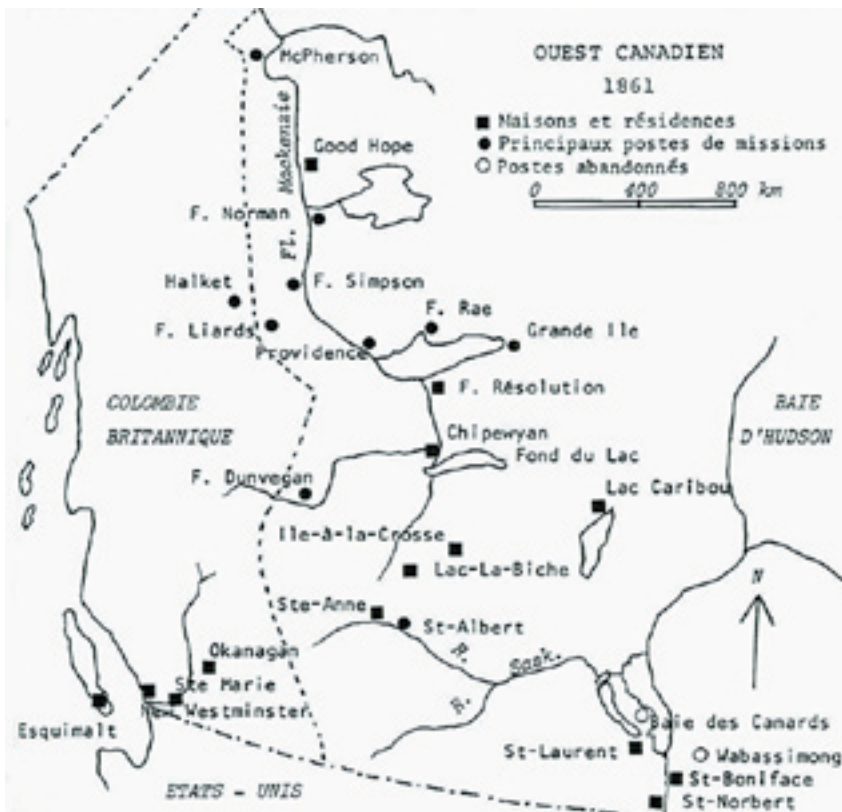
Bishop Joseph-Norbert Provencher will be our guide across the vast expanse of the Oblates' apostolate. A French Canadian cleric, he himself did not belong to the Oblates. He was sent as a missionary to Red River in 1818, and in 1822 he was consecrated bishop of Juliopolis (in partibus infidelium), acting as assistant to the bishop of Quebec, and then was put in charge of the missionary vicariate of the Northwest—the first to hold that position. This region was known as the Hudson Bay and Northwest Territories at the time when the Holy See separated that huge stretch of country from the immense diocese of Quebec on April 16, 1844. The future diocese of St. Boniface extended between the 49th parallel, the Rockies, the Arctic Sea, and Hudson Bay, and to the east, the divide that separates the waterways flowing

into Hudson Bay and James Bay from those that flow into Lake Superior.

As Bishop Alexandre Taché sagaciously points out in his "Vingt années de missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique" (Twenty Years of Missions to Northwestern America): "One of the venerable bishop's first concerns was to obtain the help of a religious order to ensure there were enough missionaries for the many savage tribes scattered within the boundaries of his jurisdiction."

And not without reason. During this period, 12 secular priests from Quebec had successively gone to this region: Sévère Dumoulin (1818-1823), Destroismaisons (1820-1827), Jean Harper (1822-1832), Boucher (1827-1833), Belcourt (1831-1859), Poiré (1832-1839), Thibault, Demers (1837-1838), Mayrand (1838-1845), Darveau (1841-drowned in 1844), L. Laflèche (1844-1856), and lastly Bourassa (1844-1856). These missionaries did not lack zeal, but there were already too few of them, and their numbers would fall even more since the region was removed from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Quebec. Bishop Provencher, seconded by the indefatigable Bishop Bourget, asked the Oblates for help. The Oblates' General Council received the bishops' request favourably (December 16, 1844), and two missionaries were sent to Bishop Provencher in the spring of 1845: Father Aubert and a subdeacon whose name was to go down in the history of these regions, Alexandre Taché.

The two missionaries left the convent of Longueuil on June 24, 1845, the feast of St. John the Baptist, patron of French Canadians. The next day, in a birch bark canoe manned by six men, they set forth from Lachine, near Montreal. Their trip would mean 1,800 miles on rivers and lakes and 62 days total travel time, interrupted by 144 portages and enlivened by running 50 rapids. Moreover, the travellers were accompanied by two Grey Nuns from Montreal going to join their sisters posted at Red River the previous year. They



arrived safely at St. Boniface on August 25, the feast of St. Louis, king of France. The two Oblates would spend their first winter there, ministering to the Métis and learning the Indians' languages.

Brother Taché had had his 22nd birthday on the trip, and on September 1, Bishop Provencher ordained him a deacon. On October 12th of the same year, he ordained the young man a priest. The next morning, Father Taché took his vows before Father Aubert before celebrating his first Mass, the first Oblate to take his vows in this region. He was also a great nephew of the man who discovered Red River and the surrounding country (I mean, of course, Sieur Varennes de La Vérandrye, related through his mother and one of his nieces to the La Broquerie family, who were maternal ancestors of Father Taché).

Oblate missions

The first missions that Father Aubert carried out among the Saulteaux Indians in the St. Boniface region met with failure, since the local natives refused to hear the message of the Gospels.

Because of this failure, coupled with the extreme difficulties of apostolate in such vast and deserted lands, very unfavourable reports and descriptions of the situation came to the ears of Bishop Mazenod, founder of the order, and the Superior was on the verge of recalling the Oblates from this vast missionary field altogether. What saved the missions of Western Canada was Father Taché's appointment as coadjutor to Bishop Provencher in 1850.

Among the Montagnais and the Cree

While Father Aubert worked on the missions to the Saulteaux, Father Taché and the secular priest Louis-François Lafèche (future bishop of Trois-Rivières), founded a mission among the Montagnais and the Cree some 1,500 kilometres to the west, which they named Île-à-la-Crosse (1846). From there, Father Taché opened the Lake Caribou mission in 1847, over 500 kilometres to the north, and then, in the same year, the mission of the Nativity at Fort Chipewyan, 600 kilometres west.

It would be too long to tell how all the missions in these regions were founded, one by one. However, by the end of the 1860s, the Oblates had travelled all the way up to the Arctic Circle, to the limits of Eskimo territory.

In the west

To the south, the huge territory of the Peace River valley, Lesser Slave Lake, and the north branch of Saskatchewan River was partially covered by the Oblate missionaries. The central mission of this region was established at Lac Ste. Anne by secular priests in 1843, and in 1852 and 1853 Fathers Albert Lacombe and René Rémas of the Oblates joined the mission. They and the Oblates who came to join them in following years served outposts of Whites, Indians and Métis along the Saskatchewan, Athabaska, and Peace rivers. Like the missionaries at Red River, they regularly joined the buffalo hunters on their trips to the great prairies.

Fruits of their early labours

The missionaries scattered across this immense region were forced to suffer distances, isolation, cold and often meagre means of subsistence. Wherever they went, the Oblates studied and practiced Indian tongues, even publishing pious works in these languages, and looked after Indians, Whites and Métis. The Grey Sisters of Montreal also provided invaluable assistance.

"The most notable fact of this missionary epic," wrote Father Joseph-Etienne Champagne in his book "Les missions catholiques dans l'Ouest Canadien" (Catholic Missions in the Western Canada) "was not the number of conversions, but how, in fewer than 15 years, the Oblates occupied every strategic point of a country as big as a continent. And this marvel of apostolate was carried out by a mere handful of missionaries, whose means were primitive and whose resources were extremely limited."

Father Donat Levasseur, in his book "Histoire des Missionnaires Oblates de Marie Immaculée" (History of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate) estimated the number of Catholics of the Vicariate of St. Boniface in the 1860s at around 20,000, out of an overall population of around 50,000 Indians, 15,000 Métis (almost all Catholics), 4,000 Eskimos and 4,000 Whites.

In conclusion, let us mention that Father Taché, who, in 1850, was appointed coadjutor bishop to Bishop Provencher at the age of 27, became the residential bishop of St. Boniface three years later. In 1857, he himself received a legendary coadjutor in the person of Father Vital Grandin.



Bishop Provencher, seconded by the indefatigable Bishop Bourget, asked the Oblates for help.



Father Albert Lacombe joined the mission. They served outposts of Whites, Indians and Métis along the Saskatchewan River, Athabaska River, and Peace River.

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.



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.

Coast to Coast

News and photos from the canadian district activities !!!



Rocky Mountain House - Fundraiser

This year we are starting our drive to raise money for the construction of a new church. The parish gathered together to talk about fundraising ideas and to organize a committee to lead us on this endeavour.

The President, Sasha Land, is in charge of getting all of the paper work and licences necessary to go forth in our fundraising. The Vice President, Patrick Pedrazzini, is in charge of communicating all of our ideas and meeting minutes with Father. The treasurer, Steve Sewalk, is in charge of all monetary deposits and receipts. The secretary, Barbara Heaton, is in charge of taking minutes at the meetings and typing them up for Father.

Our first meeting ran very well, with the election of chair people. Our first

fundraiser is to take place in April from the 23 to the 25th at the Rocky Mountain House Arena. We have decided on



a 50/50 raffle, yard sale, craft booth and possibly a bake sale. This last item is dependent upon the new laws and regulations about selling baked items from home. We also will be running a concession booth with all the necessary goodies to keep us all running for the days ahead. Our parish is sadly in need of a new church as we have started to outgrow it. Right now we have been putting all our money toward building and unfortunately not towards running it, so with this new fundraising committee we can now get our priorities in order and get the ball rolling. Father Ockerse has grand plans ahead for our new church which is to include a hall and hopefully a parish school. May God bless us in this endeavour and make it possible for all our fundraising plans to prosper.

CONVICTIONS

Subscriptions

We heartily invite all the faithful to subscribe to our magazine "Convictions".

■ This magazine includes articles on current problems in society and especially in the Church, relations with Rome, education, spiritual works, and parish activities in the chapels across the country, with lots of interesting pictures.

■ These articles will be educational, enjoyable to read, and will help us to become better Catholics.

You will find a subscription form on the reverse of this page. The prices for outside Canada are also listed in the magazine (cf. page 3).

Thank you, in advance, for your support!

"Convictions" may be purchased in the parish bookstore for only \$3.00 each.

We highly recommend that each family subscribe to this apostolic work of our priests at the low cost of \$25.00 per year for TEN issues, which makes each issue only \$2.50, throughout Canada.

Hockey Tournament at Nicholville

On the first weekend in March there has been, for years, a hockey tournament, organized by the priory of Nicholville, N.Y. This year there was a team from Syracuse, a team from Nicholville and two teams from Quebec which confronted one another to win a magnificent trophy that gets bigger from year to year...

It was for us an occasion to meet with traditional Catholics from other priories and from another country. All of us had assisted that same morning at Holy Mass and we knelt down before each match to offer it up to God.

The teams all confronted each other, the one against the other, in order to determine the placing for the semifinal games. The teams from Quebec placed 3rd and 4th, because the American teams were much more accustomed to play in an arena, and we took a fair amount of time to recuperate!!! But the honor was saved, seeing that the last team in the ratings had a point, coming from a match that was nil (1-1) against Syracuse.

Besides, the first team, Nicholville, confronted the lesser strong of the Quebec teams for a place in the finals that was gained by 3 goals to 0. But the other Quebec team assured Canada of a place in the finals by winning 6 to 0 over the Syracuse team. Alas, the Quebecers, being a little too pleased with themselves in the semi-finals, admitted defeat against Nicholville: 4 to 1, after a magnificent game where the fatigue of the players made all the difference, while Quebec was in the lead for the first third of the game.

Notwithstanding their defeats, the Quebecers returned home happily. In fact, the games were of excellent quality, the American welcome was very warm and the organization was perfect. The tournament was strongly marked with Christian joy, because even if the hockey games were played with the roughness that accompanies this sport, each one knew how to be a good loser.

A great progress was noted with respect to last year...: the Quebecers did not arrive nor return accompanied by the annual blizzard of the beginning of the month of March.

And, it's a promise: next year, it is Quebec that carries off the trophy!!!

► Photos page 32

Little Surprise from the Ministry of Education to Holy Family School

For several months, the school has put forth all its efforts to try as much as possible to meet the demands of the Quebec Ministry of Education. But Providence would reduce the time that we reckoned to use to carry out these reforms from ten months to three small weeks.

In fact, on Friday, December 12th, the Ministry, very well informed about us, made a surprise inspection. Following the visit, the inspectors gave us until the end of the Christmas vacation to bring ourselves up to their standards. We were then obliged to part with several competent and dedicated teachers who did not have their college diploma for teaching. The priests and the sisters also took part in the lot. From now on, they will only teach catechism. It was there-



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fore necessary to hire a Math teacher for the high school, as well as a teacher for athletics, though we have been able to benefit from the help of three of our former teachers, who finished their studies for teaching from the university.

The classes and their time schedules also became a problem. We were not teaching certain subjects, especially the class of ethics and religious culture. If we are under the obligation to teach the contents of the official program regarding natural morals and false religions, we carefully avoid all relativism, destroyer of the Faith. Furthermore, they pointed out to us that we were short some 40 minutes of class time each week, that certain science classes were not sufficiently taught, that it was not posted that we have a 5 minute pause between each class, etc. Thus, we had to revise all the class schedules, with consideration for all the minutes imposed

for each subject and the personal restraint of the teachers. And lastly, it was necessary to rack our brains once more (the third time in less than a year!) to redo all the report cards: for us the joy to Excel!

Moreover, the school brought the science experimental laboratory back up to good standing; for that, we had to find the funds to move the computer room from its place into what was the large ping-pong room. It was the same for the student library: since the beginning of the year, the priests were thinking about the best place; the choice was settled, and now a furnished library, spacious and well-lit, is being assembled in a new area.

We rejoice to have the consolation of seeing our efforts rewarded, since the school reopened in January!

DEO GRATIAS!!!



Announcements

Please accept our gratitude for the many encouraging letters and reactions to issue #15 of our magazine.

May we ask you to help us allow Convictions magazine to have a larger and larger distribution.

You could subscribe to Convictions, if you have not done so already.

Tell friends, relatives and acquaintances about this magazine.

And you may wish to send us a subscription form for someone else, as your gift to them. May God reward you for helping us in this apostolate!



Readers' Letters

Dear Rev. Father Girouard,

We love the new format of "Convictions". Rev. Fr. May brought us the February issue 2009 when he came to O.L. of Sorrows Mission in Miramachi, NB.

Great idea to post it on the internet. We hope you get lots and lots of subscribers...

..... Lucie Comeau

Dear Rev. Father Girouard,

Congratulations, "Convictions" is selling like hotcakes.

The photo of the four bishops, good articles - a nice, big job. Thank you!


..... Thérèse Dion

Hello Fathers,

Congratulations - the new Convictions Magazine is just beautiful. We, St. Philomena Mission in Northern Ontario (Sudbury), love the changes and that the number of issues will increase.

God bless you and all who have contributed to making the Convictions magazine a success story.

..... Trudy Wallace



LIFE IS CHANGED, NOT TAKEN AWAY

Matthew Burger: * Aug. 16, 1918, Qu'Appelle, SK
+ Jan. 17, 2009, Langley, BC

Lillian Ammann : * April 11, 1919
+ February 18, 2009, Vancouver, BC



Lévis

Adresses priories

Ecole Sainte-Famille (418) 837-3028
10425 Boul. de la Rive-Sud
QC G6V 9R6

Shawinigan

Prieuré St-Pie X, Maison de Retraite (819) 537-9696
905 Rang St. Matthieu
QC G9N 6T5

Toronto

St. Michael's Priory (416) 251-0499
45 Guthrie Avenue
ON M8Y 3L2

New Hamburg

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Academy (519) 634-4932
24836 Bleams Road
ON N3A 3J2

Winnipeg

St. Raphael's Priory (204) 589-4524
480 Mc Kenzie St.
MB R2W 5B9

Calgary

Immaculate Heart of Mary Priory (403) 233-0031
401, 8th Street NE
AB T2E 4G8

Vernon

Our Lady Queen of Peace Priory (250) 545-3516
3012, 37th St.
BC V1T 6G5



St. Valentine's Day Event

At Christ the King Church, Langley, BC, February 15th 2009, Mrs Cathy Burger and Mr. David Pearce gave a talk on Elizabeth Browning's romantic poems, Choir sang some hymns, St. Valentine's Day Cake, Fruit Punch for everyone.



Manifestation against abortion

Father Boulet participates together with his faithful in a manifestation against abortion. The group of faithful prays in front of a abortion clinic.



Men and Women Retreats in Shawinigan

Baptism in Ottawa
Sunday, March 22 father Boulet baptized Joseph Inderbitzin, first child of Martin Inderbitzin and Julie Goyette.



Hockey Tournament at Nicholville

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