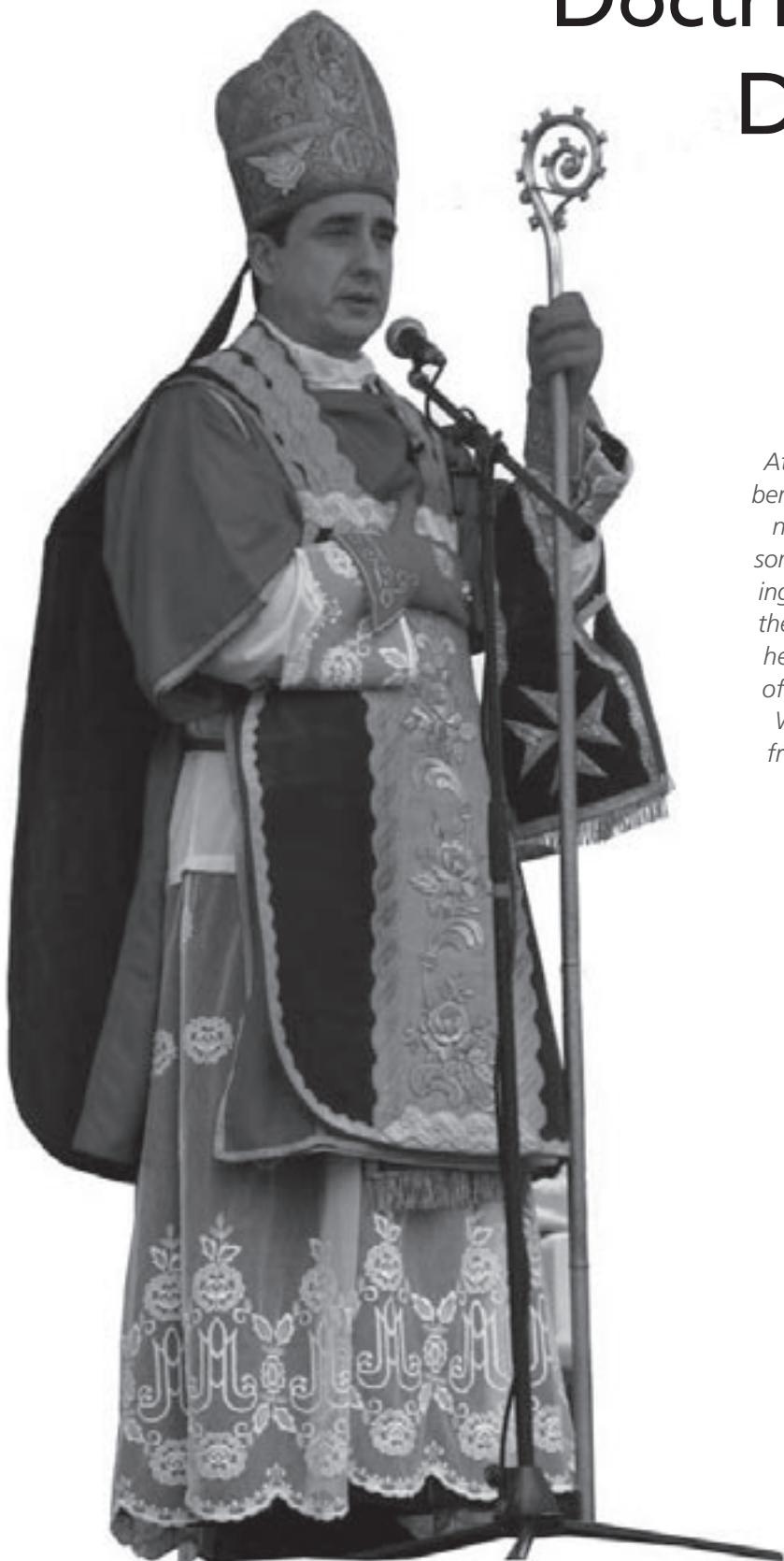


Doctrinal Discussions



At the end of the sermon that he delivered on December 19, 2009, during the priestly ordinations at the seminary of La Reja (Argentina), Bishop de Galarreta gave some information and comments on the doctrinal meetings which had begun last October, between Rome and the Society of Saint Pius X. This judgment, coming from he who is at the head of the delegation of theologians of the Society of Saint Pius X, is particularly interesting. We give here large extracts of his sermon, translated from the French translation for the readers of the DIC1 Website.

Mgr Alfonso de Galarreta

Bishop de Galarreta described as “good” the climate in which took place the first meeting with the roman theologians, in view of the circumstances and the expectations.

“Last October 26th, the first meeting with the roman Commission took place, and if I obviously cannot mention certain details, certain circumstances, or certain things which had been said, I can however tell you in broad outline what has happened and what we have done. This first meeting was relatively good; I say relatively because it is indeed according to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and in accordance with the hopes which we may really have. Thus, in considering these circumstances and that which we may expect, the meeting has been good.”

Then Bishop de Galarreta made clear that the discussions are good because they are exclusively doctrinal and because they concern solely the Second Vatican Council and the postconciliar magisterium.

“It was good first of all because these contacts take place clearly on a doctrinal level. It is a matter of a commission whose purpose is the study of doctrinal questions, and which does not have as its goal to consider neither theoretically or practically any agreement, no matter what, of a nature that is purely juridical, purely canonical, purely practical. That is completely out of the question. And this has been well clarified. It is a discussion which solely and exclusively concerns doctrine.

“Secondly, it is a discussion about the Second Vatican Council, and the postconciliar magisterium. Precisely: the Council and the postconciliar magisterium, the postconciliar magisterium and the Council. The topics, the themes which we will deal with have been well established; they are those which concern all the issues, all the themes which we have criticized for forty years, especially the religious liberty, the modern liberties, the liberty of conscience, the dignity of the human person – as they say – the rights of man, the personalism, the ecumenism, the interreligious dialogue, the inculturation, the collegiality; this egalitarianism, this democracy and this destruction of authority which has been introduced into the Church; as well as all the notions of ecclesiology which have totally changed that which is the Church; this question of the auto-conscience of the Church, the Church-communion, the Church-sacrament, the Church-People of God..., all these new notions on the relation between the Church and the world. Then, the question of the Mass, of the new Mass, of the new missal, of the liturgical reform..., and of other themes still. And what is most important – and which has been established in a very clear manner – is that the only common and possible criteria of these discussions is the anterior Magisterium; I repeat: the only common and possible criteria that we accept, and it is a sine qua non condition for these discussions, is the Magisterium prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium of all times, the Tradition.”

The work method adopted by the members of the commission is likewise, in the eyes of Bishop de Galarreta, a guarantee of seriousness.

“I also consider that this was a good beginning, if we look at the method which has been adopted. There will be reunions every two or three months: three months when it’s a matter of a new theme, two months when we carry on with the same theme. If we begin a theme that we will continue, the following reunion may be in two months; but if we have to prepare a new question, we have need of three months. And it has been well established that the Society – the delegation which I direct – will be the first to furnish a work on a precise theme. (...) The roman experts must respond to us in writing and afterwards, on the basis of these two texts will be the oral discussion, which will also give rise to a written document.

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“Everything is recorded, from their side as well as ours, and what is more, it is filmed, in front of you, in front of the Church, in front of God. At the end of each confrontation, we draw up an evaluation which says if there are coinciding points of view, or not, and where the problem is. We define, we refine, and after each question we write up a file which is transmitted to the other members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, if the Prefect deems it appropriate, and to one other Congregation if this dicastery is concerned with the theme studied – for example, that of the Mass will of course be in collaboration with the

Congregation of the Liturgy, of the divine Cult. And afterwards on all the themes discussed, a file, a summary drawn up in writing – as I have said – is handed in to the Pope and to the Superior of the Society. Once again, this commis-

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sion does not have as its purpose to result in – which would be disastrous – a sort of doctrinal agreement. No! We go simply to give a testimony of our faith, to defend it, to do the best that we are able, and anyway we will defend the honour of God, the honour of Our Lord and the honour of the Church, that which is the essential, if you have well understood what I said in the beginning (of this sermon) on the mediation and the office of the priest, and it is what, in any case, suffices.”

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The intellectual quality of the roman interlocutors permits them to perfectly understand the objections formulated by the theologians of the Society of Saint Pius X. But Bishop de Galarreta recalls, only Our Lord can enlighten the minds.

“Our interlocutors – I refer here specifically to those who negotiate with us in this commission – are people with whom we can speak, they understand our language, they understand that which we say, they understand very well our objections. We may speak peacefully and in full liberty, that is sufficient. If, up to there, everything depended on our corresponding to the grace of God, from now on we may say that everything depends entirely on the grace of God; because God, and only He, is the interior Master who can enlighten the minds and convert. Only God can do that, and as we do not know the designs of God, we don't know up to where this will go. That which we certainly know is that He can do everything. To God, nothing is impossible. And He can convert when He wills, how He wills, to whom He wills.”

If he recognizes the part of uncertainty which exists in every human endeavor, Bishop de Galarreta reaffirms clearly the double certitude which is that of the Society of Saint Pius X in these discussions.

“I make these things explicit to you so that you will have tranquility and the necessary assurance. If these circumstances, which seem to me absolutely sure, would change, then we clearly know that which we are not disposed to accept. If we don't perfectly know how things will evolve, we know very clearly, on the other hand, that which we have not the intention to do, on any account: first, to yield about the doctrine, and secondly, to make a purely practical agreement. With these conditions and the dispositions which they have of accepting for the first time a discussion of the Council – it is the first time that they give us the possibility of presenting to them a doctrinal criticism, profound, founded on the Magisterium of all time, it is the first time! – it is clear that we must do it. Afterwards, God knows! Prudence shows us what we must do now, but not exactly what we must do in three or six months, because the circumstances may change. However that may be, it is clear for us that the mission of the Society, before anything else, before even going to Rome, is essentially to give a testimony of faith. We must continue, to safeguard, to transmit, to live the true Catholic priesthood. We must guard, defend, live, transmit the true Sacrifice of the Mass.”