

The Society of Saint Pius X from 1970 to 2010

40 years of the Society

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The foundation

In the years of the Council, Archbishop Lefebvre, while Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, receives some anguished appeals from distraught seminarians. Indeed, the degradation of the priestly formation is already felt a little everywhere. He guides them toward the seminaries or universities which were

considered as more "traditional". Unfortunately, the conciliar revolution seems to have to sweep everything away. People everywhere are abandoning the priesthood, neglecting pious exercises, prayer, recitation of the rosary, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints. Catholic education is de-

stroyed; new methods made a clean sweep of the past, from solid philosophy to the permanent magisterium of the Church, the Divine Liturgy giving place to the most diverse and the least sacred experiences. Acknowledging that

the other proposed institutions are of no avail – such as the French Seminary of Rome or the papal University of the Lateran – Archbishop Lefebvre soon finds himself free from all duties, having been forced to resign as head of the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968. A retired bishop at 68 years of age, he then, moved by Providence, decided to open by himself a house of formation in Fribourg, Switzerland. October, 1969 arrives and the house on the road "Vignattaz" finds the first seminarians knocking at its door, asking for a truly Catholic spiritual foundation. At the same time, they take classes at the local Catholic University.

1969-1970: It is a crucial year for the Church, one in which the new mass is imposed. At Fribourg, the beginnings are difficult: Archbishop Lefebvre falls ill and several seminarians depart. At the same time, in the Valais, a group of fervent Catholics purchase property in Ecône, sold to them by the canons of the Great Saint Bernard. They hoped to save the buildings from profane usage, desiring to preserve the property as a religious house. The new buyers soon donate the entire property to Archbishop Lefebvre who in turn decides, during the early years, to institute there a year of preparation or of spirituality, a preparation before the studies of philosophy and theology. Thus in the autumn of 1970, 11 new seminarians enter at Ecône while their



1969 : A group of fervent Catholics bought back the house and land of the Great St. Bernard Canons at Ecône.

more advanced classmates head off to Fribourg to continue their formation.

Above all, on November 17, 1970, Archbishop Lefebvre proudly announces to his seminarians the official establishment of the priestly Society of Saint Pius X in the diocese of Fribourg by His Excellency Bishop Francis Charrière. The formal acknowledgement was signed on the 1st of November, 1970, the feast of All Saints. The Catholic Church thus recognized the foundation of the priestly Society of Saint Pius X. On February 18, 1971, the cardinal prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy sends a letter of praise for the work accomplished. Fortified with the recognition and the blessing of the Church, the Society of Saint Pius X seems in store for a promising and serene future.

The expansion and the first difficulties

In June of 1971, the Archbishop blesses the cornerstone of a new residence at Ecône, one needed to house the numerous seminarians who outgrew the existing structures. The early apostolate is still very limited: in 1972, the Society has a presence only in Great Britain and California, also supplying a chaplain to a small girls' school in France. In December of 1972, a French newspaper campaign is launched. Certain bishops are annoyed to see young men departing for what they consider a "wildcat seminary".

In 1973, a new house opens in Armada, Michigan, to accommodate a North American seminary. Then in 1974, the Society acquires a former Novitiate of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Albano-Laziale, near Rome.

In October of 1974, 40 new candidates present themselves at the door of the seminary. At Ecône, the aspirants to the priesthood number 130, without counting the 5 postulant brothers. But suddenly a storm breaks. On November 11, 1974, two apostolic Visitors arrive at Ecône. These two prelates, Msgr. Descamps and his secretary, Msgr. Onclin, put forward remarks that shock the seminarians: "the ordination of married people was normal," noted the visitors, adding that they "did not accept an unchanging Truth," and finally expressing "doubts about the traditional understanding of Our Lord's Resurrection." Scandalized and not wishing to collaborate with that which Pope Paul VI had already

called "the auto-demolition of the Church," Archbishop Lefebvre publishes his formal declaration of November 21, 1974.

Declaration of November 21st, 1974

We hold firmly with all our heart and with all our mind to Catholic Rome, Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary to the maintenance of this faith, to the eternal Rome, mistress of wisdom and truth. We refuse on the other hand, and have always refused, to follow the Rome of Neo-Modernist and Neo-Protestant tendencies, which became clearly manifest during the Second Vatican Council, and after the Council, in all the reforms which issued from it.

In effect, all these reforms have contributed and continue to contribute to the destruction of the Church, to the ruin of the priesthood, to the abolition of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments, to the disappearance of the religious life, and to a naturalistic and Teilhardian education in the universities, in the seminaries, in catechetics... No authority, not even the highest in the hierarchy, can compel us to abandon or to diminish our Catholic Faith, so clearly expressed and professed by the Church's Magisterium for nineteen centuries.

...

It is impossible to profoundly modify the Lex Orandi without modifying the Lex Credendi. To the New Mass there corresponds the new catechism, the new priesthood, the new seminaries, the new universities, the "Charismatic" Church, Pentecostalism: all of them opposed to orthodoxy and the never-changing Magisterium. This reformation, deriving as it does from Liberalism and Modernism, is entirely corrupted; it derives from heresy and results in heresy, even if all its acts are not formally heretical.

It is therefore impossible for any conscientious and faithful Catholic to espouse this reformation and to submit to it in any way whatsoever. The only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine appropriate for our salvation is a categorical refusal to accept this reformation. That is why, without any rebellion, bitterness, or resentment, we pursue our work of priestly formation under the guidance of the never-changing Magisterium, convinced as we are that we cannot possibly render a greater service to the Holy Catholic Church, to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to posterity.

That is why we hold firmly to everything that has been consistently taught and practiced by the Church concerning faith, morals, divine worship, catechetics, priestly formation, and the institution of the Church, until such time as the true light of tradition dissipates the gloom which obscures the sky of the eternal Rome.

Doing this, with the grace of God, the help of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Pius X, we are certain that we are being faithful to the Catholic and Roman Church, to all of Peter's successors, and of being the Fideles Dispensatores Mysteriorum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi In Spiritu Sancto.

+ Marcel Lefebvre

The condemnations

On February 13, 1975, Archbishop Lefebvre is invited "to talk" with the members of a commission of three cardinals (Their Eminences Garone, Wright and Tabera). Following this meeting, the Archbishop is then informed that they have instructions to conduct a proceeding against him, without him having had knowledge of the competence of any "court". He "appeared" a second time on the 3rd of March. On May 6, 1975, without a trial, the Society is illegally suppressed by Bishop Mamie, successor to Bishop Charrière in the See of Fribourg, the sentence being "immediately effective." Archbishop Lefebvre must immediately abandon 104 seminarians, 13 professors and the staff, sending them away without further ado, and that just two months before the end of the school year! All this occurred in 1975, a year

proclaimed by the Holy Father to be a "year of the reconciliation."

Having appealed this injustice, Archbishop Lefebvre takes all the seminarians on a pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year. By 1975 the Society numbers 15 priests and one bishop.

During 1976, facing the calm resistance of the "Iron Bishop", more drastic measures are taken: (illegal) blockage of the appeal presented by Archbishop Lefebvre to the apostolic Signature by intervention of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot followed by a letter of the Secretary of State to the Episcopal conferences of the entire world by which the Ordinances are invited to not grant the incardination in their diocese to the applicants from the Society of Saint Pius X, and finally the

Sermon at the Priestly Ordinations, Hot Summer, July 29th 1976 (extracts)

My dear friends, dear confreres, dear brethren...

Ah, I know well that the difficulties are numerous in this undertaking which we have been told is foolhardy. They say that we are in a deadlock. Why? Because from Rome have come to us, especially in the last three months, since March 19th in particular, the Feast of Saint Joseph, demands, supplications, orders, and threats to inform us that we must cease our activity, to inform us that we must not perform these ordinations to the priesthood...

But if in all objectivity we seek the true motive animating those who ask us not to perform these ordinations, if we look for the hidden motive, it is because we are ordaining these priests that they may say the Mass of all time. It is because they know that these priests will be faithful to the Mass of the Church, to the Mass of Tradition, to the Mass of all time, that they urge us not to ordain them. In proof of this, consider that six times in the last three weeks-six times-we have been asked to re-establish normal relations with Rome and to give as proof the acceptance of the new rite; and I have been asked to celebrate it myself. They have gone so far as to send me someone who offered to concelebrate with me in the new rite so as to manifest that I accepted voluntarily this new liturgy, saying that in this way all would be straightened out between us and Rome. They put a new Missal into my hands, saying "Here is the Mass that you must celebrate and that you shall celebrate henceforth in all your houses." They told me as well that if on this date, today, this 29th of June, before your entire assembly, we celebrated a Mass according to the new rite, all would be straightened out henceforth between ourselves and Rome. Thus it is clear, it is evidence that it is on the problem of the Mass that the whole drama between Ecône and Rome depends...

I said as much to those who came from Rome. I said so: Christians are torn apart in their families, in their homes, among their children; they are torn apart in their hearts by this division in the Church, by this new religion now being taught and practised. Priests are dying prematurely, torn apart in their hearts and in their souls at the thought that they no longer know what to do: either to submit to obedience and lose, in a way, the faith of their childhood and of their youth, and renounce the promises which they made at the time of their ordination in taking the anti-Modernist oath; or to have the impression of separating themselves from him who is our father, the Pope, from him who is the representative of Saint Peter. What agony for these priests! ...

Tomorrow perhaps, in the newspapers, will appear our condemnation. It is quite possible, because of these ordinations today. I myself shall probably be struck by suspension. These young priests will be struck by an irregularity which in theory should prevent them from saying Holy Mass. It is possible. Well, I appeal to Saint Pius V-Saint Pius V, who in his Bull said that, in perpetuity, no priest could incur a censure, whatever it might be, in perpetuity, for saying this Mass. And consequently, this censure, this excommunication, if there was one, these censures, if there are any, are absolutely invalid, contrary to that which Saint Pius V established in perpetuity in his Bull: that never in any age could one inflict a censure on a priest who says this Holy Mass...

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

threat of suspension if Archbishop Lefebvre proceeds with the priestly ordinations at the end of the year. Henceforth, the knot around which “the drama of Ecône” unfolds concerns the explicit acceptance of all of the Second Vatican Council, of all the decisions and reforms which issue from it, beginning with the New Mass. If only Archbishop Lefebvre would concelebrate the new rite just once, then (they promised) all difficulties would be smoothed away.

The summer of 1976 comes, the famous “hot summer.” After the ordination of twelve priests on June 29th, Archbishop Lefebvre is struck with a suspension a divinis, a penalty which, he humorously remarks, forbids him to say the Mass ... that is, the New Mass! On August 29, 1976, he goes to Lille to celebrate Mass before thousands of the faithful. He delivers there a resounding sermon which immediately makes the headlines.

Another trial falls upon Archbishop Lefebvre and his still fragile work when, at the start of the new academic year in 1976, some of his professors fail to appear. The Archbishop in turn decides to direct himself the seminary of Ecône, with a new staff of professors. By 1977, all of the professors are members of the Society.

The Society continues

In fall, 1975, a seminary was opened at Weissbad, in the German-speaking district of Appenzell, directed by Fr. Franz Schmidberger. In October of 1977, the Society numbers 40 priests, 150 seminarians, 20 houses and three seminaries (Ecône and Weissbad in Switzerland, and Armada in the United States).

In 1978, the seminary of Weissbad is moved to Zaitzkofen, in Bavaria, Germany. The following year another seminary is opened in Buenos Aires with 12 first-year seminarians. The seminary of Armada then moves to Ridgefield, some 100 miles from New York. Archbishop Lefebvre then stops directing the seminary of Ecône and takes residence in Rickenbach (canton of Soleure) where he establishes his General House. Rev. Fr. Tissier de Mallerai replaces him as rector of the seminary.

The suspension of 1976 had never ended the Society’s contact with Rome, but there was little hope of an agreement before the election of John



In 1976 : At Lille, the Mass of the « Challenge to Pope Paul VI ».

Paul II, the young Polish pope. The Archbishop, in fact, during an interview in November, 1979, proposes a solution that seems to satisfy the new pope. He speaks of “the Vatican II Council received in the light of Tradition.” But Cardinal Seper, who is present, intervenes by denouncing the attitude of the prelate from Ecône, one who “makes of the mass a flag,” he says in a contentious tone. The interview ends there abruptly. In 1980, the Society numbers 82 priests, and still one bishop.

A new Superior General

On June 29, 1983, at the sermon given during the ordinations at Ecône, Archbishop Lefebvre announces that Fr. Schmidberger, whom he had named the preceding year as his vicar general, will take his place beginning that very day as Superior General of the Society.

Battle against the scandals in the Church – expansion

Late in 1983, the Society enters a new stage in its history. Earlier that year John Paul II expressed great sympathy for Martin Luther, the same year Protestants celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth. More than ever, the Pope commits himself to “the rights of man” and adopts a form of “ecumenism” condemned by his predecessors. Faced with so many scandals coming from the top, Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer of Campos (Brazil), write the pope an open letter on November 21, 1983. They do it in the spirit of Saint Paul publicly resisting Saint

Peter, when he “did not walk according to the Gospel” (Galatians 2, 14).



May 5th, 1988 : Signing of the « protocol ». Satisfaction and mistrust. Standing are Fathers Laroche and Tissier de Mallerais, the Society's negotiators.

In 1985 the Society numbers 156 priests and one bishop and Archbishop Lefebvre publishes at Albin Michel's house an “Open Letter to Confused Catholics” in which he explains, in clear language accessible to all, the reasons for his resistance, faced with the destructive reforms of Catholicism. Unfortunately, at a synod of that same year, an extraordinary synod held for the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II decides to continue by going still further. He convokes, for the 21st of October, 1986, an ecumenical reunion at Assisi, where all religions, united and placed on an equal footing, will together invoke their various gods. Once again, Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer react vigorously, successors of the apostles, strong in the faith. They denounce in particular an implicit syncretism and the pope's blatant neglect of the first commandment.

During this worsening crisis, the Society continues to grow. In France, the Seminary of Flavigny-sur-Ozerain (Côte-d'Or) opens its doors to accommodate an overcrowded residence hall at Ecône. Furthermore, the Society increases its apostolate in a spectacular manner, opening new houses in Gabon, Chili, New Zealand, the West

Indies, Zimbabwe, and India. The Society henceforth has a presence on six continents, spread over 23 countries.

The consecrations

The apostasy of conciliar Rome is now reaching its height, and when the pope confirms the spurious thesis of “religious liberty,” Archbishop Lefebvre announces at the ordinations of June 29, 1987, that he will not hesitate, if God wills it, to consecrate successors in the episcopate so that the work of the Society may continue.

Rome reacts immediately by proposing to visit to the houses of the Society in order to better evaluate the training their priests receive and to witness by the Society's fruits of holiness and worldwide apostolate. Archbishop Lefebvre rejoices and welcomes the apostolic visitor, Cardinal Edouard Gagnon of the congregation of the Priests of St. Sulpice, along with his secretary Msgr. Camille Perl. This visit recognizes the illegitimacy of the penalties and suppressions previously imposed. How could these two eminent prelates visit a religious society that supposedly had been dissolved and officially should no longer exist? The cardinal, moreover, assists at the Mass of the “suspended” bishop on December 8, 1987, at Ecône. (1) The same day, he declares: “I wish to say that we have been quite amazed. Everywhere we hold a great admiration for the piety of the persons, for the actuality and importance of the works, especially in what concerns the catechism, the formation, the administration of the sacraments. Certainly we have in our hands all that we need to make a very positive report.”

This report would never appear and would be, basically, hushed up. To this day, it has never been published. On the other hand, one can still read in the Visitors' Book of the seminary of Ecône the wish of the cardinal that “the marvelous work of priestly formation accomplished here shine one day for the good of all the holy Church”.

Archbishop Lefebvre then postpones the date of the consecrations in the hope of an acceptable agreement. Later, in spite of all that has happened, the Archbishop signs a doctrinal form after a new meeting at Rome, on May 5, 1988, with Cardinal Ratzinger. The next day, the Archbishop requests new guarantees concerning the consecration of bishops that would be in charge of Tradition. The

refusal of these indispensable conditions leads Archbishop Lefebvre to decide to consecrate four bishops himself from the ranks of the Society on June 30, 1988. The Archbishop believes that he is justified in performing such irregular consecrations considering the case of necessity in which the Church presently finds Herself. The pope, however, explicitly refuses the Archbishop permission to proceed with these consecrations. This refusal, however, was unjustified, for the pope

should always seek to give the Church the indispensable means for her common good. For more details about the legitimacy of the consecrations of 1988, see the theological study of the magazine *Si Si No No*, *Courier de Rome*.

In March of 1988, the sixth seminary of the Society, Holy Cross Seminary, is opened up in Australia. In September of the same year, the seminary of the United States is moved to Winona, in

Sermon on the occasion of the episcopal consecrations

June 30th, 1988

Your Excellency, dear Bishop de Castro Mayer, my most dear friends, my dear brethren,

...

We place ourselves in God's providence. We are convinced that God knows what He is doing. Cardinal Gagnon visited us twelve years after the suspension: after twelve years of being spoken of as outside of the communion of Rome, as rebels and dissenters against the Pope, his visit took place. He himself recognized that what we have been doing is just what is necessary for the reconstruction of the Church. The Cardinal even assisted pontifically at the Mass which I celebrated on December 8, 1987, for the renewal of the promises of our seminarians. I was supposedly suspended and, yet, after twelve years, I was practically given a clean slate. They said we have done well. Thus we did well to resist! I am convinced that we are in the same circumstances today. We are performing an act which apparently... and unfortunately the media will not assist us in the good sense. The headlines will, of course, be "Schism," "Excommunication!" as much as they want to - and, yet, we are convinced that all these accusations of which we are the object, all penalties of which we are the object, are null, absolutely null and void, and of which we will take no account. just as I took no account of the suspension, and ended up by being congratulated by the Church and by progressive churchmen, so likewise in several years - I do not know how many, only the Good Lord knows how many years it will take for Tradition to find back its rights in Rome - we will be embraced by the Roman authorities, who will thank us for having maintained the Faith in our seminaries, in our families, in civil societies, in our countries, and in our monasteries and our religious houses, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

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



Minnesota, to the lovely buildings restored from a former novitiate of Dominicans. In 1988, the Society numbers 209 priests and 5 bishops.

The jubilee

On November 19, 1989, at Bourget, near Paris, Archbishop Lefebvre celebrates the jubilee of his 60 years of priesthood before 23,000 faithful. The following year, the Society of Saint Pius X celebrates 20 years of existence. It numbers, in 1990, 236 priests and 5 bishops.



Deaths of Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer – consecration of a bishop

On March 25, 1991, Archbishop Lefebvre renders his soul to God. Visiting Ecône, and in recollection before the tomb of the founder of the Society, a cardinal whispers: "Thank you, Your Grace." A month later, April 26th, his companion in combat, Bishop de Castro Mayer, passes to a better life. In the year of the death of its founder, the Society numbers 249 priests and 4 bishops.

The following year, Bishop Tissier de Malle-rais, assisted by Bishop Williamson and Bishop de Galarreta as co-consecrators, consecrates Dom Licinio Rangel auxiliary bishop for the Society of Saint John Mary Vianney at Campos, Brazil.

This same year, 1992, the Society opens a house in the Philippines, developing its apostolate in the Far East after the fall of the iron curtain. On March 25, 1993, the first Mass is celebrated at Schloss Schwandegg, the new General House of the Society, located at Menzingen, in the canton of Zug. This new property also accommodates the novitiate of the Oblate Sisters until the number of

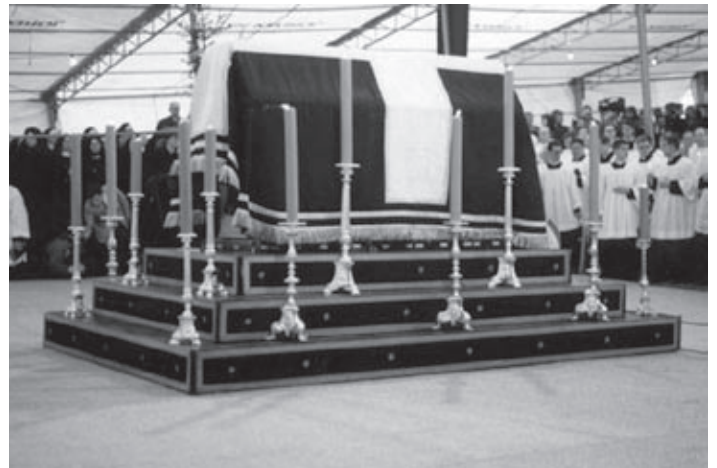
vocations causes the sisters to set up their novitiate at Salvan, in the Valais.

General Chapter, elections

In July 1994, Bishop Fellay is elected Superior General, succeeding Fr. Schmidberger, who in turn is elected first Assistant General. The following year the Society celebrates its silver jubilee at Ecône and the cornerstone of the future church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is blessed. In 1995, the Society numbers 329 priests and 4 bishops.

End of the century

During the years 1994-1999, the Society sees a peaceful growth. "Tradition" (2) as a whole develops, thanks to the success of Archbishop Lefebvre's life-long work, "Operation Survival." The increasing numbers of clergy, religious vocations,



and the faithful in general, especially the blossoming of large Catholic families, validate the choices of the "rebel" bishop. The Society also expands geographically, desirous in such a dire state of necessity to help save as many souls as possible, regardless of latitude or longitude. While the religious spirit falters in the post-conciliar Church, the "experiment of Tradition" appears to be very successful!

Pilgrimage to Rome in the year 2000

In the jubilee year, Bishop Fellay decides to lead a pilgrimage to venerate the Apostles at Rome, in this way hoping to show the Society's attachment to the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, to the papacy, as well as our refusal to allow ourselves to be enclosed in a so-called schismatic attitude. More than 5,000 faithful – a record for the Holy Year! – visit the major Basilicas in the middle of August. One newspaper title pro-

claimed: "Five thousand excommunicated people in Saint Peter's Basilica!" The article emphasizes, through this kind irony, a significant aspect of the present crisis: those who seek to keep the faith and who fight against the enemies of Catholicism are banished from the Church.

"Contacts" with Rome

Favorably impressed by this demonstration, Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, prefect of the Congregation of the clergy newly placed at the head of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission (3), seizes the occasion to establish closer "contact." A vague solution is put forward without any concrete structure. Once again, the understanding of the members of the hierarchy towards Tradition exhibits clear limits. The eyes are still far from being opened to the depth and the origin of the tremendous crisis which has shaken the Church for already 40 years.

In the footsteps of Archbishop Lefebvre, the Superior General decides that the time has not yet come for a full collaboration, and that all pursuit of a purely practical agreement – a juridical status in the bosom of the conciliar Church – is bound to fail. In response, Bishop Fellay tries to focus the debate on the basics, namely doctrinal questions. In accordance with the desire of Archbishop Lefebvre expressed not long before his death, if the Tradition must resume contact with the Roman authorities, it must do so only to address doctrinal problems. Bishop Fellay also asks for two signs of reassurance, indications that something has truly changed in the Vatican. He requests the liberation of the traditional Mass for all Catholic priests and the lifting of the unjust censures which weigh heavily on the Society's bishops, supposedly excommunicated since 1988. In the year 2000, the Society numbers around 400 priests.

The doctrinal combat:

The problem of the liturgical reform

From the beginning of his combat for the faith, Archbishop Lefebvre justified and explained, through conferences, articles, and books, the reasons behind his point of view. He never ceased to denounce modern errors or to propose the necessary remedies, especially concerning the most recent council. Numerous authors, both ecclesiastics and laymen, have also, of course, defended the faith at the first signs of this modern disaster,

but it would be exhausting to cite them all. The Society, hoping to continue to bring these current problems to light, has founded newspapers, hosted interviews and conferences, sustained by periodicals, and of course authored numerous publications intended for the catechetical and doctrinal formation of the faithful.

Such works deepen the analysis of "the spirit and the letter" of Vatican II and expose its dire consequences. In 2001, the Society publishes a work on the liturgical reform entitled "Novus Ordo Missae," one which renews the critiques made of this neo-protestant rite. A challenge directed to the Holy Father and to several cardinals, as well as to numerous bishops, it has, to this day, yet to be satisfactorily answered.

From ecumenism to silent apostasy

In January of 2004, Bishop Fellay and his two Assistants (Father Schmidberger and Bishop de Galarreta) with the other two bishops (Bishop Tissier de Mallerai and Bishop Williamson) together send the cardinals a text entitled "From ecumenism to silent apostasy – 25 years of pontificate". This document was originally intended to be given to the pope during his jubilee, but the state of his health leads the Superior General instead to address it to the cardinals. Bishop Fellay presents the document during a press conference, which is attended by some forty members of the Vatican, on February 2, 2004.

There again, the rigorous demonstration has not received, to this day, a serious response and, much less, a refutation. Nevertheless, the accusation is serious. If there is indeed a "silent apostasy" (the exact words of the pope) spreading particularly throughout Europe, it must have a cause.

The text argues the new modern form of ecumenism inescapably breeds indifferentism (4) which leads precisely to apostasy.

The election of Benedict XVI

In 2005, Bishop Fellay hails the election of the new pope as "a glimmer of hope." Although accepting the doctrine of Vatican II on religious liberty and false ecumenism, as shown by his visits to the synagogues and the mosques, Benedict XVI is conscious of the actual situation of the Church, of the grave crisis that She undergoes, and the failings, if not the vices, of the liturgical reform. As to

From Ecumenism to Silent Apostasy –

25 years of John Paul II's pontificate

43. Considered from a pastoral aspect, one must say that the ecumenism of the last decades that it leads Catholics to a "silent apostasy" and that it dissuades non-Catholics from entering into the unique ark of salvation. One must reprobate "the impiety of those who close to men the gates of the Kingdom of heaven". Under the guise of searching for unity, this ecumenism disperses the flock; it does not carry the mark of Christ, but that of the divider par excellence, the devil.

44. As attractive as it may first seem, as spectacular as its ceremonies might be watched on the Television, as numerous as the gathered crowds might be, the reality remains: Ecumenism has made of the Holy City the Church a city in ruins. Following an utopian ideal – the unity of the human race – the Pope has not realized how much this ecumenism which he has pursued is truly and sadly revolutionary: it inverts the order willed by God.

45. Ecumenism is revolutionary, and it affirms itself as revolutionary. One remains impressed by the succession of texts that remind us of this: "The deepening of communion in a constant reform [...] is without a doubt one of the most important and distinctive traits of ecumenism." "On taking the idea which John XIII had expressed at the opening of the Council, the Decree on ecumenism represents the formulation of doctrine as one of the elements of continuing reform." At times this affirmation is adorned with ecclesiastical unction in order to become a "conversion". In the case in point, there is very little difference. In the two cases, that which existed before is rejected: "Convert. There is no ecumenical reconciliation without conversion and renewal. There is no conversion from one confession to another. [...] Everyone must convert. We must not ask firstly 'what is wrong with the other', but rather 'what is wrong with us; where should we begin to clean house?'" Typical of its revolutionary characteristic, this ecumenism makes an appeal to the people: "In ecumenical activity, the faithful of the Catholic Church [...] will consider, with loyalty and attention, all that has need to be renovated in the catholic family itself." Truly in this *aggiornamento*, this state of intoxication, the head has need to be overrun by the members: "The ecumenical movement is a somewhat complex process, and it would be an error to wait, from the catholic side, that everything be done by Rome. [...] The intuitions, the challenges must also come from local Churches, and much must be done on a local level before the universal Church makes it her own."

the Society of Saint Pius X, after 35 years of existence, it numbers 451 priests and 4 bishops.

The General Chapter, held at Ecône in 2006, witnesses the re-election of Bishop Fellay for a new mandate of twelve years. At his side are elect-

ed Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, first Assistant, of Swiss origin from the canton of Soleure, and Fr. Alain-Marc Nely, second Assistant, a Frenchman. They then confirm the Society's doctrinal position. On July 15, 2006, the General Chapter declares:

In the exchanges which it has had in these last years with Rome, the Society was able to see the validity and the necessity of the two preliminaries (5) which it has requested, which would procure a very great good for the Church in restoring to it at least a part of its rights to its characteristic Tradition. Not only the treasure of graces which are enjoyed by the Society would spread more fully, but it would provide in this manner the medicine of which the mystical Body needs so much to be healed.

If, after their fulfillment, the Society awaits the possibility of doctrinal discussions, it is still with the aim of making the voice of traditional doctrine resound more strongly in the Church. In fact, the contacts which it will maintain occasionally with the Roman authorities have as their end only that of helping to establish again the Tradition which the Church cannot renounce without losing her identity, and are not in the pursuit of an advantage for itself, nor to arrive at an impossible and purely practical "agreement." The day in which Tradition regains all its rights, "the problem of reconciliation will no longer have a *raison d'être*, and the Church will see again a new dawn" (6).

The following year, Benedict XVI publishes, on July 7, 2007, a *motu proprio* in which he at last declares that the Tridentine Mass has never been abrogated, and every priest has the right to celebrate it. The Society rejoices at this news, although it rejects the presentation of two legitimate forms of one Latin rite, an ambiguous expression obviously intended to placate more liberal bishops, those who are vehemently hostile to Tradition.

On January 21, 2009, after a good many difficulties in the course of the year 2008, the Holy See publishes a decree from the cardinal-prefect of the Congregation of the Bishops annulling the effects of the so-called excommunications of 1988. The doctrinal discussions, admittedly necessary, could at last begin. They start in the fall of 2009, and are continuing. One year later, celebrating its 40th anniversary, the Society numbers 4 Bishops, 529

Priests, 195 Seminarians, 117 Brothers, 176 Religious Sisters, 82 Oblate Sisters, 1 General House, 6 Seminaries, 161 Priors, 725 Mass Centers, 2 College Institutes, 90 schools, and 7 Retirement Homes for senior citizens. The Society is present in 31 countries, and extends her apostolate in 32 others. The good fight for the faith continues so that the rights of Christ the King may again be recognized in His Church and in society at large.

(1) Let us remember that the penalty of suspension a *divinis* forbids those who incur it from the public celebration of the sacraments. The public assistance, and in choir dress, by Cardinal Gagnon at the Archbishop's Mass introduced at least a serious doubt of the validity of the anterior sanctions.

(2) The word "Tradition" must be well understood, for it has various meanings. In a primary sense, it designates one of the two sources of Revelation confided to the Church by its Founder, the other being Holy Scripture. It is characterized by the very fact that it is unwritten. These two sources are equal in dignity, but Tradition holds precedence in time, and furthermore, it produced Holy Scripture. In its primary sense, the word is written with a capital letter. In a second sense, the word signifies the traditions coming from the Apostles, and which are transmitted in the course of history. These have not the same dignity as the first, but must be respected with veneration. They may eventually be put aside in certain circumstances by the proper authorities if they become useless or misunderstood. Finally, the word signifies different elements of the life of the Church, formed throughout the centuries under the influence of the two first. This tradition is the reflection of the

faith of the Church, living from the revealed deposit, which gives rise, through the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to various manifestations of this faith and of this divine life. These elements are not inviolable and may change and be transformed with time, however they must be treated with respect and precaution, because they represent the expression of the faith in a given period, and their imprudent elimination or change would inevitably result in a weakening of this faith. Lastly, the term "Tradition", with or without a capital letter, is used today to mean those who wish to live it and cannot resign themselves to the loss of a treasure discarded by modernism, nor to be subjected to the doctrinal and religious disintegration which follows.

(3) Commission established in 1988 by this same *motu proprio* intended to receive those who would like to keep Tradition while "reintegrating" into the fold of the Church. The Society of Saint Pius X absolutely refuses to unite itself with this institution, because it considers that it has never left, under any circumstances, the bosom of the Church.

(4) A condemned doctrine which maintains that the membership in one religion or another is of little importance for salvation, because they are all capable of providing for man's salvation.

(5) The complete and unconditional liberty for the Tridentine Mass and the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication of the four bishops of the Society.

(6) Letter from Archbishop Lefebvre of June 2, 1988 to Pope John Paul II.

