

Ten Years Ago...

PART 1

Taken from [The Recusant #57](#) (Lent 2022)

2nd Feb. 2012 - Bishop Fellay sermon: “We Are Ready”

“We are not an independent group. Even if we are fighting with Rome, we are still, so to say, with Rome. ... It’s also important that we don’t finally imagine a Catholic church which is just the fruit of our imagination but which is no longer the real one. And with the real one we have problems. [...]

So what is going to happen now? Well, we have sent our answer to Rome. ... Do they really want us in the Church or not? We told them very clearly, if you accept us as is, without change, without obliging us to accept these things, then we are ready.” (See: <https://web.archive.org/web/201202061752...ruary-2nd/>)

18th March 2012 - Bishop Fellay, writing to all SSPX priests in *Cor Unum*: “We need to take up a new position with respect to the Official Church”

“We now have friendly contacts in the most important dicasteries, and also in the Pope’s entourage! As we see this situation, we think that the efforts of the aging hierarchy will not succeed in stopping this movement that has begun – a movement that desires and hopes for the restoration of the Church, although still in a rather muddled way. Even though the return of a “Julian the Apostate” cannot be ruled out, I do not think that the movement can be stopped.

If this is true, and I am convinced of it, this requires that we take up a new position with respect to the official Church. Quite obviously we must support this movement with all our strength, and possibly to guide and enlighten it. This is precisely what many people expect of the Society. This is the context in which it is advisable to ask the question about some form of recognition of the Society by the official Church. Our new friends in Rome declare that the impact of such recognition would be extremely powerful on the whole Church, as a confirmation of the importance of Tradition for the Church. [...] Concrete circumstances are what will show when the time has arrived to take the step towards the official Church.”
(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/fellay-cor-unum-march2012>)

7th April 2012 - Letter of three SSPX Bishops to the Superior General and his two Assistants - “Do not engage the Society in a purely practical agreement!”

“Reverend Superior General, Reverend First Assistant, Reverend Second Assistant, For several months, as many people know, the General Council of the FSSPX is seriously considering Roman proposals for a practical agreement, after the doctrinal discussions of 2009 to 2011 proved that a doctrinal agreement is impossible with current Rome. By this letter the three bishops of the FSSPX who do not form part of the General Council wish to let him know, with all due respect, of the unanimity of their formal opposition to any such agreement. [...]

Don't we see already in the Fraternity symptoms of a lessening in its confession of the Faith? Today, alas, the contrary has become “abnormal”. Just before the consecration of the bishops in 1988 when many good

people insisted that Archbishop Lefebvre had to reach a practical agreement with Rome that would open a large field of apostolate, he expressed his thoughts to the four new bishops: 'A large field of apostolate perhaps, but in ambiguity, and while following two directions opposed at the same time, and this would finish by us rotting.' [...]

Your Excellency, Fathers, take care! ... At least listen to your Founder. He was right 25 years ago. He is right still today. On his behalf, we entreat you: do not engage the Society in a purely practical agreement. With our most cordial and fraternal greetings,

In Christo and Maria,

Mgr. Alfonso de Galarreta

Mgr. Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

Mgr. Richard Williamson ”

(See: <https://www.therecusant.com/menz-letter-to-3-bishops>)

14th April, 2012 - Letter of Reply from the Superior General and his two Assistants to the Three SSPX Bishops: “It is not realistic to require that everything be settled to arrive at what you call a practical agreement.”

“Menzingen,
14 April, 2012

Your Excellencies,

To your collective letter addressed to the members of the General Council we have given our full attention. We thank you for your concern and for your charity. Allow us in turn with the same concern for charity and justice to make the following observations. [...]

Reading your letter one seriously wonders if you still believe that the visible Church with its seat in Rome is truly the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a Church horribly disfigured for sure from head to foot, but a Church which nevertheless still has for its head Our Lord Jesus Christ. One has the impression that you are so scandalised that you no longer accept that that could still be true. Is Benedict XVI still the legitimate pope for you? If he is, can Jesus Christ still speak through his mouth? If the pope expresses a legitimate desire concerning ourselves which is a good desire and gives no command contrary to the commandments of God, has one the right to pay no attention and to simply dismiss his desire? ... You blame us for being naïve or fearful, but it is your vision of the Church that is too human and even fatalistic; you see dangers, plots, difficulties, you now longer see the help of grace and the Holy Ghost. [...]

Within the Society, we are in the process of making the Council's errors into superheresies, as though it is becoming absolute evil, worse than anything, in the same way that Liberals have dogmatised this pastoral council. This failure to distinguish leads one or the other of you three to an “absolute hardening”. This is serious because such a caricature no longer corresponds to reality and logically it will in the future finish up in a true schism. And it may well be that this fact is one of the arguments pushing me to delay no longer in responding to the pressure from Rome. [...]

So that as for the most crucial question of all, that of whether we can survive in the case of the Society being recognised by Rome, we do not arrive at the same conclusion as you do. Let it be noted in passing that we did not look for a practical agreement. That is false. All we have done is not refuse *a priori*, as you ask us to do, to consider the Popes offer. For the common good of the Society, we would far prefer the present solution of the intermediary status quo but it is clear that Rome will put up with it no longer.

In itself, the proposed solution of a personal Prelature is not a trap. That is clear firstly from the fact that the present situation in April of 2012 is very different from that of 1988. To claim that nothing has changed is a historic error. [...] Fewer and fewer Romans believe in Vatican II.

This concrete situation, together with the canonical solution being proposed, is very different from that of 1988 and when we compare the arguments given by Archbishop Lefebvre at that time we draw the conclusion that he would not have hesitated to accept what is being proposed to us. [...] It is not realistic to require that everything be settled to arrive at what you call a practical agreement.

You cannot know how much your attitude over the last few months - quite different for each of you - has been hard for us. It has prevented the Superior General from sharing with you these great concerns, which he would gladly have brought you in to, had he not found himself faced with such a strong and passionate lack of understanding. How much he would have loved to be able to count on you, on your advice to undergo this so delicate moment in our history. It is a great trial, perhaps the greatest of all 18 years of his being superior. Our venerable founder gave to the Society bishops a task and precise duties. He made clear that the principle of unity in our Society is the Superior General. But for a certain time now, you have been trying - each one of you in his own way - to impose on him your point of view, even in the form of threats, and even in public. This dialectic between the truth and the faith on the one side and authority on the other is contrary to the spirit of the priesthood. He might at least have hoped that you were trying to understand the arguments driving him to act as he has acted these last few years in accordance with the will of divine Providence.

We are praying hard for each of you that we may find ourselves all together once again in this fight which is far from over, for the greater glory of God and for love of dear Society. May Our risen Lord and Our Lady deign to protect and bless you,

+Bernard Fellay (Superior General)
Niklaus Pfluger+ (First Assistant)
Alain-Marc Nély+ (Second Assistant) ”
(See: <https://www.therecusant.com/menz-letter-to-3-bishops>)

15th April 2012 - Doctrinal Declaration composed and signed by the Superior General on behalf of the SSPX and delivered to Rome (but kept secret from even the SSPX's own priests for almost a full year).

“I. We promise to be always faithful to the Catholic Church and to the Roman Pontiff, the Supreme Pastor, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Peter, and head of the body of bishops.

II. We declare that we accept the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church in the substance of Faith and Morals, adhering to each doctrinal affirmation in the required degree, according to the doctrine contained in No.25 of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council.(1)

III.

1. We declare that we accept the doctrine regarding the Roman Pontiff and regarding the college of bishops, with the Pope as its head, which is taught by the dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of Vatican I and by the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II, chapter 3 (*de constitutione hierarchica Ecclesiae et in specie de episcopatu*), explained and interpreted by the *nota explicativa praevia* in this same chapter.

2. We recognise the authority of the Magisterium to which alone is given the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, in written form or handed down (2) in fidelity to Tradition, recalling that,

“the Holy Ghost was not promised to the successors of Peter in order for them to make known, through revelation, a new doctrine, but so that with His assistance they may keep in a holy and expressly faithful manner the revelation transmitted by the Apostles, that is to say, the Faith.”(3)

3. Tradition is the living transmission of revelation ‘*usque ad nos*’ (4) and the Church in its doctrine, in its life and in its liturgy perpetuates and transmits to all generations what this is and what She believes. Tradition progresses in the Church with the assistance of the Holy Ghost(5), not as a contrary novelty(6), but through a better understanding of the Deposit of the Faith(7).

4. The entire tradition of Catholic Faith must be the criterion and guide in understanding the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which, in turn, enlightens - in other words deepens and subsequently makes explicit - certain aspects of the life and doctrine of the Church implicitly present within itself or not yet conceptually formulated(8).

5. The affirmations of the Second Vatican Council and of the later Pontifical Magisterium relating to the relationship between the Church and the non-Catholic Christian confessions, as well as the social duty of religion and the right to religious liberty, whose formulation is with difficulty reconcilable with prior doctrinal affirmations from the Magisterium, must be understood in the light of the whole, uninterrupted Tradition, in a manner coherent with the truths previously taught by the Magisterium of the Church, without accepting any interpretation of these affirmations whatsoever that would expose Catholic doctrine to opposition or rupture with Tradition and with this Magisterium.

6. That is why it is legitimate to promote through legitimate discussion the study and theological explanations of the expressions and formulations of Vatican II and of the Magisterium which followed it, in the case where they don't appear reconcilable with the previous Magisterium of the Church(9).

7. We declare that we recognise the validity of the sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments celebrated with the intention to do what the Church does according to the rites indicated in the typical editions of the Roman Missal and the Sacramentary Rituals legitimately promulgated by Popes Paul VI and John-Paul II.

8. In following the guidelines laid out above (III,5), as well as Canon 21 of the Code of Canon Law, we promise to respect the common discipline of the Church and the ecclesiastical laws, especially those which are contained in the Code of Canon Law promulgated by John-Paul II (1983) and in the Code of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches promulgated by the same pontiff (1990), without prejudice to the discipline of the Society of Saint Pius X, by a special law.

Notes --

(1) Cf. the new formula for the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity for assuming a charge exercised in the name of the Church, 1989; cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 749,750, §2; 752; CCEO canon 597; 598, 1 & 2; 599.

(2) Cf. Pius XII, *Humani Generis* encyclical.

(3) Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution, *Pastor Aeternus*, Dz. 3070.

(4) Council of Trent, Dz. 1501: “All saving truth and rules of conduct (Matt. 16:15) are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves,[3] the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand.”

(5) Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 8 & 9, Denz. 4209-4210.

(6) Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, Dz. 3020: “Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding “Therefore [...] let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding.” [Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 23, 3].”

(7) Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, Dz. 3011; Anti-modernist Oath, no. 4; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis*, Dz 3886; Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10, Dz. 4213.

(8) For example, like the teaching on the sacraments and the episcopacy in *Lumen Gentium*, no. 21.

(9) There is a parallel in history in the Decree for the Armenians of the Council of Florence, where the porrection of the instruments was indicated as the matter of the sacrament of Order. Nevertheless theologians legitimately discussed, even after this decree, the accuracy of such an assertion. Pope Pius XII finally resolved the issue in another way.” (See: <https://www.therecasant.com/doctrinalpreamble-15apr2012>)

For an overview, in chronological order, see: www.therecasant.com/reference-materials

Ten Years Ago...

PART 2

Taken from [The Recusant](http://www.therecasant.com) #58 (September 2022)

1st May, 2012 - SSPX First Assistant, Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, gives a public conference in Hattersheim, Germany:

“[...] ‘No practical agreement without doctrinal agreement’ – that was the principle of the SSPX when it entered into discussions with the Holy See. But the negotiations of the past two years have made it clear that the different points of view regarding central matters of Church doctrine cannot be reconciled. In recent weeks, however, it has become clear that Pope Benedict XVI is so interested in a canonical solution for the Society that he is ready to come to an agreement even if they do not recognise the controversial texts of the Second Vatican Council or the New Mass. But if, under even these circumstances, the SSPX still refuses a reconciliation, it is certainly faced with the possibility of a renewed excommunication.

Under these circumstances, the Superior General, Bishop Bernard Fellay, does not see that it is possible to reject the offer of the Pope. It would be the equivalent of sliding into sedevacantism [...] The recognition of the SSPX is an official confirmation of the importance of Tradition, and as such will be extremely influential throughout the Church. And it will repair the injustice of the Society’s stigmatisation.”
(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/pfluger-hattersheim>)

May 2012 - Fr. Michel Simoulin, writing in SSPX newsletter ‘*Le Seignadou*’:

Rome has changed for the better, we have to reject the attitude towards Rome which we had in 1988! The time has come for trust in the Church! “It is not an exaggeration to say that Bishop Fellay has achieved more than what Archbishop Lefebvre asked for, without having the latter’s prestige or moral authority. Should we then be even more demanding than Archbishop Lefebvre or Bishop Fellay?

Whatever the state of Rome may be, of all that still remains that is disturbing in Rome, plain common sense and honesty should lead us to consider the current situation with different eyes than those of 1988!

Recalling the saying of one of our bishops, we cannot be “eighty-eighters”! We are neither in 1975 with Paul VI nor in 1988 with John Paul II, but in 2012 with Benedict XVI. It can be said as much as one may wish that the state of the Church is still of great concern, that our Pope has a theology that is at times strange, etc... we have said it enough, it seems to me; but let it not be said that the state of things is the same as in 1988, or worse. ... The time is come for prayer, as Bp. Fellay has called us to do, and for trust in the Church.” (See: <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2012/0...88ers.html>)

9th May, 2012 - SSPX USA (sspx.org) publishes an article by SSPX seminary professor Fr. Juan Carlos Iscara, saying that sometimes the “prudential” thing to do is to keep silence when faced with heresy.

“In the face of heresy: St. Basil’s ‘Economy of Silence’

“The example of St. Basil of Caesarea shows that, even in a doctrinal crisis of the Church, the steadfast profession and defense of the Faith is not incompatible with a prudential attitude, seeking an accommodation with those who are in error.” (See: <https://www.therecuscant.com/fr-iscara-ec...of-silence> And: archives.sspx.org/miscellaneous/st_basils_economy_of_silence_in_the_face_of_heresy.htm)

11th May, 2012 - Novus Ordo ‘Catholic News Service’ publish an article based on their interview with the SSPX Superior General, Bishop Bernard Fellay. The whole thing is worth reading.

Traditionalist leader says group could divide over unity with Rome By Francis X. Rocca

Catholic News Service

MENZINGEN, Switzerland (CNS) -- The leader of a breakaway group of traditionalist Catholics spoke in unusually hopeful terms about a possible reconciliation with Rome, but acknowledged significant internal resistance to such a move, which he said might lead to the group splitting apart. Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior general of the Society of St. Pius X, spoke to Catholic News Service May 11 at the society's headquarters in Switzerland about the latest events in more than two years of efforts at reconciliation with the Vatican.

The society effectively broke with Rome in 1988, when its founder, the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, ordained four bishops without the permission of Blessed John Paul II in a protest against modernizing changes that followed the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65.

In April the society responded to a "doctrinal preamble" stipulating the group's assent to certain church teachings, presumably including elements of the teaching of Vatican II, as a prerequisite for reconciliation. The Vatican has yet to respond, but the director of the Vatican press office initially described the latest position as a “step forward.”

The society is hardly united behind its leader's position, however. In April, according to a letter which surfaced on the Internet May 10, the society's other three bishops warned Bishop Fellay that the Vatican's apparent offer to establish the group as a personal prelature -- a status currently held only by Opus Dei -- constituted a “trap,” and urged him to say no.

“There are some discrepancies in the society,” Bishop Fellay told CNS. “I cannot exclude that there might be a split.” But the bishop defended his generally favourable stance toward the Vatican’s offer against the objections of his peers. “I think that the move of the Holy Father - because it really comes from him - is genuine. There doesn't seem to be any trap,” he said. “So we have to look into it very closely and if possible move ahead.”

He cautioned, however, that the two sides still have not arrived at an agreement, and that unspecified guarantees from the Vatican are still pending. He said the guarantees are related to the society’s traditional liturgical practices and teachings, among other areas. “The thing is not yet done,” the bishop said. “We need some reasonable understanding that the proposed structure and conditions are workable. We are not going to do suicide there, that's very clear.”

Bishop Fellay insisted the impetus for a resolution comes from Pope Benedict XVI. “Personally, I would have wished to wait for some more time to see things clearer,” he said, “but once again it really appears that the Holy Father wants it to happen now.” Bishop Fellay spoke appreciatively of what he characterized as the pope’s efforts to correct “progressive” deviations from Catholic teaching and tradition since Vatican II. “Very, very delicately -- he tries not to break things -- but tries also to put in some important corrections,” the bishop said. Although he stopped short of endorsing Pope Benedict's interpretation of Vatican II as essentially in continuity with the church's tradition - a position which many in the society have vocally disputed - Bishop Fellay spoke about the idea in strikingly sympathetic terms.

“I would hope so,” he said, when asked if Vatican II itself belongs to Catholic tradition. “The pope says that ... the council must be put within the great tradition of the church, must be understood in accordance with it. These are statements we fully agree with, totally, absolutely,” the bishop said. “The problem might be in the application, that is: is what happens really in coherence or in harmony with tradition?”

Insisting that “we don't want to be aggressive, we don't want to be provocative,” Bishop Fellay said the Society of St. Pius X has served as a “sign of contradiction” during a period of increasing progressive influence in the church. He also allowed for the possibility that the group would continue to play such a role even after reconciliation with Rome. “People welcome us now, people will, and others won't,” he said. “If we see some discrepancies within the Society, definitely there are also (divisions) in the Catholic Church.” “But we are not alone” in working to “defend the faith,” the bishop said. “It's the pope himself who does it; that's his job. And if we are called to help the Holy Father in that, so be it.”

(See: <https://www.therecusan.com/bishop-fellay-cns>)

15th May, 2012 - ‘CNS’ release the transcript of their interview with Bp. Fellay.

(N.B. - The subtitles in bold are flashed on screen by CNS, all other words are Bishop Fellay speaking).

SSPX vs. Rome

“The question is not the Society vs Rome, I think if you see the whole thing like that it is a wrong understanding. I definitely don't look at it this way. Since Paul VI, we may see it's in the Council, so it is not new, we may see since the Council we have this apprehension that there is something wrong with the Church, a movement, strong movement, which is going, which is no longer, let's say, giving the Catholic line, but from people who are in positions, and so who give the impression it is the Catholic Church. Many people have an understanding of the Council which is a wrong understanding. And now we have Authorities in Rome who say it. We, I may say in the discussions, I think we see that many things which we would have condemned as being from the Council are in fact not from the Council. But the common understanding of it.”

Religious Liberty

“The Religious liberty is used in so many ways and looking closer I really have the impression that not

many know what really the Council said about it. The Council is presenting a religious liberty which is in fact a very, very limited one. Very limited. It would mean our talks with Rome, they clearly said that to mean that there would be a right to error or right to choose each religion, is false."

Liberty in Practice

"Conflict situations are not from today. The church had to deal with them a long time ago already. What she requests from the States and so on is not new. And so, we have no problem with the act you see, requesting this freedom of the Church and so being in the Middle East or in the [United] States and so on, it is rather which principle is invoked to do it. We would argue that there might be another principle which would be more accurate to justify the action. Which was called before tolerance. We have to profess our Faith and we have to show it. We are not supposed to hide it. But in certain circumstances, just life tells us that we better bow down and if there is a time of persecution for example nobody is obliged to provoke the opponent or the persecutor."

The Ideal State

"Just in itself, the best situation is when you have the whole society which is going in the same way. It also helps to unity, to peace to everything. And of course, religion is a major part in the human heart. And if you are one in the religion it helps to have this peace. And I may say well that is the commandment of our Lord to his Church. We have to go to all nations and teach them what our Lord said. Now when you are in a situation which is a mixed situation which is let's say the reality, I would say, well, that is not the ideal but that is the situation in which you are. And that is let's say where you have to do your job, your duty, as a Christian. So we have to give this witness to the others, you must try to help them. We want everybody to have that wonderful happiness of heaven and trying to bring them to this knowledge."

The Church and the Jews

"If you think of what happened to them during WWII, they do consider let's say the Christian position towards them, as the course of what happened to them. Which we claim that is wrong. That is not true. Hitler might have been baptised but his behaviour was absolutely anti-Catholic. It was not the Catholic behaviour which he followed, by doing what he did. And I think it is not fair to put the burden of what happened to them then on the Catholic Church. If you look what Pius XII did for them, talk about 7 hundred thousand of Jews would have been saved by the Church, by Pius XII. But when you see all the comments on the Jewish side about Catholicism you see this antagonism. Which does not come first from the Catholics. I don't think so."

The Work of Pope Benedict

"Personally, I would have wished to wait for some more time to see things clearer, but once again it really appears that the Holy Father wants it to happen now. The move of the Holy Father, because it really comes from him, is genuine. If this recognition happens it is thanks to him. Definitely and to him alone."

(See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdnJigNzTuY>)

3rd June, 2012 - Bishop Tissier de Mallerais openly contradicts Fr. Juan Carlos Iscara and Fr. Michel Simoulin, in a sermon preached at St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, Paris.

"Anyway, St. Basil of Caesarea in Pontus arose and ... he fought against those who professed error. And in our situation when we're thinking of resolving the crisis after twenty or thirty years when the heretics are beginning to convert, St. Basil would say, the conciliarists are beginning to convert - but that's simply not true, anywhere, neither in Rome nor in the dioceses, none of them are converting. ... St. Basil didn't use ambiguous expressions with those who wanted to return to the Church. He demanded that they profess the entire Catholic Faith but using a nice way of saying it. He was prudent, very good, but in professing the true faith. He was not willing to sign ambiguous texts, dear faithful. That's what we must do today. Refuse ambiguous texts, not stop condemning error ... the crisis is in full swing, now we have to be firm and

condemn the errors of the council, especially the denial of Christ the King, the refusal of Christ the King. That, dear faithful, is our plan of action. There's no point in deceiving ourselves, there's no way the crisis is almost over, the crisis is far from being over, the fight is going to last a long time and so we need to get organised, to last out and to continue to profess the whole Catholic Faith in full confidence in the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (See: <https://www.therecasant.com/tissier-refu...cara-3june>)

8th June, 2012 - Bishop Fellay gives an interview to the SSPX's DICI: 'It is not a trap!' 'We are going to need the permission of the local bishops, but since when was life without difficulties?'

"I really think that the main concern among us is rather the question of trust in the Roman authorities, with the fear that what might happen would be a trap. Personally, I am convinced that that is not the case. In our Society we distrust Rome because we have experienced too many disappointments; that is why some think that this could be a trap. It is true that our enemies may plan to use this offer as a trap, but the pope, who really wants this canonical recognition, is not proposing it to us as a trap. ... Yes, the pope is the one who wants it, and I have said it repeatedly. I have enough precise information in my possession to declare that what I say is true, although I have not had any direct dealings with the pope - rather, with his close collaborators. [...]

There is a lot of confusion about this question, and it is caused mainly by a misunderstanding of the nature of a personal prelature, as well as by a misreading of the normal relation between the local ordinary and the prelature. Add to that the fact that the only example available today of a personal prelature is Opus Dei. However, and let us say this clearly, if a personal prelature were granted to us, our situation would not be the same. In order to understand better what would happen, we must reflect that our status would be much more similar to that of a military ordinariate, because we would have ordinary jurisdiction over the faithful. Thus we would be like a sort of diocese, the jurisdiction of which extends to all its faithful regardless of their territorial situation. All the chapels, churches, priories, schools, and works of the Society and of the affiliated religious Congregations would be recognized with a real autonomy for their ministry.

It is still true - since it is Church law - that in order to open a new chapel or to found a work, it would be necessary to have the permission of the local ordinary. We have quite obviously reported to Rome how difficult our present situation was in the dioceses, and Rome is still working on it. Here or there, this difficulty will be real, but since when is life without difficulties? [...]

DICI: Again, if there is a canonical recognition, will you give some cardinals in the Curia or some [novus ordo] bishops the opportunity to visit our chapels, to celebrate Mass, to administer Confirmation, perhaps even to ordain priests at your seminaries?

Bishop Fellay: The bishops who are in favour of Tradition and the conservative cardinals will come closer. ... There is no doubt that people will come to visit us, but as for a more precise collaboration, such as the celebration of Mass or ordinations, that will depend on the circumstances. Just as we hope that Tradition will develop, we hope to see Tradition develop among the bishops and the cardinals. One day everything will be harmoniously traditional, but how much time that will take, only God knows." (See: <https://www.therecasant.com/fellayinterviewdici>)

13th June, 2012 - French magazine 'Rivarol' interviews Bishop Tissier, who openly contradicts Bishop Fellay and Fr. Pfluger: "We want no compromise with this new religion, not even any appearance of reconciliation."

Rivarol: Much is said of the imminent ‘reintegration’ of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) into the ‘official Church’. What is that exactly?

Bishop Tissier de Mallerays: ‘Reintegration’ - the word is false. The Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) has never left the Church. It is at the heart of the Church. The Church is where there is the preaching of the true faith. The project of ‘formalisation’ of the SSPX leaves me cold. We do not need it and the Church does not need it. We are already on the pinnacle, as a sign of contradiction that attracts noble souls, which attracts many young priests despite our pariah status. We would have to put our light under a bushel by our integration into the conciliar sphere. [...]

Rivarol: So how do you solve this disagreement between the SSPX and Benedict XVI, considered scandalous by many?

Bishop Tissier: It is true that the SSPX is a ‘stumbling block’ for those who resist the truth (1 Peter 2: 8) and this is good for the Church. If we were ‘reintegrated,’ we would, by that act, cease being the thorn in the side of the conciliar church, cease being a living reproach to the loss of faith in Jesus Christ, in His divinity, in His kingship.

Rivarol: But, Sir, you with your two colleagues have written a letter to Bishop Fellay rejecting a purely practical agreement with Benedict XVI. What are the reasons for the refusal?

Bishop Tissier: The dissemination of our letter is due to an indiscretion of which we are not guilty. We reject a purely practical agreement because the doctrinal issues are paramount. Faith comes before legality. [...]

Rivarol: Some believe that the proposed status of a personal prelature would offer you a sufficient guarantee of any danger of abandoning the fight for the faith. How do you respond?

Bishop Tissier: This is incorrect. Under the proposed prelature, we would not be free to establish new priories without the permission of local bishops and furthermore, our recent foundations would need to be confirmed by those bishops. It would thus enslave us quite unnecessarily to an overall modernist episcopate. [...]

[Vatican II is] the cult of the man who makes himself God, replacing the worship of God who became man (cf. Paul VI, Address at the close of the council, December 7, 1965). They made a new religion that is not the Catholic religion. We want no compromise with this religion, no risk of corruption, not even any appearance of reconciliation, and it is this appearance that we would give with our so-called ‘regularization.’ May the Heart of Mary, immaculate in her faith, keep us in the Catholic faith.”
(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/bp-tissier-rivarol>)

17th June, 2012 - Bishop Fellay writes a personal letter to Benedict XVI:

Your Cardinals have changed my own April 2012 ‘Doctrinal Declaration’, making it more obviously modernist: unfortunately, I just won’t be able to hoodwink my colleagues into accepting this new document. But still, despite the strong opposition and disruption it will cause the SSPX, I fully intend to continue trying to put the SSPX under your control.

“To His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

Most Holy Father,

I am ever so sorry, at a time you are afflicted with such trying difficulties for which I assure you of my poor prayers, to present you with yet another problem rather than some consolation.

Indeed, Wednesday evening, 13th June, during a cordial meeting, Cardinal Levada presented me with a doctrinal declaration which I could not sign. Not heeding the request not to modify the proposition I had submitted, because of the consequences that would lead to, the new text resumes almost all the points that caused difficulty in the September 2011 Preamble and which I had endeavoured to set aside.

Unfortunately, in the current context of the Society, the new declaration won't be accepted. I must admit to no longer knowing what to think. I had believed that you were disposed to leave till a later date the resolution of outstanding disagreements over certain points of the Council and liturgical reform, rather like when the Council of Florence, in order to achieve union, overlooked the question of the Greeks allowing divorce following adultery, and I committed myself in this perspective despite the fairly strong opposition in the ranks of the Society and at the price of substantial disruption. And I fully intend to continue to do my best to pursue this path to reach the necessary clarifications.

It seems now that I was mistaken, and what is really asked of us is the total acceptance of the litigated points before proceeding further ... I regret it if any of my recent statements have added fresh difficulty, but it was for the sake of clarity. Moreover, given the enormous opposition brewing up in certain circles of the Church determined to render impossible the activity of the new prelature, given the pressure even of certain countries, I wonder how in such circumstances the project could come to fruition.

I believe you alone can still change the course of events to come. Of course it is not for me to apply any kind of pressure, but simply set out the facts and find out if I mistook your intentions concerning our situation. If you judge it opportune, at this rather delicate moment, I dare ask of your goodness an audience (the most discreet possible) in order to hear from your own lips your appreciation of us.

May Your Holiness deign to believe my filial devotion and my dearest wish to serve the holy Church.

Menzingen, Sunday 17th June 2012

+ Bernard Fellay”

(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/fellay-bxviletterjun12>)

20th June, 2012 - Open Letter from British SSPX Faithful to Bishop Fellay.

Your Excellency,

We wish to approach you, in a spirit of charity, in order to bring before you certain concerns that we wish to address to you as the Superior General of the SSPX.

For some time now we have been hearing reports regarding a practical arrangement with Rome. We are concerned at the potential danger that this might pose to the integrity of the Faith, which is our Faith, and the Faith of our children and grandchildren.

Rome's intentions regarding an SSPX agreement

Several high-ranking SSPX clerics (Frs. Pfluger, Schmidberger and others) have stated that Rome is prepared to give the SSPX "*carte blanche*" - in other words, to accept the SSPX as it is, without compromise. However, in contradiction to that we have the published words of several high-ranking

individuals in Rome, including the Vatican Press Spokesman, who make it clear that they view this as a question of the acceptance by SSPX of the “Vatican II” version of religion in order to achieve a ‘return to Rome’. At the same time, we are warned that we ought to pay no heed to ‘rumours’. Since there exists a contradiction between the two reported versions of what is being offered to the SSPX, and since a Vatican press announcement is not a rumour, are we to conclude that we ought to pay no heed to the words of Fr. Pfluger, for example?

Your own position regarding the Second Vatican Council

We are also scandalized at your recent remarks, published across the world by CNS, that: “[thanks to the doctrinal discussions with Rome] we see that many things which we would have condemned as being from the Council are in fact not from the Council, but is the common understanding of it”

...and that:

“The Pope says that the Council must be put within the great Tradition of the Church... these are statements we agree with, totally, absolutely.” (CNS, May 2012)

We, the signatories to this letter, wish to point out that when you say “we” you do not speak for us. Furthermore, we wonder how you can reconcile this idea that the Council was misinterpreted, with the words of Archbishop Lefebvre (in his books “They Have Uncrowned Him” and “I Accuse the Council!” for example), or even with your own statements from not so very long ago, such as:

“Ratzinger should prepare for a direct revision of the Council texts and not just denounce their incorrect hermeneutic (interpretation)”. (CNA, 30 October 2007)

From certain quarters we are being urged to show loyalty, obedience and unity. Leaving aside the awkward memory of how these very same words were used to silence opposition to conciliar teachings and the New Mass some 40 years ago, we feel compelled to ask: which Bishop Fellay are we expected to obey? The Bishop Fellay of 2007, who declared that Vatican II must be revised, or the Bishop Fellay of 2012 who thinks that Vatican II was merely misunderstood and can be accepted? Furthermore, which Bishop Fellay is more consistent with the example of Archbishop Lefebvre?

Your attitude towards Benedict XVI

We also must confess ourselves confused, to say the least, regarding your recent statements about Benedict XVI. It has been said that nobody in the SSPX has a right to refuse if the Pope insists on a canonical accommodation. You yourself have spoken of him in terms of his being our leader in the fight for Tradition: “But we are not alone in working to defend the Faith ... It’s the Pope himself who does it; that’s his job. And if we are called to help the Holy Father, then so be it.” (CNS, May 2012)

May we remind you that this is the very same man (as Cardinal Ratzinger) whom Archbishop Lefebvre felt he could not trust in 1988? That this is the same man who has professed heresies that he has never retracted, as Bishop Tissier de Mallerais has pointed out on several occasions? That in the mind of this same Benedict XVI, the idea ‘defending the Faith’ appears to include speculating about the non-existence of Limbo, about the possible moral probity of contraception when used by the depraved, and that he appears to believe that conversion, baptism or the confession of Christ are not necessary for Jews to be saved?

Given that a person as prominent as yourself is not normally ignorant of these things, is it unreasonable for us to conclude that you are consciously and deliberately overlooking the heterodox teachings and leadership of Benedict XVI? The SSPX USA District website currently carries an article purporting to show that, following the example of St. Basil of Caesarea, the correct attitude of Catholics when faced with heterodoxy and heresy in high places might often have to be one of silence in the face of apostasy, in order to accommodate themselves so as to continue to do good. We cannot for one minute imagine that Archbishop Lefebvre would have agreed that this should be the strategy of the Society at this particular time, nor that he would have tolerated for one moment such an idea being published in or by his SSPX in

these circumstances.

The reaction of your fellow Bishops of the Society would indicate that rapprochement (or more than that) with Rome at this present time is, to say the least, taking a hasty and overly perilous step. We find that in remaining faithful to the legacy of the great Archbishop Lefebvre, remaining faithful to Catholic Tradition, we are placed at odds with you and your leadership. We neither desired this nor asked for it: the cause lies with you, therefore with you also lies the solution. We, the sheep adhering to Holy Tradition gladly gathered around the Society, because the Society spoke with the Voice of the Eternal Shepherd, and we recognized His Voice in what the Archbishop and his faithful followers proclaimed. Whatever the result of the present circumstances, we - the Flock faithful to Holy Tradition and to the Faith of the Eternal Church - we shall not be the ones to change. We will remain faithful to Tradition, whatever the consequences.

Rumours, Information, Openness and Honesty

Finally, we wish to express our very deep concern that amidst this turmoil, amidst what appears to be a huge upheaval affecting the SSPX - therefore all of us and, by implication, the future of Tradition and the whole Church - there appears to be a reticence on the part of the leadership of the SSPX, a reluctance to come forward with information in a spirit of honesty and openness.

We are told on the one hand that we ought to pay no attention to rumours or internet gossip, and only pay heed to information which comes to us from the official sources of the SSPX. On the other hand, when solid facts come to light (such as the letter of the three Bishops, or your recent interview with CNS, or the Vatican press release about the SSPX) we are supposed not to look at that either.

On the one hand, we are told that we should get our information solely from the official organs of the SSPX (dici, sspx.org, pius.info etc.). On the other hand, these same news organs have been demonstrably hiding from their readers any facts that do not help the cause that they are trying to advance (namely, the argument in favour of reaching a practical agreement with Rome). Nowhere on DICI.org, or on SSPX.org, or on pius.info will one find the May press statements from the Vatican, nor any reference to the fact that a majority of the Society's bishops, as well as a large proportion of the priests of the SSPX and of the faithful adhering to the SSPX - quite possibly the majority - would be against the idea of a practical agreement with Rome at this time.

We are castigated for reading what is termed "private correspondence", when our only desire is to put an end to rumour by making ourselves informed of the facts. The letter which the three SSPX Bishops sent to you last month did not contain any personal information, and treated only of public matters affecting the future of the SSPX, therefore it is surely somewhat disingenuous for it to be termed "private correspondence". What is more, it does appear that there is a double standard in allowing clerics who are in favour of reaching a practical arrangement to express their personal opinions from the pulpit, whilst at the same time requiring absolute silence from those who are against such an arrangement. We therefore feel that we are justified in both reading and circulating that letter to other faithful Catholics who, like us, are concerned for the future of the SSPX, and who - except for seeing that letter - might feel themselves alone and confounded.

In short, if Your Excellency wishes the faithful to trust the leadership of the SSPX, if the faithful adhering to the SSPX are exhorted to pay no heed to rumours, then we feel you ought to take steps to dispel the current climate of fear and distrust, and allow all opinions on the matter to be stated openly, all information (regarding, for example, whether the Rome of today has converted from its modernism to any significant degree) to be circulated openly, and it is in a spirit of honesty and openness that we write this letter to you, in genuine concern for the future of Tradition throughout the world.

The Future of the SSPX and the Future of Tradition

When you became Superior General of the SSPX in 1994, you took your place at the head of a Society that was strongly united, fervent, devout and unworldly, which knew what it stood for and why, and which had a clear vision of where it was going. Our Lord entrusted this Society into your hands. Were He to ask you now to render an account of what you have done with that same Society, what would you be able to show Him?

What sort of a Society will you bequeath to your successor?

It is abundantly clear to us that Rome has not converted, that Rome is as steeped in Modernism as ever it was. What is not clear to us is what the leadership of the SSPX is doing or why - i.e. your own attitude, beliefs or motives. Archbishop Lefebvre taught us admirably well, both through his writings and in the personal example that he gave to the world, that the duty of Catholics is not one of merely believing in a passive way. It is also apostolic, of converting the world, and of pointing out and denouncing error when one sees it. In his own day, Archbishop Lefebvre denounced the various errors spread by Church authorities, including the Pope. He founded the SSPX not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end: the end being the continuation of Tradition and the denouncing of error.

He did not found the SSPX in order for it to “... not be provocative [or] aggressive,” to use some more of your recent words. We are perplexed and dismayed that certain members of the SSPX appear to see a motive, an end, which outranks that of preaching the Truth and denouncing error in season and out of season, and are thus willing to fall silent in the face of the many errors and evils of our day.

It is our fervent hope that the future of the SSPX and the future of Tradition are, as in days past, one and the same thing. Whatever may be the case, however, we will do all within our power to believe and spread the Truth, to denounce error, and in so doing to remain faithful to Our Lord and His Church, to Tradition, and to the legacy of Archbishop Lefebvre - whatever the cost, and whether Your Excellency chooses to abandon us or remain with us.

St. Pius X, *ora pro nobis!*

(See: <https://www.therecusant.com/open-letter-...h-faithful>)

25th June, 2012 - Internal Letter of Fr. Thouvenot, Secretary General, to Priests of the SSPX.

“Excellencies, and Superiors,

As you know, our Superior General responded to the letter of the 16th March from Cardinal Levada who tried to impose the doctrinal Preamble of the 14th September 2011.

By this document, dated 15th April, he wished to break free from the impasse created by this Preamble. According to several concurring sources, the new text seemed to satisfy the Sovereign Pontiff.

On the 13th June, 2012, Cardinal Levada returned to our Superior General his text of April, but it was amended in such a way that it still took up, in substance, the propositions of September, 2011. Msgr. Fellay also made known to him that he could not sign this new document, which was clearly unacceptable. The coming General Chapter will permit the analysis of the entire dossier.

Moreover, I inform all the members of the Chapter, that in virtue of Canon 2331, Paragraph 1 and 2 (New Code 1373) the Superior General has deprived Mgr. Williamson of his office as member of the Chapter for taking a position calling for a rebellion, and for his continually repeated disobedience. He has equally forbidden him to come to Écône for the ordinations.

Finally, Mgr. Fellay has deferred the ordinations of the Dominicans of Avrillé and the Capuchins of Morgon, who were foreseen to have been ordained at Écône this coming 29th June. The putting off of orders was dictated simply by the wish of Bishop Fellay to be assured of the loyalty of these communities, before laying hands upon their candidates (cf. I Timothy 5:22).

Be assured Excellencies and Superiors of my respectful and faithful priestly wishes.

Fr. Christian Thouvenot.”

(See: <https://www.therecusant.com/fr-thouvenot-letter-jun2012>)

27th June, 2012 - Open Letter to Fr Thouvenot by Fr Matthew Clifton, SSPX.

“St George’s House, Wimbledon.

27th June 2012.

Dear Father,

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of my priestly ordination, whilst giving thanks to Almighty God and Our Blessed Lady for such a great grace and mercy shown to me, I feel compelled to make known my thoughts on the current sufferings which have come to afflict our dear Society.

Events in the Society over the last three months have led me first to sadness and anguish, and finally to despondency and anger. The terrible divisions which now undermine our Society are not the fruit of rebellion and disobedience, but clearly are the result of a seismic change of principle on the part of our Superiors in the relation to Rome. Abandoning the security and prudence of the position adopted by the Society at the last meeting of the General Chapter (2006), namely of refusing any practical agreement with the Roman authorities without there being any doctrinal resolution of the errors of the Second Vatican Council, has proved to be a disaster. Consequently, the Society which was always united and strong is now fractured and weakened – brother is turning against brother. No convincing argument has been presented as a justification for such a fundamental shift in position – the Holy Father has not altered in any way whatsoever his insistence upon the hermeneutic of continuity in relation to Tradition and the teachings of the last Council. And yet, we are simply meant to accept the contrary.

This approach could not but produce the profound malaise that now affects our Society. Additionally, the misuse of secrecy on such a grand scale by our current Superiors, accompanied by privileging a small group of trusted supporters of the new policy towards Rome, has served to exacerbate this painful situation even further. Hence, it is abundantly clear to me that those who truly bear responsibility for the current storm are not those who have attempted to preserve our Society’s firmness and unambiguous profession of the Catholic Faith in relation to the Conciliar authorities but those who chose to abandon the wisdom of insisting upon a real conversion on the part of Modernist Rome before envisaging a practical agreement.

In light of this, the Superior General’s decision to exclude one of his brother bishops (chosen, as himself, by His Grace Archbishop Lefebvre) from the Chapter Meeting in July together with this refusal to ordain candidates from religious communities who have always shared with us the same battle for Tradition “until their loyalty can be ensured” are profoundly disturbing and unjust. To simply have recourse to ever-increasing sanctions against those who oppose the novelty of the new policy – alluded to by Bishop Fellay for the first time in the March edition of *Cor Unum* – will only serve to create ever more division and do even more harm to the Society. On the contrary, it is my profound conviction that only a return to our former position of insisting upon a real doctrinal conversion on the part of Rome before any practical agreement, will be able to restore once again peace and unity to our priestly Society, ever loyal to the example and spirit of our beloved founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

In Christo sacerdote et Maria Immaculata,

Fr. Matthew Clifton.”

(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/fr-clifton-open-letter>)

17th July, 2012 - The General Chapter sells out the SSPX: it does not reprimand Bishop Fellay for disobeying the 2006 Chapter, but instead gives its retrospective approval to his attempts to surrender to Rome.

“17th July, 2012

To the superiors of the SSPX:

Here are the final declarations which the General Chapter adopted before its conclusion and the visit to the grave of our beloved founder. This declaration will also be published on ‘DICI’, the official communication organ of the General House. Also, the initial conditions were better defined for a possible normalization of our relations with the official church.

‘*Sine Qua Non*’ Conditions - those which the SSPX enjoins and those which are sought from the Roman authorities, before seeking for a canonical recognition:

1. The freedom to preserve, share and teach the sound doctrine of the constant Magisterium of the Church and the unchanging truths of divine tradition, and the freedom to accuse and even to correct the promoters of the errors or the innovations of modernism, liberalism, and Vatican II and its aftermath;
2. The exclusive use of the Liturgy of 1962. The retention of the sacramental practice that we currently maintain (including: holy orders, confirmation, marriage);
3. The guarantee of at least one bishop.

Desirable conditions:

1. A separate ecclesiastical court of the first instance;
2. Exemption of the houses of the SSPX from the diocesan bishops;
3. A Pontifical Commission for Tradition in Rome, which depends directly on the Pope, with the majority of the members and the president in favour of Tradition.

Fr. Christian Thouvenot (SSPX Secretary General)”

(See: <https://www.therecasant.com/2012chapter-six-conditions>)

**19th July, 2012 - Official Statement of the SSPX General Chapter - ‘We have recovered our profound unity - Archbishop Lefebvre is dead, we are united behind Bishop Fellay now.’
‘Vatican II is only tainted with error.’**

“At the conclusion of the General Chapter of the Society of St. Pius X, gathered together at the tomb of its

venerated founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, and united with its Superior General, the participants, bishops, superiors, and most senior members of the Society elevate to Heaven our heartfelt thanksgiving, grateful for the 42 years of marvellous Divine protection over our work ... We have recovered our profound unity in its essential mission: to preserve and defend the Catholic Faith, to form good priests, and to strive towards the restoration of Christendom.

We have determined and approved the necessary conditions for an eventual canonical normalisation. [See above - Ed.] ... The Society continues to uphold the declarations and the teachings of the constant Magisterium of the Church in regard to all the novelties of the Second Vatican Council which remain tainted with errors, and also in regard to the reforms issued from it. ...”

(See: http://archives.sspx.org/superior_generals_news/2012_general_chapter/2012_general_chapter_statement_7-19-2012.htm)