

Primary Sources

FOR STUDYING

The CRISIS in the SSPX

MMXII



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THE CRISIS IN THE SSPX
MMXII**

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DECLARATION OF THE SSPX 2006 GENERAL CHAPTER

For the glory of God, for the salvation of souls and for the true service of the Church, on the occasion of its Third General Chapter, held at Ecône in Switzerland, from July 3 to 15, 2006, the Priestly Society of St. Pius X declares its firm resolution to continue its action, with the help of God, along the doctrinal and practical lines laid down by its venerated founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

Following in his footsteps in the fight for the Catholic Faith, the Society fully endorses his criticisms of the Second Vatican Council and its reforms, as he expressed them in his conferences and sermons, and in particular in his Declaration of November 21, 1974:

“We adhere with all our heart and all our soul to Catholic Rome, guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary for the maintaining of that Faith, to eternal Rome, mistress of wisdom and of truth. On the contrary, we refuse, and we have always refused, to follow the Rome of neo-modernist and neo-Protestant tendencies, which showed itself clearly in the Second Vatican Council and in the reforms that issued from it.”

Contacts held with Rome over the last few years have enabled the Society to see how right and necessary were the two pre-conditions that it laid down, since they would greatly benefit the Church by re-establishing, at least in part, her rights to her own Tradition. Not only would the treasure of graces available to the Society no longer be hidden under a bushel, but the Mystical Body would also be given the remedy it so needs to be healed.

If, upon these pre-conditions being fulfilled, the Society looks to a possible debate on doctrine, the purpose is still that of making the voice of traditional teaching sound more clearly within the Church. Likewise, the contacts made from time to time with the authorities in Rome have no other purpose than to help them embrace once again that Tradition which the Church cannot repudiate without losing her identity. The purpose is not just to benefit the Society, nor to arrive at some merely practical impossible agreement. When Tradition comes back into its own, *“reconciliation will no longer be a problem, and the Church will spring back to life”*.

On this long road to re-conquest, the Chapter encourages all members of the Society to live, as its statutes require, ever more intensely by the grace proper to it, namely, in union with the great prayer of the High Priest, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let them be convinced, along with their faithful, that in this striving for an ever greater sanctification in the heart of the Church is to be found the only remedy for our present misfortunes, which is the Church being restored through the restoration of the priesthood.

In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.

Letter from the Superior General to SSPX Members (“Cor Unum”, March 2012)

Dear Members of the Society of Saint Pius X,

As you all know, last autumn was marked by the question of our relations with Rome, in particular by two astonishing events.

The first was the absence of any evaluation by Rome of the doctrinal discussions that had been conducted for two years by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The only thing that was communicated to us was an indirect and unofficial remark to the effect that these discussions had shown that the Society was not attacking any dogma. Officially: nothing. Not one positive word, not one negative word. As if these discussion had not taken place, and even though we had been invited to see Cardinal Levada for the purpose [of an evaluation]. Indeed, the Preliminary Note to the Preamble proposed on September 14 simply mentioned that the discussions have achieved their aim, which was to set forth and to clarify our positions. This amounts, at best, to the establishment of a *status quaestionis* [state of the question], nothing more. The same Preliminary Note mentions some demands and concerns of the Society with respect to maintaining the integrity of the faith. One might possibly consider that as a hint in our favour. And that is all.

The discussions ended, it is true, somewhat abruptly, the stumbling block being the question of the present-day Magisterium, its relation with Tradition, with the teaching of the Church in past eras, and the development of Tradition. Therefore everything seems to indicate, as far as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is concerned, that these discussions are effectively over.

The second result is the proposal made by that same Congregation: to recognize the Society by granting it a canonical status of personal prelature, provided that we sign an ambiguous document, which we spoke about in the last issue of *Cor Unum*. This is surprising, inasmuch as the discussions manifested a profound disagreement on almost all the points that were addressed.

For our part, our experts clearly showed the opposition that exists between the teaching of the Church before the Council, on the one hand, and on the other hand the teaching of Vatican Council II and its aftermath.

For Rome’s part, their experts strove to say that we are mistaken, that we unfairly attribute the abuses and errors (which they acknowledge) to the Council, whereas they were due to other causes, since the Church can do no wrong and cannot teach error. We even found ourselves accused of Protestantism, since they say that we set our own reason and judgment above the present-day Magisterium; that we pick and chose what we like in the past so as to set it in opposition to the current Magisterium, whereas it has the responsibility of making present this teaching from the past, for it too is the proximate norm of the Faith.

Our experts replied that the deposit of faith that has been entrusted to the Church does not undergo any new enlargement, but only a homogeneous development “*in eodem sensu*” [“in the same meaning”]. That deposit was completed at the death of the Apostles. We can, however, find a certain progress when an implicit truth is made more explicit, or expressed by a more precise formula. Subjective progress, in other words progress made by believers, certainly exists also, but it is more difficult to define: in principle an adult person should know his faith better than a child. These two forms of progress have been recognized for a long time, since Saint Vincent of Lérins already spoke about them in his *Commonitorium*. And their limits were also set as of that moment. The First Vatican Council did the same. Vatican II, for its part, mixes these two forms of progress and uses extremely imprecise language that can be understood either in the traditional way or in the modern way. The progressives have made ample use of it and have misused it as well.

Thus we have received a proposal that tried to make us enter into the scheme of the hermeneutic of continuity. This asserts that the Council is and must be in perfect harmony with the teaching of the Church throughout the centuries: Vatican II! A traditional Council?

We replied that indeed the Council, and the whole Church, should be in complete harmony with the past teaching, with Tradition. This is a fundamental principle of the Church. Nevertheless, the factual reality contradicts the possibility of any such continuity.

“*Contra factum non fit argumentum.*” [“There is no arguing with a fact.”] How is such a thing possible? It is a mystery! In effect, doesn’t that contradict the promise of divine assistance made by Our Lord for His Church? To all appearances, yes, and this is the great mystery, and we are trying to explain how it could happen by means of distinctions and definitions, while recognizing that the very reality of the crisis it [sic] itself a great mystery permitted by the good Lord.

For the first time on December 1, and a second time on January 12, we communicated to Rome the fact that it is impossible for us to sign a document that contains such ambiguities. So as not to burn all our bridges, we proposed an alternative, following a line of thought that Archbishop Lefebvre addressed to Cardinal Gagnon in 1987: we agree to be recognized AS WE ARE. It is important not to end all relations and to keep a door open, even though nothing suggests that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith would agree to consider, even remotely, such a perspective.

We just received from that Congregation on March 16 of this year a response to our proposal. It consists of a letter couched in harsh terms in the form of an ultimatum and, of course, a rejection of our document. If we continue to hold our position, in one month we will be declared schismatic because we would de facto be rejecting the current Magisterium. Nevertheless the discussion that followed the delivery of the letter helped us to get a clearer insight into these demands by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In order to understand clearly the course that we are charting in this new situation, it seems to us advisable to provide you with a few considerations and observations:

1. Our principled position: the faith first and foremost: we intend to remain Catholic and, to that end, to preserve the Catholic faith first of all.
2. The situation in the Church may oblige us to perform acts of prudence relative and corresponding to the concrete situation. The Chapter in 2006 set forth a very clear line of conduct in matters concerning our situation with respect to Rome. We give priority to the faith, without seeking for our part a practical solution BEFORE the doctrinal question is resolved.

This is not a principle, but a line of conduct that should regulate our concrete action. Here we are faced with a syllogism, the major premise of which is the affirmation of the principle of the primacy of the faith so as to remain Catholic. The minor premise is an historical observation concerning the present situation of the Church, and the PRACTICAL conclusion is inspired by the virtue of prudence that regulates human action: no seeking agreement at the expense of the faith. In 2006, heresies continued to spread, the authorities themselves were propagating the modern and Modernist spirit of Vatican II and were imposing it on everyone like a bulldozer (this is the minor premise). It would be impossible to arrive at a practical agreement until they were converted; we would be crushed, torn to pieces, destroyed or subjected to pressures so strong that we could not resist (that is the conclusion).

If the minor premise were to change,, in other words, if there was a change in the situation of the Church with respect to Tradition, then that might necessitate a corresponding modification of the conclusion, without any change whatsoever in our principles! Since Divine Providence is expressed through the reality of events, in order to know His will we must attentively watch the reality of the Church, and observe and investigate what is happening within it.

Now there is no doubt that since 2006 we have witnessed a development in the Church, an important and extremely interesting development, although it is not very visible. Nevertheless this development, assisted by measures undertaken by the Supreme Pontiff, albeit timid ones, with regard to the internal life of the Church, is at the same time thwarted by a large majority of the hierarchy, which wants to hear nothing of it. Moreover this attempt at internal renewal is placed under the bushel basket of a constant affirmation of the importance of the Second Vatican Council and of its reforms, in particular those that affect the life of the Church ad extra: her relations with the world, with other religions and with States.

Thus we are witnessing two opposed, unequal movements:

The hierarchy, consisting of persons who made the Council (a generation which today has almost disappeared) and of those who applied the Council, who made the transition from the pre-conciliar Church – which was traditional but already partially characterized by an appetite for novelties – to the conciliar or post-conciliar Church, with its infatuation for novelty and the subsequent catastrophe. For the most part they do not want to go back; perhaps some of them will concede that there have been abuses, etc., or even a crisis, but the cause of them could never be the Council.

On the other hand, the subsequent generations look at these facts in a different light. They do not have that visceral emotion bond with a Council that they themselves did not experience. They know even less about the pre-conciliar period. Some members of those generations, more than you might think, do not even know that there used to be another rite. What they see is an extremely sad decadence and very little reason for enthusiasm, while they experience frustration and profound disillusionment: convents are closing, the lack of vocations has its consequences everywhere, and the churches are empty. Not having received correct, sound doctrine, they do not know what they have lost, but when they discover something of it through contact with Tradition, then they are filled with great bitterness, they feel betrayed and deprived of this immense treasure. This movement is manifestly growing almost everywhere in the world, especially among young priests and seminarians. It eludes the hierarchy – in part – which tries somehow or other to nip in the bud this desire for and trend toward a restoration of the Church.

The few steps taken by Benedict XVI in this direction, official acts ad intra that affect the liturgy, discipline and morality, are therefore important, even though their application leaves something to be desired.

We find some elements of this movement, however, even among young bishops, some of whom clearly but discreetly express to us their sympathy or even their fundamental agreement: “Hold fast, keep going, remain as you are, you are our hope....” These are no longer rare words on the lips of bishops that we meet.

It may be in Rome that these things are more manifest! 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. This is not a question of our applying for an identity card that we already have! Nor is it a matter of a false complex or feeling that we are consigned to a “ghetto”. It is a question of a supernatural view of the Church and the fact that she remains in the hands of Our Lord Jesus Christ, although she is disfigured by her enemies. 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. However, such a concrete realization requires two absolutely necessary points in order to assure our survival:

The first is that no concessions affecting the faith and what follows from it (liturgy, sacraments, morality, discipline) may be demanded of the Society.

The second is that a real liberty and autonomy of action should be granted to the Society, and that these freedoms should allow it to live and to develop in concrete circumstances.

Humanly speaking, we doubt that the current hierarchy is disposed to accept these stipulations. But a number of very serious indications oblige us to think that nevertheless Pope Benedict XVI may be ready to do so.

The Church today is so debilitated, the hierarchy so divided, that we do not think that the bulldozer approach is still possible. On the contrary, we are gaining ground every day, even in our present situation, although many still denounce it as being schismatic.

Let it be understood that we have ruled the possibility of our embarking on an alliance that would consist of swallowing the conciliar poison and compromising our positions. That is absolutely not what we are talking about.

Nevertheless, considering the lessons of Church history, we see that the saints, with much moral courage and a strong faith, brought back souls that had gone astray in terrible situations of crisis, with much mercy (and firmness), without falling into a reprehensible excess of rigidity, as was the case with the Donatists, for example, or with Tertullian. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the saints did not refuse to work with and in the Church, in spite of the Arian occupation (for example) and the numerous Arian bishops still in office.

Let us learn the lessons of this History, by considering the admirable equilibrium of our venerated founder, Archbishop Lefebvre, a balance of strength, faith and charity, of missionary zeal and love for the Church.

Concrete circumstances are what will show when the time has arrived to “take the step” towards the official Church. Today, despite the Roman overture of September 14, and because of the conditions that have been set, this still seems impossible. When the good Lord wills it, that time will come. Nor can we rule out the possibility that a swift resolution will be reached, because the pope seems to be throwing all his weight into this matter. As for us, let us remain very faithful and anxious to please God alone. That is enough; He will guide our steps safely, as He has done since the foundation of the Society.

We entrust and consecrate again our dear Society to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is terrible as an army set in battle array. As a good Mother, she deigns to protect us, to guide us in the midst of so many dangers, until the victory: her triumph on earth and our salvation in heaven!

Wishing you an end of Lent and an Easter season filled with graces, I give you my blessing.

+Bernard Fellay

Letter from Three Bishops to the SSPX General Council

7 April, 2012

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.

Of course, on the two sides of current division between the Conciliar Church and the FSSPX much wish that the Catholic unity be restored. Honour to those on both sides. But since reality governs everything, and to the reality all these sincere desires must yield, namely that since Vatican II the official authorities of the Church have deviated from the Catholic truth, and today they are shown to be quite given to always remaining faithful to the Conciliar doctrines and practices. The Roman discussions, the “doctrinal preamble” and Assisi III are bright examples of this.

The problems arising to the Catholics by the Second Vatican Council are profound. In a conference, which seems like the last doctrinal will of Mgr Lefebvre, which was given to priests of the Society at Écône a half year before his death, after having briefly summarized the history of the liberal Catholicism resulting from the French Revolution, he recalled how the Popes have always fought this attempt at a reconciliation between the Church and the modern world, and he declared that the combat of Society of St. Pius X against the Vatican II was exactly the same combat. He concluded:

“The more one analyzes the documents of the Vatican II and their interpretation by the authorities of the Church, and the more one realizes that they are neither superficial errors nor a few particular errors such as ecumenism, religious freedom, collegial structure, but rather a total perversion of the spirit, a whole new philosophy founded upon Subjectivism... It is very serious! A total perversion! ... That is really alarming.”

But, is the thinking of Benedict XVI is better in this respect than that of John Paul II? It is enough to read the study made by one of us three, *The Faith in Peril from Reason*, to realize that the thought of the current Pope is also impregnated of subjectivism. It is all the subjective imagination of the man in the place of the objective reality of God. It is all the Catholic religion subjected to the modern world. How can one believe that a practical agreement can arrange such a problem?

But, some will say to us, Benedict XVI is really well disposed towards the Society and its teaching. As a subjectivist this can easily be the case, because liberals subjectivists can tolerate even the truth, but not if one refuses to tolerate error. He would accept us within the framework of relativistic and dialectical pluralism, with the proviso that we would remain in “full communion,” in relation to the authority and to other “ecclesiastical entities .” For this reason the Roman authorities can tolerate that the Society continue to

teach Catholic doctrine, but they will absolutely not permit that it condemn Conciliar teachings. That is why an even purely practical agreement would necessarily silence little by little the Society, a full critique of the Council or the New Mass. By ceasing to attack the most important of all the victories of the Revolution, the poor Society would necessarily cease being opposed to the universal apostasy of our sad times and would get bogged down. Ultimately, what will guarantee that we will remain protected from the Roman curia and the bishops? Pope Benedict XVI?

We may deny it in vain, but this slip is inevitable. 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 to Mgr Lefebvre so that he reach a practical agreement with Rome that would open a large field of apostolate, he said 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."* How to obey and continue to preach all the truth? How to reach an agreement without Society "having rotted" on the contrary?

And when one year later, Rome seemed to make true gestures of benevolence towards Tradition, Archbishop Lefebvre was always wary. He feared that they are only "maneuvers to separate us from the largest number of faithful possible. This is the perspective in which they seem to be always giving a little more and even going very far. We must absolutely convince our faithful that it is no more than a manoeuvres, that it is dangerous to put oneself into the hands of Conciliar bishops and Modernist Rome. It is the greatest danger threatening our people. If we have struggled for twenty years to avoid the Conciliar errors, it was not in order, now, to put ourselves in the hands of those professing these errors." According to Archbishop Lefebvre the characteristic of the Society is, more than to just denounce the errors by their name, but rather to effectively and publicly oppose the Roman authorities which has spread them. How will one be able to make an agreement and make this public resistance to the authorities, including the Pope? And after having fought during more than forty years, will the Society now have to be put into the hands of the modernists and liberals whose pertinacity we have just come to observe?

Your Excellency, Fathers, take care! You want to lead the Society to a point where it will no longer be able to turn back, to a profound division of no return and, if you end up to such an agreement, it will be with powerful destroying influences who will not keep it. If up until now the bishops of the Society have protected it, it is precisely because Mgr Lefebvre refused a practical agreement. Since the situation has not changed substantially, since the condition prescribed by the Chapter of 2006 was by no means carried out (a doctrinal change in Rome which would permit a practical agreement), at least listen to your Founder. It was right 25 years ago. It 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

Letter of Reply to Three Bishops from the SSPX General Council

Menzingen,
14 April, 2012

To their Excellencies Tissier de Mallerais, Williamson and de Galarreta.

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.

Firstly, the letter gives a good account of the gravity of the crisis shaking the Church and analyses with precision the nature of the errors flying all around. However, the description suffers from two faults with regard to the reality of the Church: it is lacking both in supernatural spirit and in realism.

It lacks supernatural spirit. 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. If 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? If not, on what principle do you base your acting in this way? Do you not think that, if Our Lord gives a command, He will also give us the means to continue our work? Well, the Pope has let us know that his concern to settle our affair for the good of the Church was at the very heart of his pontificate, and that he also knew that it would be easier both for him and for ourselves to leave things as they presently stand. Hence it is a firm and just desire to which he is giving expression. Given the attitude that you put forward there is no further place for Gideons or for Davids or for anyone counting on the help of the Lord. 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. If one is ready to grant that divine providence conducts the affairs of men, while leaving them their liberty, then one must also accept that the gestures in our favour of the last few years come from Providence. Now, these gestures indicate a line - not always a straight line - but a line clearly in favour of Tradition. Why should this line suddenly come to an end when we are doing all we can to remain faithful and when our efforts are being accompanied by no few prayers on our part? Would the Good Lord drop us at the most decisive moment? That

makes no sense. Especially if we are not trying to impose on Him any will of our own but we are trying to discern amidst events what God wants and we are ready to act as He wishes.

At the same time your attitude lacks realism both as to the depth and the breadth of the errors.

Depth: within the Society, we are in the process of making the Council's errors into super-heresies, as though it is becoming absolute evil, worse than anything, in the same way that Liberals have dogmatised this pastoral council. The evils are already dramatic enough so that one not need to exaggerate them any further. (Cf. Roberto de Mattei, *A History never written*, p. 22; Msgr. Gherardini, *A Debate to be begun*, p. 53, etc.) No more distinctions are being made. Whereas Archbishop Lefebvre more than once made the necessary distinctions concerning Liberals. 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.

Breadth: on the one hand the present authorities are blamed for all the errors and evils to be found in the Church leaving out the fact that they are trying at least partly to free themselves from the worst of them (the pope's condemning of the "hermeneutic of rupture" denounces very real errors). On the other hand it is claimed that everybody is firmly rooted in this pertinacity ("all modernists", "all rotten"). Now that is obviously false. A great majority may still be carried away by the movement, but not everybody.

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. The same evils are making the Church suffer, the consequences are even more serious and obvious than ever; but at the same time one may observe a change of attitude in the Church, helped by the gestures and acts of Benedict XVI towards Tradition. This new movement which started about ten years ago is growing stronger. It includes a good number (still a minority) of young priests, seminarians and even a small number now of young bishops who are clearly to be distinguished from their predecessors, who tell us of their sympathy and support, but who are still somewhat stifled by the dominant line in the hierarchy in favour of Vatican II. This hierarchy is losing speed. That is an objective fact and shows that it is no longer an illusion to think of a fight arising within the Church, even if we are well aware of how

long and difficult it will be. I have been able to observe in Rome that even if the glories of Vatican II are still in the mouths of many, and are pushed down our throats, is nevertheless not in all the heads. 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. Let us not lose that sense of the Church, which was so strong in our venerated founder.

Church history shows that the curing of evils afflicting it normally happens gradually and slowly. And when one problem is over, there is another that begins... *oportet haereses esse*. It is not realistic to require that everything be settled to arrive at what you call a practical agreement. When one watches how events are unfolding it is highly likely that the end of this crisis will take tens of years yet. But to refuse to work in the vineyard because there are still many weeds that risk stifling and obstructing the vine runs up against a notable lesson from the Bible: it Our Lord himself who gives us to understand with His parable of the chaff that there will always be in one form or another weeds to be pulled up and fought against in His Church.

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**

Niklaus Pfluger +

Alain-Marc Nély +

Bishop Fellay's "Doctrinal Declaration"

Presented to Rome
15th April, 2012

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 as 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.

Original CNS Article

11th May, 2012

(Source: <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1201931.htm>)

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 favorable 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.”

Transcript of Bishop Fellay’s CNS Video Interview

Released 15th May 2012

(Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdnJigNzTuY>)

[N.B. - The subtitles appear as text on the screen. The rest of the text is spoken by Bishop Fellay.]

SSPX vs. Rome

The question is not the Society versus 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 cause 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.

DICI Interview with Bishop. Fellay

on

Our Relations with Rome

(Source: <http://www.dici.org/en/news/interview-with-bishop-bernard-fellay-on-relations-with-rome/>)

8th June, 2012

DICI: Are you concerned about the delay in the response from Rome, which could enable those who are against a canonical recognition to alienate some priests and faithful from the Society of Saint Pius X?

Bishop Fellay: Everything is in God's hands. I place my trust in the Good Lord and in His Divine Providence; He knows how to manage everything, even delays, for the good of those who love Him.

DICI: Was the pope's decision adjourned, as some magazines have said? Did the Holy See tell you to expect a delay?

Bishop Fellay: No, I have had no information about any calendar whatsoever. There are even some who say that the pope will deal with this matter at Castel Gandolfo in July.

A canonical solution before a doctrinal solution?

DICI: Most of those who are opposed to the Society's acceptance of a possible canonical recognition allege that the doctrinal discussions could have led to this acceptance only if they had concluded with a doctrinal solution, in other words, a "conversion" by Rome. Has your position on this point changed?

Bishop Fellay: It must be acknowledged that these discussions have allowed us to present clearly the various problems that we experience with regard to Vatican II. What has changed is the fact that Rome no longer makes total acceptance of Vatican II a prerequisite for the canonical solution. Today, in Rome, some people regard a different understanding of the Council as something that is not decisive for the future of the Church, since the Church is more than the Council. Indeed, the Church cannot be reduced to the Council; she is much larger. Therefore we must strive to resolve more far-reaching problems. This new awareness can help us to understanding what is really happening: we are called to help bring to others the treasure of Tradition that we have been able to preserve.

So the attitude of the official Church is what changed; we did not. We were not the ones who asked for an agreement; the pope is the one who wants to recognize us. You may ask: why this change? We are still not in agreement doctrinally, and yet the pope wants to recognize us! Why? The answer is right in front of us: there are terribly important problems in the Church today. These problems must be addressed. We must set aside the secondary problems and deal with the major problems. This is the answer of one or another Roman prelate, although they will never say so openly; you have to read between the lines to understand.

The official authorities do not want to acknowledge the errors of the Council. They will never say so explicitly. Nevertheless, if you read between the lines, you can see that they hope to remedy some of these errors. Here is an interesting example on the subject of the priesthood. You know that starting with the Council there was a new concept of the priesthood and that it demolished the role of the priest. Today we see very clearly that the Roman authorities are trying to rehabilitate the true concept of the priest. We observed this already during the Year of the Priest that took place in 2010-2011. Now, the Feast of the Sacred Heart is becoming the day consecrated to the sanctification of priests. For this occasion, a letter was published and an examination of conscience for priests was composed. One might think that they went to Ecône to find this examination of conscience, it is so much along the lines of pre-conciliar spirituality. This examination presents the traditional image of the priest, and also of his role in the Church. This role is what Archbishop Lefebvre affirms when he describes the Society's mission: to restore the Church by restoring the priest.

The letter says: "The Church and the world can be sanctified only through the sanctification of the priest." It really places the priest at the center. The examination of conscience begins with this question: "Is the first concern of the priest his own sanctification?" The second question: "Is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass"—and that is the expression that they use, not the Eucharist, the Synaxis, or I don't know what else—"the center of the life of the priest?" Then it recalls the ends of the Mass: the praise of God, prayer, reparation for sins.... It says it all. The priest must immolate himself—the word "immolate" is not used, but rather "give himself", sacrifice himself to save souls. It does say that. Then comes a reminder about the last things: "Does the priest think often about the last things? Does he think to ask for the grace of final perseverance? Does he remind his faithful to do so? Does he visit the dying so as to give them the last rites?" You see how, in a clever way, this Roman document clearly recalls the traditional idea of the priest.

Of course, that does not do away with all the problems, and there are still serious difficulties in the Church: ecumenism, Assisi, religious liberty..., but the context is changing, and not just the context, but the situation itself.... I would distinguish between the external relations and the internal situation. The relations with the outside have not have changed, but as for what goes on within the Church, the Roman authorities are trying to change it little by little. Obviously, a major disaster still remains today, one must be aware of that, and we do not deny it, but one must also look at what is starting to happen. This examination of conscience for priests is a significant example.

What should be our attitude toward the doctrinal problems?

DICI: You acknowledge that some serious difficulties remain with ecumenism, religious liberty.... If a canonical recognition came about, what would be your attitude with regard to these difficulties? Would you not feel obliged to be somewhat reserved?

Bishop Fellay: Allow me to answer your question with three inquiries: Did the novelties that were introduced during the Council start a trend of growth in the Church and an increase of vocations and religious practice? Do we not observe, to the contrary, a form of "silent apostasy" in all the countries of Christendom? Can we be silent when faced with these problems?

If we want to make the treasure of Tradition fruitful for the good of souls, we must speak and act. We need this twofold freedom of speech and action. But I would mistrust a purely verbal denunciation of doctrinal errors—a denunciation that would be all the more polemical because it was only verbal.

With his characteristic realism, Archbishop Lefebvre recognized that the Roman and diocesan authorities would be more responsive to numbers and facts presented by the Society of Saint Pius X than to theological arguments. And so I would not hesitate to say that, if a canonical recognition were to come about, the doctrinal difficulties would still be emphasized by us, but together with a lesson taught by the facts themselves, tangible signs of the vitality of Tradition. And for that to happen, as I already told you in 2006, concerning the stages in our dialogue with Rome, we must have “faith in the Traditional Mass, the Mass that demands in and of itself integrity of doctrine and of the sacraments, the assurance of all spiritual fruitfulness in the service of souls”.

DICI: The year 2012 is not 1988, the year of your episcopal consecration. In 2009 the excommunications were lifted, in 2007 it was officially acknowledged that the Tridentine Mass had “never been abrogated”, but now some members of the Society lament the fact that the Church has not yet converted. Is their a priori refusal of a canonical recognition due to forty years of an exceptional situation, resulting in a certain inability to understand submission to authority?

Bishop Fellay: What is happening these days clearly shows some of our weaknesses with regard to the dangers that are created by the situation in which we find ourselves. One of the great dangers is to end up inventing an idea of the Church that appears ideal, but is in fact not found in the real history of the Church. Some claim that in order to work “safely” in the Church, she must first be cleansed of all error. This is what they say when they declare that Rome must convert before any agreement, or that its errors must first be suppressed so that we can work. But that is not the reality. It is enough to look at the Church’s past: often, and almost always, we see that there are widespread errors in the Church. Now the reforming saints did not leave the Church in order to combat these errors. Our Lord taught us that there would always be weeds until the end of time. Not just the good crop, not only the wheat.

At the time of the Arians, the bishops labored in the midst of errors to convince those who were mistaken about the truth. They did not say that they wanted to be outside, as some say now. Of course, we must always be very careful about these expressions, “inside”, “outside”, because we are of the Church and we are Catholic. But can we for that reason refuse to convince those who are in the Church, on the pretext that they are full of errors? Look at what the saints did! If the Good Lord allows us to be in a new situation, in close combat in the service of the truth.... This is the reality that Church history presents to us. The Gospel compares Christians to yeast; and do we want the dough to rise without us being in the dough?

In this situation, which some currently depict as an impossible situation, we are being asked to come and work just as all the reforming saints of all times did. Certainly that does not do away with the danger. But if we have sufficient freedom to act, to live and to grow, this must be done. I really think that this must be done, on the condition that we have sufficient protection.

DICI: Do you think that there are members of the Society who, consciously or not, espouse sedevacantist ideas? Are you afraid of their influence?

Bishop Fellay: Some may indeed be influenced by such ideas; that is nothing new. I do not think that there are that many of them, but they can do harm, especially by spreading false rumors. But 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.

Finding out what the Roman proposal will allow de jure and de facto

DICI: Several times you have said that the pope personally wants the canonical recognition of the Society. Do you have a recent personal assurance from the pope himself that this is truly his intention?

Bishop Fellay: 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.

DICI: The April 14 letter signed by the three other bishops of the Society was unfortunately circulated on the Internet; does the analysis that it presents correspond to the situation in the Church?

Bishop Fellay: I do not rule out the possibility of a development in their position. The first question for us who were consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre was the question of the survival of Tradition. I think that if my confreres see and understand that de jure and de facto the Roman proposal contains a genuine opportunity for the Society to “restore all things in Christ”, despite all the troubles that continue to exist in the Church today, then they will be able to readjust their judgment - that is to say, with the canonical status in hand and the facts on the table. Yes, I think so, I hope so. And we must pray for that intention.

DICI: Some people throughout the world, including members of the Society, have made use of passages from an interview that you granted to Catholic News Service; these passages seem to indicate that in your view *Dignitatis Humanae* no longer poses a difficulty.

Did the way in which this interview was edited change the meaning of what you wanted to say? What is your position on this subject in relation to what Archbishop Lefebvre taught?

Bishop Fellay: My position is that of the Society and of Archbishop Lefebvre. As usual, in such a delicate matter, we must make distinctions, and a good part of these distinctions disappeared in the televised interview that had been reduced to less than six minutes. But the written report that CNS made of my remarks recovers what I said that was not included in the broadcast version: “Although [Bishop Fellay] stopped short of endorsing Pope Benedict’s interpretation [of religious liberty] 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." In fact, I simply recalled that there is already a traditional solution to the problem posed by religious liberty, which is called tolerance. As for the Council, when they asked me the question, "Does Vatican II belong to Tradition?", I answered, "I would like to hope that that is the case" (which a faulty French translation transformed into: "I hope so.") This is quite along the lines of the distinctions made by Archbishop Lefebvre to read the Council in the light of Tradition: what agrees with Tradition, we accept; what is doubtful, we understand as Tradition has always taught it; what is opposed, we reject.

Relations of the Society of Saint Pius X with diocesan bishops

DICI: A personal prelatore is the canonical structure that you mentioned in recent statements. Now, in the Code of Canon Law, canon 297 requires not only informing diocesan bishops but obtaining their permission in order to found a work on their territory. Although it is clear that any canonical recognition will preserve our apostolate in its present state, are you inclined to accept the eventuality that future works may be possible only with the permission of the bishop in dioceses where the Society of Saint Pius X is not present today?

Bishop Fellay: There is a lot of confusion about this question, and it is caused mainly by a misunderstanding of the nature of a personal prelatore, as well as by a misreading of the normal relation between the local ordinary and the prelatore. Add to that the fact that the only example available today of a personal prelatore is Opus Dei. However, and let us say this clearly, if a personal prelatore 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? Very probably we will also have the contrary problem, in other words, we will not be able to respond to the requests that will come from the bishops who are friendly to us. I am thinking of one bishop who could ask us to take charge of the formation of future priests in his diocese.

In no way would our relations be like those of a religious congregation with a bishop; rather they would be those of one bishop with another bishop, just like with the Ukrainians and the Armenians in the diaspora. And therefore if a difficulty is not resolved, it would go to Rome, and there would then be a Roman intervention to settle the problem.

Let it be said in passing that what was reported on the Internet concerning my remarks on this subject in Austria last month is entirely false.

DICI: If there is a canonical recognition, what would happen to the chapels affiliated with the Society and independent of the diocese? Would the bishops of the Society continue to administer Confirmation and provide the Holy Oils?

Bishop Fellay: If they work with us, there will be no problem: it will be exactly as it is now. If not, everything will depend on what these chapels mean by independence.

DICI: Will there be a difference in your relations with the Ecclesia Dei communities?

Bishop Fellay: The first difference will be that they will be obliged to stop treating us as schismatics. As for future development, it is clear that some will draw closer to us, since they already approve of us discreetly; some others, no. Time will tell how Tradition will develop in this new situation. We have great expectations for the traditional apostolate, just as some important personages in Rome do, and the Holy Father himself. We have great hopes that Tradition will develop with our arrival.

DICI: Again, if there is a canonical recognition, will you give some cardinals in the Curia or some 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 favor of Tradition and the conservative cardinals will come closer. One can foresee a whole development, without knowing the particular details. And certainly there will be difficulties, too, which is altogether normal. 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.

DICI: While awaiting the Roman decision, what are your interior dispositions? What dispositions would you wish for the priests and the faithful who are devoted to Tradition?

Bishop Fellay: In 1988, when Archbishop Lefebvre announced that he would consecrate four bishops, some encouraged him to do it and others tried to dissuade him from it. But our founder kept the peace, since he had nothing in view but the will of God and the good of the Church. Today these are the same interior dispositions that we should have. Like its holy Patron, the Society of Saint Pius X has the desire to “restore all things in Christ”. Some say that now is not the time, while others on the contrary say that this is the opportune moment. For my part, I know only one thing: it is always the moment to do God’s will, and He makes it known to us at an opportune time, provided that we are receptive to His inspirations. For this reason, I asked the priests to renew the consecration of the Society of Saint Pius X to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on His feast day, June 15, and to prepare for it by a novena, during which the litanies of the Sacred Heart will be recited in all our houses. Everyone can join in asking for the grace to become docile instruments of the restoration of all things in Jesus Christ.

(DICI no. 256 dated 8th June, 2012)

Letter of Bp. Fellay to Benedict XVI

17th June 2012

Menzingen,
Sunday 17th June 2012

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 will not be get through.

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 prelatore, 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.

+ **Bernard Fellay**

Letter of Fr. Thouvenot, Secretary General of the SSPX to Priests of the SSPX

Menzingen
25th June, 2012

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. Mgr. 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.

Open Letter to Fr. Thouvenot

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 supports 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.

SSPX General Chapter Statement

14th July, 2012

(Source: <http://www.dici.org/en/news/society-of-st-pius-x-general-chapter-statement/>)

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, amidst a Church in crisis and a world which distances itself farther from God and His law with each passing day.

We wish to express our gratitude to each and every member of our Society: priests, brothers, sisters, third order members; to the religious communities close to us and also to our dear faithful, for their constant dedication and for their fervent prayers on the occasion of this Chapter, marked by frank exchanges of views and by a very fruitful common work. Every sacrifice and pain accepted with generosity has contributed to overcome the difficulties which the Society has encountered in recent times. 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 normalization. We have decided that, in that case, an extraordinary Chapter with deliberative vote will be convened beforehand.

We must never forget that the sanctification of souls always starts within ourselves. It is the fruit of a faith which becomes vivifying and operating by the work of charity, according to the words of St. Paul: “For we can do nothing against the truth: but for the truth” (cf. II Cor., XIII, 8), and “as Christ also loved the church and delivered himself up for it... that it should be holy and without blemish” (cf. Eph. V, 25 s.).

The Chapter believes that the paramount duty of the Society, in the service which it intends to offer to the Church, is to continue, with God’s help, to profess the Catholic Faith in all its purity and integrity, with a determination matching the intensity of the constant attacks to which this very Faith is subjected nowadays.

For this reason it seems opportune that we reaffirm our faith in the Roman Catholic Church, the unique Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ, outside of which there is no salvation nor possibility to find the means leading to salvation; our faith in its monarchical constitution, desired by Our Lord Himself, by which the supreme power of government over the universal Church belongs only to the Pope, Vicar of Christ on earth; our faith in the universal Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of both the natural and the supernatural orders, to Whom every man and every society must submit.

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. We find our sure guide in this uninterrupted Magisterium which, by its teaching authority, transmits the revealed Deposit of Faith in perfect harmony with the truths that the entire Church has professed, always and everywhere.

The Society finds its guide as well in the constant Tradition of the Church, which transmits and will transmit until the end of times the teachings required to preserve the Faith and the salvation of souls, while waiting for the day when an open and serious debate will be possible which may allow the return to Tradition of the ecclesiastical authorities.

We wish to unite ourselves to the other Christians persecuted in different countries of the world who are now suffering for the Catholic Faith, some even to the extent of martyrdom. Their blood, shed in union with the Victim of our altars, is the pledge for a true renewal of the Church in *capite et membris*, according to the old saying *sanguis martyrum semen christianorum*.

“Finally, we turn our eyes to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is also jealous of the privileges of her Divine Son, jealous of His glory, of His Kingdom on earth as in Heaven. How often has she intervened for the defence, even the armed defence, of Christendom against the enemies of the Kingdom of Our Lord! We entreat her to intervene today to chase the enemies out from inside the Church who are trying to destroy it more radically than its enemies from outside. May she deign to keep in the integrity of the Faith, in the love of the Church, in devotion to the Successor of Peter, all the members of the Society of St. Pius X and all the priests and faithful who labour alongside the Society, in order that she may both keep us from schism and preserve us from heresy.

“May St. Michael the Archangel inspire us with his zeal for the glory of God and with his strength to fight the devil.

“May St. Pius X share with us a part of his wisdom, of his learning, of his sanctity, to discern the true from the false and the good from the evil in these times of confusion and lies.”

(Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre; Albano, October 19, 1983).

Given at Ecône, on the 14th of July of the Year of the Lord 2012.

SSPX General Chapter 2012 Resolution “Six Conditions”

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 normalisation 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

‘Kirchliche Umschau’ interview with Fr. Niklaus Pfluger (First Assistant of the SSPX)

16th October, 2012

(“An interview with Father Niklaus Pfluger, First Assistant General of the Society of St. Pius X, on the present situation of the Society.” DICI English Translation: <http://www.dici.org/en/documents/interview-with-father-pfluger/>)

Kirchliche Umschau: Just a few months ago, the Vatican seemed to be on the verge of granting canonical recognition to the Society. It seems now that all efforts were in vain. Bishop Müller, the new Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, suggested as much in several recent interviews.

Father Niklaus Pfluger: All efforts were not in vain, but an agreement in the near future is improbable. In both our estimation and that of the Curia, any agreement would be pointless unless we are on the same page about what the Faith really means. This common understanding was to be expressed in a “doctrinal declaration”, which we took ample time in drawing up, and in April 2012, Bishop Fellay, our Superior General, presented a preliminary, informal draft. But, to our great surprise, this text was rejected by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. So we are back to square one.

Kirchliche Umschau: How do you account for Rome’s change of direction?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: In Rome there is a group strongly opposed to a canonical regularization for the Society. Such an official recognition would in effect be a sign that the post-Vatican II era is outdated and that a new chapter has begun. Of course, this would not suit the agenda of the Council’s supporters. For them, official recognition of the Society of St. Pius X would be not merely an insult, but also a questioning of the Council’s status, therefore a collapse. It appears that the Council’s adherents prevailed.

Kirchliche Umschau: Do you think that there could be a new development?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Not just think—I know! The facts are what they are. The Church everywhere in the world, with some rare exceptions, is undergoing a process of self-destruction, and not just in Europe. In Latin America, for example, things don’t seem to be any better. Where the economy is relatively strong, as in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States, the external structures remain. But the loss of the Faith can be seen everywhere. Now, without the Faith, there is no Church. In Germany, the bishops recently sent a clear message: the right to collect taxes from Church members is more important than 120,000 Catholics leaving the Church every year. We are witnessing a march to destruction unseen in history, a rising tide which not even the bishops can stem, using, as they do, tactics devoid of the spirit of Faith. Joseph Ratzinger, as a Council father 50 years ago, spoke of a Church, “imbued with the spirit of paganism,” which the Council did its part to usher in. I am convinced that this turn of events, on the one hand, will bring the bishops to a more sober frame of mind, and, on the other hand, will leave only the conservatives holding fast, meaning those who quite simply wish to believe as the Church has always believed, and to persevere in their Catholic Faith. With those holding fast, we will no longer need to argue. Agreement in the Faith will soon follow.

Kirchliche Umschau: You are insinuating that the tide of self-destruction will engulf liberal Catholics. But the liberals see things differently. They want even more reforms to assure the survival of the living Church.

Father Niklaus Pfluger: I am inventing nothing. I see events and where they lead. Which religious order or diocese has younger members to ensure its future growth, and which ones are dying out? We can observe that decline and dissolution are most apparent in those places where the so-called conciliar reforms are most eagerly followed. I don't deny that, in the arena of public opinion—and on the parish level—the liberal approach is more acceptable. But the Church does not live by social acceptance or by human applause. She derives her energy from men and women who believe and practice their Faith, who are prepared to renounce worldly pleasures to become priests, monks, or nuns. These latter are conspicuously absent among the liberals, and that is why they now want to receive priestly ordination, but of course without celibacy, without any self-denial. And they naively expect to increase their vocations by lowering the standards!

Kirchliche Umschau: Do you foresee a new excommunication of the Society's bishops, or even of the whole Society?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: There are many who might welcome a new excommunication, but during this pope's reign, it seems highly improbable. How would they justify it? There is no "traditional heresy." We do not belong to the sedevacantists. We fully accept that the assistance of the Holy Ghost is granted to the pope and the bishops. But from Rome's standpoint, the Society was pronounced guilty of "disobedience" even when the excommunications from 1988 were later withdrawn. How would they justify new ecclesiastical penalties? For refusing the Council? In the Credo none of the articles state: "I believe in the Second Vatican Council...!" The imposing reality of the facts just mentioned should be more important than the discussions. We find today a new generation of young priests, who slowly but surely discover the Old Mass, and through it, the Catholic Faith in its entirety, and the authentic priesthood. But in many cases we find young Catholics interested in the Faith, who nearly always discover it outside of their parishes. These honest souls are very impressed by traditional doctrine and worship, even if they still attend the New Mass. They observe the Society, follow it with interest, seek to contact us, ask for our publications, and stay in communication with us. The same holds for the Ecclesia Dei communities, and among diocesan priests, who, thanks to the *Motu Proprio* of 2007, have begun to celebrate the Tridentine Mass. We are more than just a Society with almost 600 priests; our influence is deeply felt in the Church, and particularly in those circles which have a future. If the Romans want to save face, they will wisely avoid an excommunication which they will soon have to revoke.

Kirchliche Umschau: So there is still a chance to regularize the Society, but it seems that the bottom line is to "recognize the Council."

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Of course we recognize that there was a Second Vatican Council. Archbishop Lefebvre himself was a Council father. Nonetheless, we must admit that not only the post-conciliar reforms, but also certain texts of the Council itself are in contradiction with important doctrines already defined by the Church. Certain ambiguities and novelties are at the heart of the present dissolution taking place within the Church. For Rome, it is unacceptable that we speak of "the errors of the Council." You

see, we criticized the Council while it was everywhere being celebrated and when the Church enjoyed a deeper faith and vitality than it does today. Why would we suddenly make an about-face, when our warnings and criticisms have been vindicated over time? The sad reality is that, 50 years after the Council, Archbishop Lefebvre's predictions were far from exaggerated. In the 1970s, due to the enthusiasm and naive optimism of the moment, nobody could have imagined that the Catholic bishops would rally in favour of homosexuality, the propagation of Islam, and the dissolution of marriage, which unfortunately is now the order of the day! The Vatican is faced with the ruins of the Church, which was at one time so beautiful and strong. But now there is no true renewal, no relief in sight. A realistic evaluation of new charismatic communities, which were extolled in the last decades as signs of vitality, should serve instead as warning signs. I don't understand why there hasn't been an honest and thorough investigation of the causes of the present situation in the Church. The Church is destroying herself, and silencing all discussion of the problem will not make the problem go away. Pretending that the Council is not to blame for the post-conciliar crisis is burying one's head in the sand.

Kirchliche Umschau: Since you seem so little disposed to compromise, why do you still hold discussions with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Because the pope and Rome are realities inseparable from the Faith. The loss of faith in the Church's structures—a loss of faith from which we have been spared, thanks be to God—is only one aspect of the crisis in the Church. For our part, we suffer also from a defect: the fact of our canonical irregularity. The status of the post-conciliar Church is imperfect, nor is our status the ideal.

Kirchliche Umschau: Are you referring to members of your community who refuse the discussions with Rome?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Yes, but they are few, very few. The prolonged period of separation has led certain members to confusion in theology. Deep down, these persons set faith in opposition to law, as if union with the pope, the primacy of the pope, were just a minor question of law.

Separating the legitimacy of the pope from the Faith, and reducing his legitimacy to a merely juridical question, is a sign of great danger. Finally, it comes from a Protestant view of the Church. But the Church is visible. The papacy belongs to the domain of Faith.

We ourselves, Catholics faithful to Tradition, suffer from the crisis in two ways. We participate in this crisis, albeit on a different and higher level, as I see it. There is no denying the obligation to take an active part in overcoming the crisis. And this combat begins with us, by desiring to overcome our abnormal canonical status.

Kirchliche Umschau: So we are back to square one. Why not just go along with Rome?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Because we cannot exchange an imperfect status for one that is even less perfect. Union with Rome is supposed to be an improvement, not a mutilation. Having to omit certain truths of the Faith, as well as being forbidden to criticize various doubtful and liberal positions: all this would be tantamount to a mutilation. We will not go along with that.

Kirchliche Umschau: The General Chapter was held in July. What position was taken by members of the Chapter?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: We laid down six guidelines to be met before any reunion with Rome. These were so many touchstones which restated the points to which we have always held fast. Our position was reinforced once more.

Kirchliche Umschau: On the Internet, there is a debate over this issue. Thundering condemnations are hurled at the Society's leaders, who are accused of treason.

Father Niklaus Pfluger: You are quoting Bishop Williamson, who was excluded from the General Chapter by the great majority of superiors. That shows how strongly united we are.

Kirchliche Umschau: But you have a problem of communication. Judging by certain forums over the Internet, the situation couldn't be worse.

Father Niklaus Pfluger: It is true that the Internet calls for, even requires, a new form of communication. We are obliged—just as the Vatican is—to go beyond the printed publications in use until now. But surely there are simple souls who are easily misled by sowers of discord, who themselves are widely misinformed by what they read on the Internet. Our priests appealed to the faithful not to go on these discussion sites which are often very rude, and not to let themselves be troubled and upset by the rumours and manoeuvrings found on the Internet. We will use the available means of communication from now on, including the Internet.

Kirchliche Umschau: Certain groups have targeted Bishop Fellay himself.

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Bishop Fellay has certainly done more for the cause of Catholics faithful to Tradition than all those who doubt him, criticize him, and even accuse him of treason. For several years, he has conducted relations with Rome prudently and skilfully; never did he act impulsively, nor did he let himself be provoked or lose patience. Today we have the Tridentine Mass available to any priest; we have seen the lifting of the “excommunications” which were inveighed against us in 1988; we have had the discussions on the problems of the Council. And, as an Austrian bishop admits, we have brought the Council back on the table for debate. Thus, as a result, the Council is no longer sacrosanct and its glory turns to dust. And all this remains true notwithstanding the litanies of praises heaped on the Second Vatican Council by the 50 year jubilee.

Our Superior General has accomplished a great deal, because he persevered in the negotiations and faithfully presented our theological positions. On that score, I observe that he has only one aim in view in this crisis of the Church, namely to preserve the Faith and to serve the Church with our whole heart.

Kirchliche Umschau: One question remains. Why is it that Bishop Fellay seems to have done nothing against the smear campaign mounted against him these last few months over the Internet?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Patience, kindness, and generosity appear to many as weaknesses, but this is not so. Faced with repeated attacks and harassment over the Internet, we do not abandon our values and our principles. We deal with plotting and intrigues according to the laws of the Church. This may seem like procrastination which can

be annoying to some, but it can't be done any other way if we don't want to betray our own ideals. I would like to make this clear: let no one imagine that he can criticize authority with impunity.

Kirchliche Umschau: What does this mean specifically?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: Bishop Williamson has been given fair warning. This is a sad moment in the history of our Society. If he continues his Internet campaign against the Society and its Superior General, then his expulsion from the Society cannot be avoided. Besides his false ideas, he has plotted under cover. The veritable tragedy is the fact that for years he has not accepted the authority of the Superior General, but has assigned to himself a God-given mission. Before the General Chapter, he rallied priests and faithful to rebellion. For a Catholic bishop, this is very serious.

Kirchliche Umschau: The Society's purpose is not limited to negotiations with Rome. What other fields of apostolate do you envision?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: The West has lost the Faith. One reason for this loss is the fact that the Church is no longer presenting the Faith, no longer brings it to the world. Modern churchmen almost seem to be ashamed of their faith, which is why they campaign for the defence of the environment, the redistribution of wealth, and aid to development. We cannot just wait for them to come to their senses. We must be more active in society, have a greater influence in public, and rebuild Christendom with prudence, humility, and charity. As Our Lord appealed to those of His time: do not fear!

Kirchliche Umschau: Where do you see the important challenges to face?

Father Niklaus Pfluger: We witness presently a world-wide persecution of Christians in the East. Our task is to draw our attention to our persecuted brethren and to come to their aid. The General Chapter's Declaration made this clear. In the Western countries, parents are having fewer and fewer children because family values are declining. The laws of the State pose greater threats to the family, the building block of society. One major task is aid to families. We must give our support to large families, lest they be marginalized by society at large. But our primary duty remains—as re-emphasized by the General Chapter's Declaration in July—the defence and preservation of the Faith, and specifically the formation of truly Catholic priests. That is the best way we can be of service to the Church.

On the personal level, sanctification is called for. Prayer, religious instruction, and the distribution of the sacraments are one aspect; an exemplary life and fraternal charity are the other aspect. They go together. By accomplishing this task, we help to save our own souls and those of our neighbour. Yes, indeed, we have known such moments where we have a real foretaste of the harmony and happiness of heaven. Materialism, atheism, coupled with false religions: all these are standing more and more in the way of a healthy Catholic life. We are speaking here of a decisive mission for the Society: to help believers of good will to keep the Faith in times of difficulty, and to live that faith. This is our task at the present time, and a magnificent and sublime one at that, if we use our God-given talents to spread the fire of divine love to the ends of the earth. This is only possible through a deep and vibrant faith.

Kirchliche Umschau: Thank you for the interview, Father.

About this Booklet:

This booklet aims to be entirely neutral. It contains not one word or sentence of opinion or polemic, rumour or conjecture, attack or defence.

The only authors are those stated for each document. Those who have created this booklet cannot in any way be called its “authors” - all we have done is to collect all the various documents - all of which have been publicly available on the internet for some time - into one place, to put them one beside the other for greater ease of reading.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide as many people as possible with original, undisputed primary source material regarding the situation between the Society of St. Pius X and Rome since the start of 2012. There are no shortage of opinions to be found amongst the laity, but what cannot always be found are the simple facts. Since surely nobody, whatever their opinion, has anything to fear from the facts of a case being better or more widely known, it is our hope that this effort will be looked upon favourably by all Catholics, whatever their opinion.

In seeking to bring to you the facts, it is our hope that you, the reader, can arrive at an informed judgement and make up your own mind accordingly. In a spirit of sincere honesty, we are open to criticism, query or suggestion.

This booklet was brought to you free of charge. If, having read it, you find that it has in any way proved useful to you, a donation however small (online or by post), would be greatly appreciated and would allow us to continue our apostolate in future.

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