

THE NEW « HERMENEUTICS » OF BISHOP FELLAY

Has the Society changed its position?

Father Juan Carlos Ortiz



Despite some seemingly reassuring recent discourses, the Society of St Pius X continues to go through the most serious internal crisis, in its complexity and in its seriousness, which it has never known.

This crisis is particularly **GRAVE** because it derives from serious failings on the part of Bishop Fellay and his two Assistants, in the **DOCTRINAL** field as well as in the domain of **PRUDENCE**. This is the main cause of the concern of members of the Society.

Some are tempted to believe that because so far there has not been a practical agreement with Rome the danger is over ... But let us not conclude so quickly!

Despite the appearances, the superiors of the Society **HAVE NOT RETRACTED** their new concept concerning the role of Tradition in the Church and in particular the relationship with the conciliar church. In addition, they are far from having taking any personal responsibility for this internal crisis caused by their imprudent actions.

It is worthwhile to look closely at two aspects of this internal crisis in order not to underestimate the negative effects that **CONTINUE** to be produced in the Society and in the ranks of Tradition.

The first aspect concerns the **MAIN ROLE** which the Society plays in the resistance to the conciliar church and the preservation of Catholic Tradition. If the Society falls, the last bastion of Tradition will fall.

The second aspect concerns the **GRAVE CHANGE** made by Menzingen as to the principal role of the Society in the forefront of responding to this crisis of the Church: this new role is clearly in opposition to the one given by Archb. Lefebvre.

However, this change is very subtle and can be difficult to see for some because while they are claiming that they do not want to give up the doctrinal combat, these superiors have made the **CANONICAL RECOGNITION** the **ESSENTIAL PRIORITY** of the Society. Some doctrinal aspects are still in their agenda, but they are placed on the **SECOND LEVEL**. Thus, everything must be "redefined" according to this new priority.

This change betrays in them the same **"LEGALISM"** which has afflicted all the traditional communities that have rallied to Rome since 1988. Like them, they feel "guilty" because they have been "excluded" by the official church and they dream of being "reconciled" at all costs.

We know the "hermeneutics of continuity" of Benedict XVI by which he has conceived a new interpretation of tradition that would **INTEGRATE THE CONCILIAR CHURCH INTO THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH**.

The authorities of Menzingen, in order to justify their change of position, also have conceived a new **"HERMENEUTICS"** or "reinterpretation" of the main role of the Society, by which they want **TO INTEGRATE THEIR TRADITION INTO THE CONCILIAR CHURCH**.

This "hermeneutic" demands that the SSPX authorities make a distorted "re-thinking" of what Archbishop Lefebvre understood as being a priority for the Society; for example, they only quote words he spoke **BEFORE** the break with Rome in 1988, or his more conciliatory words concerning the official authorities of the Church.

Thus, what was formerly vigorously rejected in the conciliar church is now "rethought" with a view toward accepting, if not totally, at least "partially" or "under certain conditions", conciliar ideas.

It should be noted that the authorities of the Society betray this new attitude, more by what **THEY DO NOT SAY** in regard to the conciliar authorities, by **OMISSION**, rather than by direct speech.

Except for a few more firm phrases here and there (to reassure the "harder" line among us), we can see a long-lasting "positive" attitude towards the teachings and the actions of the conciliar authorities, and in particular of Benedict XVI.

A recent example of this "softening" is certainly the boycott by Menzingen of some books deemed "too hard," books written by Bishop Tissier and by Fr. Calderón on the conciliar church. Another example would be the recent Symposium of The Angelus, in the United States District, which chose as this year's theme "The Papacy" when we are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the disastrous opening of Vatican II!

Some then might ask, for what purpose and by what right should this new direction in the Society be denounced?

I know the Society and its purpose, having been a member priest for 28 years. I deeply love the Society in which I took a commitment for life. I have personally known the Founder, who ordained me, and whose writings and words I have **ALWAYS** continued to study. It is because of my love for the Society and by filial piety towards Archb. Lefebvre that I think it is my duty to speak out publicly.

It appears clear to me that for several years there has been **A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE**, mainly among Bishop Fellay and his two Assistants, concerning THE MAIN ROLE of the Society of Saint Pius X in these times of crisis in the Church: to fully preserve the Catholic Tradition by fighting against the enemies of the Church both inside and outside.

The main goal of the Society of Saint Pius X in this crisis of the Church cannot be changed since that goal was clearly established by its Founder in many of his writings, sermons, lectures and actions, especially after 1988. Consequently, to change this purpose on important

points would be **TO DEPART GRAVELY** from its Founder, and thus to expose the Society **TO COMMIT SUICIDE**, by falling into the hands of the modernist Rome, which the Society always fought since its foundation.

Experience shows us that all those who strayed from the line drawn by Archbishop Lefebvre eventually finished by betraying the combat for Tradition.

This change in the Society cannot be justified, because in recent years we have not seen in the conciliar church **ANY** important doctrinal or practical change in the sense of a **REAL** return to Tradition by the condemnation of the conciliar errors and reforms.

I would like to support what I have just said by showing how the current leadership's affirmations and actions are **COMPLETELY CONTRARY** to what Archbishop Lefebvre clearly stated. And even if Archbishop Lefebvre did not explicitly speak about some of them, these changes are gravely in opposition to the **COMMON GOOD** of the Society and to the basic **COMMON SENSE**.

1. A FALSE NOTION ON THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

Firstly, it clearly appears that **THE STARTING POINT** of their deviation lies in **A WRONG NOTION ABOUT THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH**. Their public statements describe the Society as "missing" something fundamental in relation to the "visibility" of the Church. They often speak about the Society as being in an "irregular," "abnormal," "illegal" situation, although all of this, we know, is only **APPARENT**.

Father Pfluger clearly stated this error in a recent interview: "As for us, we also suffer a **DEFAULT**, because of our canonical **IRREGULARITY**. It is not only the state of the post-conciliar Church which is imperfect, **SO IS OURS**." And further on: "The obligation to work actively to overcome the crisis cannot be disputed. And this work **BEGINS WITH US**, wanting to overcome our canonical state **ABNORMAL**." (Kirchliche Umschau, October 17, 2012)

The official authorities of the Church for years have stigmatized the Society with these "defects," by means of false charges and unjust condemnations, while we know, and have shown clearly by our writings and our actions, that the Society has **NEVER** left the visible perimeter of the Catholic Church or incurred any canonical crime. Therefore we do not need to surmount any ecclesial or canonical "disability" by asking to be recognized today by the conciliar church.

On this point, the authorities are repeating the same false assertions of Dom Gérard and of the "rallied" in 1988, to whom Archbishop Lefebvre (Conference September 9, 1988; Fideliter No. 66) and Fr. **SCHMIDBERGER** (Fideliter No. 65) replied pertinently a short time after the consecration of the bishops.

Bishop Fellay as well recently stated the same error in understanding the nature of the true Church: "The fact of going to Rome does not mean we agree with them. But it is the Church. And **THIS IS THE TRUE CHURCH**. In rejecting what is not good, one should not reject everything. **THIS IS THE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC.**"(Flavigny, September 2, 2012)

This astonishing statement blatantly contradicts what Archb. Lefebvre said about the conciliar church, in the conference quoted above: "... it is WE who have the marks of the visible Church. If there is still a visibility of the Church today, it is thanks to you. **THESE SIGNS ARE NOT ANYMORE AMONG THE OTHERS** [Conciliar church]."

Archbishop Lefebvre explicitly answered Dom Gérard, who invoked as a reason to join the modernist Rome, the need to join the "visible church," with these words: "The story of Dom Gérard about the visible Church is childish. **IT'S UNBELIEVABLE** that we can speak of the **VISIBLE CHURCH** about the Conciliar Church in opposition to the Catholic Church that we are trying to represent and continue."(Fideliter, n. 70 July-August 1989, p. 6)

2. TO OBTAIN OUR "LEGITIMACY" FROM THE CONCILIAR CHURCH.

As a consequence of the first error, the authorities say that it is not enough for the Society to recognize the validity of the authority of the pope and the present bishops, nor to pray publicly for them, nor recognize some legitimate acts (when they are in line with Tradition). For them we must "go further" and ask the conciliar church **TO GIVE US A "LEGITIMACY"** we are lacking!

Here again they openly deviate from Archb. Lefebvre who stated that, as the crisis in the Church continues, we did not need any recognition from the conciliar church, because the authentic legitimacy will be logically confirmed to us when the authorities of the Church will return to the sound doctrine.

Archbishop Lefebvre said that we did not need the conciliar church to give us any "legitimacy" whatever: "About which Church are we dealing with - I would like to know, - if I am dealing with the Catholic Church, or if I am dealing with another church, a counter-Church, a counterfeit Church? ... But I sincerely believe that we are dealing with **A COUNTERFEIT** of the Church, not the Catholic Church."(June 18, 1978)

3. THE NEED FOR A PRACTICAL AGREEMENT.

Then, starting from these two errors, the leaders advocate **AN ABSOLUTE NEED FOR A PRACTICAL AGREEMENT** with the current authorities, but **WITHOUT ANY PRIOR DOCTRINAL AGREEMENT**, thus contradicting what Archbishop Lefebvre had explicitly stated, especially after 1988, and what the General Chapter (which, let us remind Menzingen, has more authority than Bishop Fellay) decided in 2006. Their present search for a purely practical agreement is all the more surprising when one considers that the recent doctrinal discussions between our Theological Commission and the Vatican came to the conclusion that a doctrinal agreement with the conciliar church is **IMPOSSIBLE!**

Therefore, for the Society to search for a purely practical agreement with the actual Rome, which continues to be in error, is equivalent to committing an "operation suicide"; we will be "absorbed" by the conciliar

church, with **ALL** its structure not only rooted in the council, but working to implement the conciliar and post-conciliar reforms. We know what happened to the eight traditional communities who rallied to this conciliar church without a preliminary doctrinal accord, inevitably the same thing can be expected to happen to us...

Archbishop Lefebvre clearly placed first and foremost, especially after the consecrations of bishops, as a prerequisite to any future dialogue with the conciliar church, a solution to the **DOCTRINAL QUESTION**: "I will place the question **ON THE DOCTRINAL LEVEL**: Do you agree with the great encyclicals of all the popes who preceded you ... Are you in full communion with these Popes and with their affirmations? Do you still accept the Anti-Modernist Oath? Are you in favor of the social reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ? If you do not accept the **DOCTRINE** of your predecessors, it is useless to speak. As long as you do not agree to reform the Council considering the **DOCTRINE** of the popes who preceded you, there is no dialogue possible. It is useless. Thus the positions will be clearer."(Fideliter No. 66, Nov.-Dec. 1988, p. 12-13)

4. THE ILLUSION OF "DOING GREATER GOOD."

Then, in order to find a "positive" justification for negotiating with conciliar Rome, the SSPX authorities affirm that this purely practical agreement will allow us **TO DO A GREATER GOOD**, for being "within the visible church" they will convert the conciliar church to Tradition... This is exactly the same argument invoked by Dom Gérard and the priests of Campos to justify their reunion with the conciliar Rome!

Our Founder answered this deceptively "optimistic" perspective with great realism in an interview, saying, "Getting inside the church, what does it mean? And first of all on which Church are we speaking about? If this is about the conciliar church should we, who have fought against it for twenty years because we want the Catholic Church, return to the conciliar church supposedly **TO MAKE IT CATHOLIC**? This is a total illusion! **INFERIORS DO NOT CHANGE SUPERIORS, BUT**

SUPERIORS WHO CHANGE INFERIORS.”(Fideliter No. 70 July-August 1989)

And the **FACTS** show us that the little good that those who rallied to Rome since 1988 have done does not justify **THE GREATER EVIL** they have done by abandoning their faithful to the conciliar errors, to the new Mass, to justifications of the actions of the post-conciliar popes, etc...

5. ARE THE PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS SUFFICIENT?

Again, in order to justify this agreement, they affirm that the **PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS** set by the last General Chapter in July 2012, would be sufficient to avoid falling into the same “traps” as the rallied communities did.

But apart from the fact that these conditions are **INSUFFICIENT AND UNREALISTIC** to protect us from being "assimilated" and "neutralized" by the conciliar church, the General Chapter has forgotten the two most important conditions, clearly requested by Archbishop Lefebvre: the **CONVERSION** the official authorities of the church, namely, by their explicit condemnation of conciliar errors, and **EXEMPTION FROM THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW**.

Archbishop Lefebvre said that even if modernist Rome granted us some preliminary conditions, such conditions would be **INSUFFICIENT** to make an agreement with them. Here is what he said to Card. Ratzinger: “Your Eminence, look, even if you give us a bishop, even if you give us some autonomy from the bishops, even if you give us the entire liturgy of 1962, if you give us to continue the seminaries and the Society as we do now, **WE CANNOT WORK TOGETHER**, it's impossible, impossible, because we work in two diametrically opposed directions: you work for the de-Christianization of society, of the human person and the Church and we, we are working to Christianize. We cannot agree.” (Retreat at Ecône, September 4, 1987)

In addition, Archbishop Lefebvre put the conversion of Rome as a prerequisite to an agreement when he addressed these words to the four

future bishops: "...being confident that without delay the See of Peter will be occupied by a **PERFECTLY CATHOLIC** successor of Peter, in which hands you could deposit the grace of your episcopate in order that he confirms it." (August 29, 1987)

And concerning the Code of Canon Law, how could we keep our identity by continuing our combat, if we are under the common law of the conciliar church, which is the **NEW** code of canon law? Don't they see that the new code was specifically made to implement the conciliar reforms, but **NOT TO PRESERVE TRADITION?**

6. VATICAN II COULD BE ACCEPTABLE!

And in order to overcome the doctrinal impasse which results from the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar "magisterium," we have seen these SSPX leaders in their recent conferences, their sermons and their interviews show an explicit and repeated determination to **MINIMIZE THE CONCILIAR ERRORS** in order to prepare the minds of the faithful for reconciliation with conciliar Rome.

Did we not hear with stupefaction Bishop Fellay, in an interview with Catholic News Service, state that, "The council is presenting a religious liberty which in fact was **A VERY, VERY LIMITED ONE, VERY LIMITED,**" and also that **THE** conclusion of doctrinal discussions with Rome was that "...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."! And: "the council must be put **WITHIN** this great tradition of the Church, must be understood **WITHIN** this, and **IN CORRELANCE** with it. These are statements **WE FULLY AGREE WITH, TOTALLY, ABSOLUTELY.**" (May 11, 2012)

And the only (incomplete) revealed text concerning their last doctrinal preamble presented in Rome in April, and spoken of by Fr Pfluger in a conference, not only betrays the same desire to minimize the conciliar errors but even to **ACCEPT** them: "...the entire Tradition of the Catholic faith should be the criterion and the guide of understanding of the teachings of Vatican II, **WHICH** in turn **ILLUMINATES** some aspects of

the **LIFE** and of Church's **DOCTRINE**, implicitly present in it, not yet formulated."(St Joseph des Carmes, June 5, 2012)

Was it not the fact that they passively observed the interfaith meeting of Assisi III without **VIGOROUSLY CONDEMNING IT**, even asking some members of the Society not to do so, also a revealing sign?

And, what is of more concern is that their minimization of the errors of the council seems to come from a while back...as Bishop Fellay already stated back in 2001 (!) in an interview that: "To accept the council, **WE DO NOT HAVE A PROBLEM**," "This gives the impression that we reject all of Vatican II. However, **WE KEEP 95%** of it."(Swiss newspaper La Liberté, 11 May 2001)

Instead of listening to the repeated warnings, asking them not to sign a practical agreement, they contemptuously replied to the **LETTER OF THE THREE BISHOPS** with harsh words... insinuating that these fellow bishops were "sedevacantist," "schismatic" and were transforming the errors of Vatican II into "super heresies."

The list would be too long to enumerate of other statements of Menzingen which move in the direction of a **WEAKENING** on their doctrinal positions; the same weakening is found among other members of the Society who support the agreement. I have seen how some confreres, who I knew as once being firm in their condemnation of the council and of the post-conciliar popes, hold now "softer" positions and are very supportive of a rally to Modernist Rome...

7. GRAVE ERRORS AGAINST PRUDENCE.

In addition to the errors in their **PRINCIPLES**, we can also note **SERIOUS ERRORS OF JUDGMENT**, which were also the cause of the most serious **INTERNAL DIVISION**, in depth and extension, which the Society has ever known.

By imprudent actions, they have preferred to sacrifice the **UNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD** of the Society to follow the agenda of the modernist Rome, as they have stated in their answer to the letter of the

three other bishops of the Society: “For the **COMMON GOOD** of the Society we would prefer by far the current solution of the status quo but manifestly **ROME DOES NOT TOLERATE IT ANYMORE.**” (14 April 2012)

Bishop Fellay has also stated that it was almost "inevitable" that a part of the Society would not follow in case of an agreement with Rome: “I cannot exclude that there might be a **SPLIT** [within the Society].”(Interview to Catholic News Service) and thus he took the risk of gravely dividing the Society.

Therefore, they preferred to ignore all the **WARNINGS** coming from the three other bishops, from some superiors and members of the Society and even from our fellow Traditional communities who asked them not to sign a purely practical agreement.

This attitude has deeply shocked many members of the Society and created an internal division which has seriously undermined the leadership’s **CREDIBILITY TO GOVERN IT**, and among friendly communities undermined a confidence which has not been restored.

8. WHO DUPED WHOM ?

When we hear their explanations (excuses?) during the last months concerning the supposedly “real reasons” which have led them so far in the concessions to Modernist Rome, we see that it is not so much the Roman authorities who have deceived them, but rather that **THEY HAVE DECEIVED THEMSELVES!** For if they have decided, imprudently, to put aside the answers they got from the **OFFICIAL** Vatican channels about the true thought of the Pope, and to favor other channels, so-called “informal” ones, such a decision does not improve their reputation as **PRUDENT** superiors...

Thus they **REFUSED** to see that everything these “unofficial” channels said to them was either gossip or manipulation, because their **DESIRE** to

reach an agreement became so much an “obsession,” that they finished by believing everything! Who’s guilty? **THEY ALONE!**

How is it possible that they could act so carelessly in a so serious matter? In any institution, even a secular one, such an act leads inevitably to the resignation of the person responsible, because too much trust has been lost. “We take our responsibility,” as Fr. Pfluger threatened to do if the agreements will fail.

Actually, if they have not resigned it is because **THEY CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN AN AGREEMENT**. They have not yet learned a lesson from their actions! It is obvious that, despite some obstacles, Menzingen and the Vatican will do everything to “resuscitate” the talks. The expulsion of Bishop Williamson appears clearly as a “telltale sign” that the talks will resume, because the expulsion was, at least for the Vatican, a sine qua non condition in favor of a deal.

In addition, we find in Bishop Fellay a grave lack of **PRACTICAL JUDGMENT** about the Pope’s false ideas. How could he think that Benedict XVI would be ready in recognizing us “to put aside our acceptance of the Council,” as he wrote to him in June 2012? Did he not know that the council is “not-negotiable” for Modernist Rome? Is this naivety on his part, or is he simply believing his desires to be reality? In any case, in this he shows that **HE GRAVELY LACKS PRUDENCE** in doctrinal matters.

9. UNJUST PERSECUTIONS.

Finally, to complete their **BLINDNESS** and their **STUBBORNNESS** on the path of “reconciliation” with modernist Rome, they have undertaken **PERSECUTIONS** in order to suppress any opposition, both inside and outside the Society. Since then we have seen a series of intimidations, admonitions, mutations, delays in Holy Orders, expulsions of priests and even of one of our bishops!

They relentlessly persecute and expel people who **OPPOSE** their reunification with Modernist Rome, and at the same time they say cynically that they intend to continue their **OPPOSITION**... within the official church once they have been recognized!

In the final analysis, they have established an **AUTHORITARIAN** government, a real **DICTATORSHIP**, in the Society, in order to remove any obstacle opposing their plans of reuniting with Modernist Rome.

Thus, Bish. Fellay and his two assistants have radically changed the **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES** of the Society established by our Founder. They have also ignored major decisions of the **GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2006**, which forbade a practical agreement with the official church without previous doctrinal agreement. They wittingly ignored the **WARNINGS** of prudent people who counseled them not to make any practical agreement with Modernist Rome. They have jeopardized the **UNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD** of the Society by exposing it to a danger of compromising with the enemies of the Church. And finally, they contradict themselves by saying **THE OPPOSITE** of what they affirmed only a few years ago!

Therefore, they have betrayed the legacy of Archbishop Lefebvre, the responsibilities of their positions, the trust of thousands, and even of those who, deceived by them, continue to trust them.

They have shown a resolute willingness to lead the Society, at all costs, **TO RALLY** to our enemies.

Regardless of whether the agreement with the conciliar church has not yet been done, or will not happen immediately or perhaps never... a **GRAVE DANGER** remains for the Society, because **THEY HAVE NOT RETRACTED** the false principles which have guided their destructive actions.

I see now sadly that they, by wanting somehow to identify abusively their judgments and their decisions with the Society itself, have ultimately **CONFISCATED** it as if it were their personal property, forgetting that they were only appointed to serve for a definite time.

May God have pity on the Society!



Father Juan Carlos Ortiz