

# **-An Open Letter to Bishop Fellay from some concerned faithful of the English District.**

May 19<sup>th</sup> 2012

Your Excellency Bishop Fellay,

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

For a little while now we have been hearing talk of a practical arrangement with Rome. We are concerned at the potential danger this might pose to the integrity of the faith, our faith, and the faith of our children and grandchildren.

## **Rome's intentions towards an SSPX agreement**

Several high-ranking SSPX clerics (Fr. Pfluger, Fr. Schmidberger, and others) have stated that Rome is prepared to give the SSPX “carte blanche” - in other words, to accept the SSPX as it is, without compromise. However, in contradiction to that we have the published words of several high-ranking Romans, including the Vatican press spokesman, who make it clear that they view this as a question of the SSPX accepting the new “Vatican II” religion in order to 'return to Rome'. At the same time, we are warned that we ought to pay no heed to rumours. Since there is a contradiction between the two versions of what is being offered to the SSPX, and since a Vatican press announcement is not a rumour, are we to conclude that we ought to pay no heed to the words of Fr. Pfluger, for example?

## **Your own position regarding the Council**

We are also scandalised at your recent remarks, published across the world by CNS, that:

*“ [thanks to the doctrinal discussions with Rome] we see that many things which we would have condemned as being from the Council are in fact not from the Council”*

...and that:

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

We wish to point out that when you say “we”, you do not speak for us. Furthermore, we wonder how you can reconcile this idea that the Council taught nothing wrong, but rather was misinterpreted, with the words of Archbishop Lefebvre (in his book “They Have Uncrowned Him”, for example), or even with your own statements from not so very long ago, such as:

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

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

## **Your attitude towards Benedict XVI**

We also must confess ourselves confused, to say the least, regarding your recent statements about Benedict XVI. It has been said that nobody in the SSPX has a right to refuse if the Pope insists on a canonical accommodation. You yourself have spoken of him in terms of him being our leader in the fight for Tradition:

*“But we are not alone in working to defend the Faith ... It's the Pope himself who does it; that's his job. And if we are called to help the Holy Father, then so be it.”*

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

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

Once again, we find that in remaining faithful to the legacy of the great Archbishop, faithful to Catholic Tradition, we are placed at odds with you and your leadership. We neither desired this nor asked for it: the cause lies with you, therefore with you lies also the solution. Whatever the result, we shall not be the ones to change. We will remain faithful to Tradition, whatever the consequences.

## **Rumours, information, openness and honesty**

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

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

On the one hand, we are told that we should only get our information from the official organs of the SSPX (dici, sspx.org, pius.info etc). On the other hand, these same news organs (dici, sspx.org, pius.info) have been demonstrably hiding from their readers any facts which do not help the cause they are trying to advance (namely, the argument in favour of reaching a practical agreement with Rome). Nowhere on DICI.org, or on SSPX.org, or on pius.info will one find the recent press statements from the Vatican, nor any reference to the fact that a large proportion of the Bishops, priests and faithful of the SSPX – we believe the majority – would be against the idea of a practical agreement with Rome.

We are castigated for reading what is termed “private correspondence”, when our only desire is to put an end to rumour by making ourselves informed of the facts. The letter which the three SSPX Bishops sent to you last month did not contain any personal information, and treated only of public matters affecting the future of the SSPX, therefore it is surely somewhat disingenuous for it to be termed “private

correspondence". What is more, it does appear that there is a double standard in allowing clerics who are in favour of reaching a practical arrangement to express their personal opinions from the pulpit, whilst at the same time requiring absolute silence from those who are against such an arrangement. We therefore feel that we are justified in both reading and circulating the letter to other faithful Catholics, who like us, are concerned for the future of the SSPX, and who – but for the appearance of this letter – might feel themselves alone and confounded.

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

### **The future of the SSPX and the future of Tradition**

When you became Superior General, in 1994, you inherited a Society of St. Pius X which was strongly united, fervent, devout and unworldly, which knew what it stood for and why, and which had a clear vision of where it was going. Our Lord entrusted this Society into your hands. Were he to ask you now to render an account of what you have done with that same Society, what would you be able to show Him? What sort of a Society will you bequeath to your successor?

It is abundantly clear to us that Rome has not converted, that Rome is as steeped in Modernism as ever it was. What is not clear to us is what the leadership of the SSPX is doing or why - your own attitude, beliefs or motives. Archbishop Lefebvre taught us admirably well, both through his writing and in the personal example which he gave to the world, that the duty of Catholics is not one of merely believing in a passive way. It is also apostolic, of converting the world, and of pointing out and denouncing error when one sees it. In his own day, Archbishop Lefebvre denounced the various errors spread by Church authorities, including the Pope. He founded the SSPX not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end: the end being the continuation of Tradition and the denouncing of error. He did not found the SSPX in order for it to “... *not be provocative [or] aggressive,*” to use some more of your recent words. We are perplexed and dismayed that certain members of the SSPX appear to see a motive, an end, which outranks that of preaching the Truth and denouncing error, and are thus willing to go silent in the face of the many errors and evils of our day.

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

St. Pius X, ora pro nobis!