

Archbishop's Aim

June 11, 2016

In this fateful month for the Society of St Pius X, June 2016, when we hear that some 30 Superiors will meet in order to decide whether to accept Rome's latest offer of official recognition, it is surely a good moment to correct misunderstandings as to the intentions of its Founder, Archbishop Lefebvre (1905–1991). Some claim that his course was unsteady, that he “zig-zagged,” veering from side to side. Others pretend that above all he sought Rome's recognition for his Society. Without having to claim that he was infallible one needs to remind the forgetful Society of what he was all about: both errors are corrected by the same observation, namely that his basic motivation was to glorify God and to save souls by serving God's one true Church by defending the Faith, and to defend the Faith by founding the Society of St Pius X to form priests who would preserve the doctrine, sacraments and Mass of Catholic Tradition.

Now the great obstacle in the Archbishop's way was the churchmen of Vatican II whose main priority was (and remains) to please not God but modern man, who has moved far away from God. So, now as then, they turned away from God (at least objectively, subjectively God knows), and sought to change God's Church and her Faith, doctrine, sacraments and Mass by a humanistic “renewal.”

In disgust or despair the Archbishop might have taken himself off into a corner with his Society, and left these churchmen to perish with their Conciliar Revolution. But firstly, from the 1974 Roman visitation of Écône onwards, they came after him with his work because they could not let it demonstrate their perversity. They could not afford to leave him alone. And secondly, if he could do anything to bring Tradition to the Romans and the Romans back to Tradition, it would benefit through them the worldwide Church and not just his little

Society. For indeed, however misguided they were, they still occupied "the seat of Moses" (cf. Mt XXIII, 2), and so from 1975 onwards the Archbishop went to and from Rome, until their prevarication in 1988 over granting another bishop to the Society proved once and for all that they could no longer be spoken to with words but only with actions.

But "Stat Crux dum Volvitur Orbis," meaning that the Cross stands still while the whole world is in revolution. Anchored in Tradition, the Archbishop was basically standing still, but he was dealing with churchmen and a situation of the Church which had slipped that anchor and was henceforth adrift. So as they drifted left, so he needed to steer right, whereas if they seemed to veer right again (as in late 1987 and early 1988) so he veered left (e.g. in the Protocol of May 5, 1988), but it was always their veering or the evolving situation (e.g. the deteriorating Novus Ordo Mass) that determined his "zig-zagging," and not the other way round. His own aim was steady – the defence of the Faith.

It was for this same reason that, once the churchmen's prevarication on that same 5th of May in 1988 was clear beyond any reasonable doubt, then after a night's reflection he renounced on May 6th that Protocol which could have obtained Rome's official recognition for the Society, and he cut off all merely diplomatic relations with Rome, not primarily to save his Society but to protect Catholic Tradition for the entire Church. Doctrine had to take over from diplomacy, and from then on until his death two and a half years later, even while behaving with respect towards the Church officials whom he had castigated as "antichrists," he declared that the Faith had to come first in the form of the pre-Conciliar Popes' anti-liberal and anti-modern doctrinal Encyclicals. By his fidelity to Church doctrine he was in the driving-seat, and the Romans knew it. What a contrast with his successors at the head of the Society, fawning on the betrayers of Church doctrine and Tradition, and humiliated by them! Let these

successors of the Archbishop just read again what was like his
farewell address to them of September 6, 1990.

Kyrie eleison.