

Archbishop's Legacy – I

March 26, 2016

Yesterday, March 25, was the 25th anniversary of the death of a great man of God, Archbishop Lefebvre, to whom so many Catholics keeping the Faith today have such a great debt. When in the 1960's the Revolutionary demons of the modern world succeeded in bringing under their yoke the mass of Catholic churchmen either during or after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), it was the Archbishop who almost single-handed stood by that Catholic Truth which Catholic Authority, blinded or cowed, was abandoning. For indeed to obey that Authority given over to the principles of the Revolution, Catholics had to abandon the Truth of the Church's unchanging Tradition. Or else, to remain faithful to that Truth, they had to enter into "disobedience" to the Church Authorities.

Of course neither the Archbishop nor the Society of St Pius X which he founded in 1970 were in real disobedience, because Catholic Authority is the indispensable servant of Catholic Truth: indispensable, because Truth without Authority is torn to pieces amid the warring opinions of fallible men, but servant, because Authority is a means and not an end, the means of protecting and preserving that infallible Truth of Christ which alone can save souls. To this immutable Church Tradition Archbishop Lefebvre remained faithful to the end, yet without scorning or defying those Church Authorities which condemned him to the end. On the contrary he did all he could have done, in fact at a given moment, on his own admission, even more than he should have done, to help them to see the Truth and serve it, for the good of the whole Church, but in vain.

That is when, to ensure the survival of the Truth of salvation, in June of 1988 he consecrated four bishops without that permission of Church Authorities which is normally necessary. They must have hoped that his proceeding without

their permission would spell the ruin of his Society, but on the contrary it flourished, because by now a significant number of souls had climbed out of their pre-Conciliar "obedience" to understand that Truth has to come first, and that truthful bishops are essential to the survival of the Church's Truth.

But what happened to the Society which he left behind him when he died two and a half years later? His Catholic wisdom and personal charisma were no longer there to protect them from the magnetic pull of pre-Conciliar "obedience," which took the form of seemingly reasonable propositions of a diplomatic compromise between Conciliar Authority and Catholic Tradition. False "obedience," preferring Authority to Truth, now crept back at the top of the Society from which the Archbishop had exorcised it, and within a few more years his Society was hardly recognisable as its misleaders went to Rome, cap in hand, begging for official recognition from the Church Authorities.

Now Truth has no right to put itself in a position of begging for anything from a group of liars – "Catholicism is Revolutionary" is a dreadful lie – but the Society's misleaders, then and now, justified their humiliating of Truth by appealing to the Archbishop's example. For years, they said, he went down to Rome seeking official approval of the Society, and they were doing nothing else. But what might have seemed similar was in reality quite different. While they were going down to Rome in pursuit of some political agreement, by which, as became clear at the latest in the spring of 2012, they were ready to compromise doctrine, on the contrary the Archbishop only ever went down to Rome for the good of the Faith and the Church. For him the official approval of the Society by Church Authority was only ever a means to help that Authority back towards Tradition and Truth, and when that Authority in the spring of 1988 demonstrated once and for all its refusal to look after Tradition, then the Archbishop broke

off all negotiations and diplomatic contacts, and roundly declared that they would only resume when Rome returned to doctrinal Truth. In fact the Archbishop's successors had never understood him. And today? See next week's "Comments."

Kyrie eleison.