

Fortieth Anniversary

November 6, 2010

Last Monday was a moment to be immensely thankful, and somewhat wary. It was the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Society of St. Pius X, when, on behalf of the Universal Church, Bishop Charriere of Geneva, Lausanne and Fribourg gave his official approval to the Society's Statutes, submitted to him some months beforehand by Archbishop Lefebvre.

To anybody striving to keep and to live by the Catholic Faith amidst today's soft global apostasy, the occasion for thankfulness is clear. Ever since Vatican II, the official Church has been in a state of collapse which is still going on, because the leading churchmen are clinging to the novelties of that Council by which man is to be put in the place of God. So the Catholic people are still being misled, and the pyramidal structure of God's Church is crumbling from top to bottom.

Therefore for a devout but pyramidally-minded churchman to see the need for a minor counter-pyramid to be constructed within the falling ruins of the major pyramid was a first miracle. For him to succeed in erecting that minor pyramid beneath the papal weight of the collapsing major pyramid was a second miracle. And for the Archbishop's successors to have upheld the minor pyramid for nearly 20 years since his death, is a third miracle. Now the SSPX has no monopoly on the defence of the Faith – God forbid! – but it has for many years up to today been the backbone of that defence. We owe boundless thanks to God for his goodness to every one of us that understands what a gift the SSPX has been.

But we must also be wary. Father Barrielle (1897–1983) was the Spiritual Director at the SSPX's first seminary at Ecône in Switzerland from its early days, and I can remember how often he quoted words of his beloved master, Father Vallet (1883

-1947), great preacher of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, and moulder of them in that five-day form so profitable to followers of the SSPX all over the world – through their transmission to SSPX seminarians by Fr. Barrielle. Fr. Vallet studied the Exercises and their history deeply, and one thing he observed was that if any Congregation was founded to preach the Exercises and did so successfully, then within a certain space of time the Devil would succeed in diverting, distracting or destroying that Congregation. What space of time, according to Fr. Vallet, as quoted by Fr. Barrielle? “Forty years”!

Now preaching the Exercises is not the SSPX’s only apostolate, so it may hope to be spared that concentrated attention of the Devil? On the contrary! If that minor pyramid is still the backbone of the defence of the Faith amidst the ruins of the Church crumbling all around, it can only be the object of his super-concentrated attention! Let all of us beware, and – because of that pyramidal structure of the Church – let us especially include in our gentle prayers the leaders of the SSPX.

Kyrie eleison.