

France Stirs

July 26, 2014

Many of you know that on Tuesday and Wednesday of last week was held in the Dominican Friary of Avrillé close to Angers in North-west France a meeting of resistant priests from wherever the “Resistance” is up and running, but mainly from France. This was the third such meeting of French priests held in Avrillé since the beginning of the year, and it was the most important. This time they began to co-ordinate and to organize their activities in France, a country often decisive for the Church in various ways.

The credit for calling these meetings goes to the Prior of Avrillé, Fr Pierre-Marie. For several years Avrillé has been offering support and a refuge to priests of the Society of St Pius X who have been finding their priestly life more and more difficult under its present leadership, whose pursuit of reconciliation with the Newchurch in Rome is, despite the disguise and denials, relentless. Only a few weeks ago the Society’s Second Assistant is reported to have said, “The train is leaving for Rome, and those who want to get off will get off.” For as long as possible Fr Pierre-Marie sought not to break off relations with the official SSPX, but earlier this year came the letter from Bishop Fellay finalising the rupture. That was inevitable, unless Avrillé would also betray Tradition.

Originally Fr Pierre-Marie designed last week’s meeting for the French priests, but I suggested to him that resistant priests from outside France might also be invited for a double reason: the priests from outside would be encouraged to see the “Resistance” stirring in France, where it has stirred little – outwardly – up till now, and the French priests in turn might be reminded that there is not only France. Fr Pierre-Marie accepted my suggestion, and that is how it turned out, some 18 priests in all.

The meeting went very well. There was little looking back and no bitterness, much looking forward. The first day's business was largely for the French priests. They began by nominating as their co-ordinator Fr. de Mérode, a priest from Belgium with 30 years' experience in the SSPX, all over the world. Then for their organisation being born they chose the name of "Priestly Union of Marcel Lefebvre," a name that announces clearly the orientation. And finally Fr. De Mérode began organising a network of Mass centres all over France – back to the 1970's, but in harsher conditions, and with very limited resources, at least for the moment.

The second day's business was given over to international concerns for the defence of the Faith, and here of course arose the question of episcopal consecrations, because I for one wished to know the mind of the priests present. It was relatively unanimous. Readers will be encouraged to know that while the priests thought that the time for consecrations had not yet come, nevertheless it could not be too far off. For indeed as of now it is very difficult to imagine any of the three bishops who remain within the SSPX undertaking to consecrate anybody without the approval of Rome, and it is impossible to imagine neo-modernist Rome approving of any anti-modernist candidate! Patience.

Do pray, both for the quiet success of the budding Priestly Union, and for God to give us, in his good time, the additional bishops needed for the defence of the Faith.

Kyrie eleison.