

Stick Again

June 28, 2008

Rumors abound once more: before the end of June, in other words in a few days' time, either the Society of St. Pius X will begin to give way to Rome's demands to conform to Vatican II and the New Mass, or Rome will declare to Church and world that the Society and its followers are in formal schism and out of the Church.

As to rumors of the Society taking any action that would imperil the defence of the Faith, I think they are to be wholly discounted. On May 5 of 1988 in particular, Archbishop Lefebvre went as far as the Faith would allow him, and even a little bit further, to come to terms with the Church authorities, but their terms finally persuaded him that they could no longer be trusted to look after the Church's immutable Tradition, which is why he went ahead with the episcopal consecrations of 20 years ago.

Similarly, ever since the Society's Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome in 2000, the Society has gone as far as it could to correspond to the goodwill gestures of Cardinal Castrillon, and even a little bit further, but in eight years it has never given to the Cardinal that abandonment of the Society's stand on Tradition that he wanted. On the contrary, the latest Letter to Friends and Benefactors of the Society's Superior General reiterated firmly that stand, which is surely where the rumors come from of the Cardinal losing patience with his eight years of carrot, and of his turning once more to the stick.

Catholics should in no way be frightened by any threat of being declared formally, i.e. properly and officially, in schism, or out of the Church. Proper Catholic officialdom would judge, like Our Lord tells us to judge (Jn. VII,24), by reality and not by appearances. The reality is obvious: it is the Conciliar "Renovation" and not Catholic Tradition that has

broken with the Catholic Church.

However, when in the next few days the Society makes no gesture towards Rome sufficient for Rome's purpose of dissolving the resistance of Catholic Tradition, I am for my part not at all sure that Rome will really go ahead with any declaration of formal schism. Maybe after eight, or 20, or 38 years of the Society's resistance they really are losing patience, but does not all past experience tell them that each time they use the stick, it stiffens rather than dissolves that resistance?

And if they did go ahead with such a declaration, Catholics should rejoice, because after several years of some ambiguity there would once more be some clarity! Twenty years ago, all Society Superiors gathered in Ecône rejoiced in the "excommunication" of their bishops. Would not the same thing happen this time round if Rome also cast priests and laity into its outer darkness? Not that any of us would rejoice in Rome's self-abasement . . .

Kyrie eleison.