

Turning Point

March 10, 2012

Speaking in the USA last month on Rome-SSPX relations, the Society of St Pius X's Superior General said that some practical agreement between the two might be possible if Rome would accept the SSPX as it is, and he quoted the Archbishop as having often said that such an arrangement would be acceptable. However, Bishop Fellay did add that the last time that the Archbishop said this was in 1987. This little addition is highly significant, and it deserves to be dwelt on, especially for a younger generation that may be unfamiliar with the historic drama of the Episcopal Consecrations of 1988.

In fact the drama of dramas, without which the SSPX would never even have come into existence, was the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), at which the large majority of the world's Catholic bishops signed on to that "up-dating" of the Church by which they split their Catholic authority from the truth of Catholic Tradition. From that point on, Catholics had to choose between Authority and Truth. To this day, if they choose Authority, they must long for Truth, and if they choose Truth, they still yearn for union with Authority. Archbishop Lefebvre chose Truth, which is why he founded the SSPX in 1970 to defend it, but for as long as possible he did all in his power to heal its split with Authority by striving to obtain Rome's approval for his Society. That is why Bishop Fellay is right to say that until 1987 the Archbishop repeatedly wished and worked for some practical agreement with Rome.

However, by 1987 the Archbishop was 82 years old. He foresaw that without its own bishops, the SSPX's stand for Tradition must come to an end. It was becoming urgent to obtain from Rome at least one bishop, but Rome stalled, surely because it too was well aware that the SSPX without its own bishop would die a lingering death. The resolute stalling of then Cardinal

Ratzinger in May of 1988 made it clear to the Archbishop that neo-modernist Rome had no intention of protecting or approving of Catholic Tradition. So the time for diplomacy was over, and he went ahead with the Episcopal Consecrations. From then on, he said, it was to be doctrine or nothing. From then on the absolutely necessary prelude to any contacts between Rome and the SSPX, he said, would be Rome's profession of Faith in the great anti-liberal documents of Catholic Tradition, e.g. *Pascendi*, *Quanta Cura*, etc.

And that is why, as Bishop Fellay implied on February 2, never again until his death in 1991 was the great Archbishop heard to say that some practical agreement might be possible or desirable. Himself he had gone as far as he could to obtain from Authority the minimum requirements of Truth. He even once suggested that he had in May of 1988 gone too far. But from the Consecrations onwards he never wavered or compromised, and he urged his Society to take the same line.

Has the situation changed since then? Has Rome returned to the profession of the Faith of all time? One might think so when Bishop Fellay informs us in the same sermon that Rome has modified its harsh position of September 14, and declares itself now willing to accept the SSPX as is. But one need only recall Assisi III and the Newbeatification of John-Paul II to suspect that behind the Roman churchmen's new-found benevolence towards the SSPX lies in all likelihood a reliance on the euphoria of re-established and prolonged mutual contact to dilute, wash out and eventually dissolve the SSPX's so far obstinate resistance to their Newchurch. Alas.

"Our help is in the name of the Lord."

Kyrie eleison.