

Wise Lefebvre – II

August 28, 2021

Besides the balance between liberalism and sedevacantism (cf. these “Comments” last week), there is another angle from which to come at the wisdom of Archbishop Lefebvre’s resisting “to their face” Popes Paul VI and John-Paul II, and that is how exceptional he was at that time in seeing how necessary for the Church such resistance was. When in 1974 he made his November Declaration which was like the Charter of the Traditional movement to come, and when in 1975 he was punished for it with the official “suspension” of his Society of St Pius X, and in 1976 with his personal suspension from all activity as a bishop by Rome, the great majority of his colleagues in the episcopacy sided with Rome, and many of them put continual pressure on him to give way to Paul VI, and to cease “disobeying.”

All the way until the consecration of four bishops in 1988 for Catholic Tradition he hoped to be able to put together a little group of four or five Traditional bishops which he knew would seriously obstruct the neo-modernists’ on-going dissolution of the Church, but although he visited many, he never found any who would join him in his public stand against the Roman dissolvers. Only in 1981 did a colleague at last stand with him in public, and that was only because Bishop de Castro Mayer, having just reached the age of 75, had had to resign as diocesan bishop of Campos, Brazil. However, he did stay faithfully at the Archbishop’s side, in public, notably at the ceremony of consecration of bishops in 1988, a gesture hugely appreciated by the Archbishop, because it proved that the Archbishop was not alone in judging that the crisis of the Church justified such drastic action as episcopal consecrations without Papal approval.

And the two clear-sighted bishops stayed together until both died within a month of each other in 1991. However, neither

was followed for long after his death by his own followers, which highlights just how exceptional the clear sight of the two of them had been. In Brazil the group of Campos priests were soon splitting Bishop de Castro Mayer in two: the obedient Pastor prior to his rebellion “against Rome,” and the “disobedient Rebel.” And declaring that their loyalty was to “Castro I,” they scuttled collectively back under the skirts of Rome. As for the worldwide Society that the Archbishop had left behind him, within a few years its leaders were making private contact with representatives of the official Church in organised talks of GREC, and within a few more years the Society’s Superior was announcing in public that only the final seal was lacking to an official agreement between the Society and Rome. To the Society leaders’ credit, the agreement has never happened yet, but to their discredit, that has not been for lack of trying.

But how dare one so sharply discredit the Society’s leaders for their noble efforts to regain their rightful status as a Society recognised within the official Church? Answer, by the fruits of those same efforts. Is there any comparison between the fruits of the Society when, behind the Archbishop, it was sharply repudiating contact with the traitors to the Faith in Rome, and ever since when, behind his successors, it has been seen to be trying to come to an understanding with them? Granted, it is not as though the Society has been bearing no fruit after it began treating these Romans as though they are Catholic, but in the ever worsening – and not easing! – crisis of the Church, how much more real fruit the Society could have borne if only souls had not been put off by a mixed message: “Yes, of course the Romans are bad, but they cannot be all that bad! They will give us recognition if only we do not treat them too badly!”

No, they really are that bad. They are primarily responsible for the destruction of the Church, on which hangs the salvation or damnation of millions and millions of souls. And

they are still at it, clearly, with the latest Motu Proprio of Pope Francis. Nor have they ever not been at it, for the last 60 years. So how did the Archbishop see that so clearly and neither his colleagues nor his successors? By the strength and purity of his faith.

Kyrie eleison