Society of Saint Pius X

SSPX

Interview with the Superior General of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X

Who is Tearing the Tunic of Christ?

"The rupture does not come from the Society of Saint Pius X, but from the flagrant divergence of official teachings from Tradition and the constant Magisterium of the Church."

1. FSSPX.News: *Reverend Superior General, your announcement, on 2 February 2026, of forthcoming episcopal consecrations provoked a series of particularly strong reactions. What do you make of this?*

Don Davide Pagliarani: It is understandable, because we are touching on a very sensitive matter in the life of the Church. Moreover, the reasons for this decision are objectively grave: what is at stake—the good of souls—is a matter of the utmost importance. It is therefore only natural that the debate triggered by this announcement should be of such magnitude: at bottom, no one has remained indifferent. This is objectively positive and, providentially, I think it corresponds to a very pressing need.

Indeed, in recent years, the conservative and traditionalist sphere, in the broad sense of the term, has sometimes given the impression of being reduced to a world of commentators, where analyses, expectations, and frustrations—often legitimate—are expressed, but are difficult to translate into realistic and coherent positions. Among these commentators, some are still awaiting a response from the Holy See to the *dubia* formulated ten years ago by four cardinals—two of whom have since passed away—concerning *Amoris lætitia*, or else the possible publication of a new *motu proprio* on the Tridentine Mass.

In this context, the decision to proceed with the consecrations calls out. It is not just another declaration: it is a significant act that compels one to reflect, to grasp the true gravity of current problems, and in practical terms, to take a stand. Nothing is more urgent today. Without having sought it, the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X finds itself to be the instrument of a salutary jolt—a jolt of which Providence alone, in the final analysis, is the author. Providentially, the Society has been permitted to contribute to something the Church certainly needs, today more than ever, for her good and for her renewal.

2. *Why do you consider such a jolt to be particularly necessary today?*

When people talk and debate without respite, often in a frustrating way, about extremely grave problems which touch on the Faith, the very subjects of debate or dialogue end up, in the long run,

being perceived as open to discussion, in systematic deference to the ideas of others and to different sensibilities. Gradually, everything is relativized.

Indeed, the scourge of doctrinal pluralism, to which modern man is naturally inclined, ends up contaminating even the soundest souls: one gradually drifts into indifferentism; a slow and inexorable anaesthesia causes one to lose one's grip on reality; one settles into one's comfort zone, becomes attached to balances and privileges which, above all, one does not wish to jeopardize; zeal and the spirit of sacrifice diminish. In a word, the danger is getting used to the crisis and living as if it were a normal situation. All this happens progressively, without one being aware of it. Those responsible for souls have a duty to analyse these mechanisms in depth, and to try to arrest them before they become irreversible.

Now, what is at stake today is not an opinion, nor a sensibility, nor a preferential option, nor a particular nuance in the interpretation of a text, but the Faith and morals that a Catholic must know, profess, and practise in order to save his soul and reach Paradise.

In other words, faced with Eternity and the danger of losing Heaven, chatter, dissertations, and dialogue must yield to reality.

3. What is this reality you speak of, which the Society's action can illuminate?

This reality is that today more than ever it is necessary to reaffirm, to proclaim, and to profess the rights of Christ the King over souls and over nations: we must have the courage to preach that the Catholic Church is the sole ark of salvation for every man without distinction; we must believe in the Redemption, in the sacraments, in the destruction of sin; we must remind humanity that the Church was established to snatch souls from error, from the world, from Satan, and from hell.

We must stop making those who habitually live in sin—those who even boast of their unnatural vice—believe that God forgives everything, always and in all circumstances, without true conversion, without contrition, without penance, without the demand for radical change; we must have the simplicity to recognize that a pope's participation in a ritual in honour of the Pachamama in the Vatican Gardens is folly and an unspeakable scandal; finally and above all, we must stop deceiving souls and humanity by making them believe that all religions worship the same God under different names. In a word: we must stop asking the world's forgiveness for having tried to convert it, to Christianize it, and for having condemned error for centuries.

In this tragic context, someone must be able to say: 'Enough!' Not only in words, but above all through practical actions.

"We must stop asking the world's forgiveness for having tried to convert it, to Christianize it, and for having condemned error for centuries."

If, in the present confusion, Providence provides the Society of Saint Pius X with the means to proclaim clearly the eternal rights of Our Lord, it would be a very grave sin on our part to shirk this obligation that faith and charity impose on us. These are the premises which allow us to understand why the Society of Saint Pius X exists, and why it is now proceeding with the episcopal consecrations.

Without these premises, the Society's decision, and its very discourse, would be devoid of meaning. If one does not recognize that what is at stake is the Faith itself, then inevitably the Society of Saint Pius X can only be perceived as a disciplinary problem, a problem of rebellion or of disobedience. This is the mistake unfortunately made by those who claim that the Society of Saint Pius X is only consecrating bishops to preserve its own autonomy.

But that is not the point. The forthcoming consecrations are an act of fidelity aimed at preserving the means to save our souls and those of others. The safeguarding of a freedom indispensable for professing the Faith and transmitting it to souls is not the same thing as the pursuit of selfish autonomy.

4. Among those who have spoken out against the 1 July consecrations are conservative cardinals very critical of Pope Francis, such as Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller and Cardinal Robert Sarah. How do you explain their stance?

First, one must acknowledge that a conservative critic of Pope Francis might feel a certain fear of being tarred with the same brush as the Society of Saint Pius X and demonized along with it. This may give rise to a need to make clear that one has nothing to do with us.

However, beyond this aspect, these cardinals and bishops suffer from a deeper and typically modern malaise: that of being unable to reconcile the demands of the Faith with those of canon law. The Faith demands that one do everything possible to profess, preserve, and transmit it; at the same time, if one interprets the law literally, in abstraction from the present circumstances, a consecration of bishops without the pope's approval seems impossible. What is to be done then? These cardinals, like others, live in a kind of permanent dichotomy that risks annihilating their good intentions: they place these two demands side by side, in a Cartesian fashion, and find themselves crushed or overwhelmed by the apparent contradiction.

"The Magisterium exists to teach the Faith, and not to invent it; the law exists to preserve it, and to guarantee the necessary conditions for the Christian life that must flow from it."

For its part, the Society of Saint Pius X holds that these two premises must not simply be juxtaposed but hierarchically ordered, the one being subordinate to the other. Within the Church, the purity and profession of the Faith precede all other considerations, because all the other elements that compose the life of the Church depend upon Faith itself: the Magisterium exists to teach the Faith, and not to invent it; the law exists to preserve it, and to guarantee the necessary conditions for the Christian life that must flow from it.[1] This priority derives from the fact that Our Lord Himself, by becoming incarnate, manifests to the world, above all, the eternal Truth; and that, as Lawgiver, He indicates in the Gospel the means of knowing this Truth, and remaining faithful to it. There is a logical priority between the first and the second element.

Consequently, Divine Providence did not establish the Church as a parliamentary assembly of juxtaposed and independent ministries. On the contrary, it established a hierarchy of priorities with the specific and primary purpose of preserving the deposit of the Faith, of confirming the faithful in that Faith, and of organizing everything else in accordance with this fundamental and primary requirement. The law, in particular, serves this purpose and is not meant to hinder or condemn those who wish to remain Catholic, that is, those who wish to live by faith.

5. Why do you consider this attitude to be typically modern?

Modern man has trouble organizing in a harmonious way the different elements of the reality in which he lives and the knowledge by which he analyses them. To use a somewhat technical term, modern man tends to classify the elements of the reality which surrounds him in a nominalist way: he places superficial labels on each of them, without making the effort to go to the root of problems, and hence without being able to grasp them in all their complexity, implications, or interdependence.

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[1] This order, based on the transmission of the Faith, is a classical notion of canon law. To cite one author among others: "*Ut patet fundamentum vitæ supernaturalis Ecclesiæ curæ et potestati concreditæ est fides*; it is clear that Faith is the foundation of the supernatural life entrusted to the care and authority of the Church." Law must therefore organically determine all that concerns Faith: "*quæ respiciunt fidei prædicationem, explicationem, susceptionem, exercitium, professionem externam, defensionem et vindicationem*; all that concerns the preaching of the Faith, its explanation, reception, exercise, external profession, defence and the refutation of errors", in Gommarus Michiels OFM Cap., *Normæ generales juris canonici*, Paris, 1949, vol. 1, p. 258.

Thus, in the case that concerns us, the application of the law is completely dissociated from the reality that the law itself is supposed to protect. It is precisely from this dissociation between law and reality that typically modern ideological approaches are born, both in the religious and in the civil domains. This attitude has two distinct and complementary consequences.

In those who suffer from this dichotomy and are confronted with this dilemma, as may be the case in conservative milieus, it leads to fatalism and discouragement, because one feels trapped, paralysed, incapable of acting in a manner adequate to and in conformity with the objective demands of the True and the Good. Those who live constantly in this existential contradiction end up falling victim to it, and confuse fatalism with trust in Divine Providence.

Furthermore, in those who hold authority, it risks leading to irreversible blindness and hardness of heart: inevitable consequences of the ideological approach, 'the law is the law', regardless of circumstances, concrete demands, and good intentions.

It is for this reason that Our Lord condemns this attitude in the strongest terms: "And Jesus said: For judgment I am come into this world; that they who see not, may see; and they who see, may become blind. And some of the Pharisees, who were with him, heard: and they said unto him: Are we also blind? Jesus said to them: If you were blind, you should not have sin: but now you say: We see. Your sin remaineth." (Jn 9:39–41)

6. *Do you believe that the teaching of the Gospel can, in some way, illuminate the present situation?*

Our Lord is the perfect example of obedience to the law of Moses: together with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, He fulfils to the letter all the legal prescriptions from the very first days of His existence. And He maintains their rigorous observance to the last day of His life: at the Last Supper, Jesus follows to the letter the Jewish ritual of the time.

Nevertheless, Our Lord performed miracles even on the Sabbath day, provoking the blind and legalistic reaction of the Pharisees. Jesus, a greater Lawgiver than Moses himself, is the first to respect the law, and the first to acknowledge the existence of a higher good that can dispense from the observance of the letter of the law. His words, as always, are worth a thousand treatises:

"And it came to pass, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the sabbath day, to eat bread, that they watched him. And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? But they held their peace. But he taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out, on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things." (Lk 14:1–6)

These divine words require no commentary. The Society of Saint Pius X makes them its own without reservation. We too must do everything in our power to pull souls out of the pit, even if we are living through an endless Sabbath. Our Lord was neither a legalist, nor a nominalist, nor a Cartesian: He was the Good Shepherd.

7. *In recent months, outside the Society, voices have spoken up in support of it. Bishop Athanasius Schneider in particular has spoken out on several occasions about the consecrations. How do you explain his resolve?*

I confess that this support for the Society has touched me deeply. Several diocesan priests have expressed their gratitude and encouragement to us, as have several bishops. I wish to thank them all.

Not being able to name all of them here, I should like to thank Bishop Strickland particularly for his message full of strength, clarity, and courage. And, of course, Bishop Schneider: this prelate has shown great courage and freedom of speech that show one is dealing with a man of God, disinterested, and truly concerned for the good of souls. I believe that his support, and every word he has offered

over these past months, will pass into history. I am persuaded that this is important not only for the Society, but even more so for all the bishops of the world. It is an objective sign of hope: his word shows that Providence can at all times raise up voices that speak the truth with courage and firmness, without fearing possible personal consequences.

Before him, Bishop Huonder, who went to his eternal reward two years ago, was already positively encouraging us to proceed with consecrations. He and Bishop Schneider had both been appointed by the Vatican to dialogue with the Society: unlike other interlocutors, they were able to listen and understand.

8. Do you still hope to see the Pope before the consecrations?

Of course, this corresponds to my sincerest desire. I am nonetheless surprised that there has so far been no personal reply or reaction from the Holy Father.

Before possibly declaring schismatic a society which counts more than a thousand members, and which serves as a point of reference for hundreds of thousands of faithful throughout the world, it might be desirable to know personally those who are to be judged. The envisaged sanction does not affect only an institution (one which, moreover, does not exist in the eyes of the Holy See), it affects persons, and persons deeply attached to the pope and to the Church.

I admit to having difficulty understanding this silence, at a time when we are so often reminded of the need to listen to the cry of the poor, of the peripheries, and even of the Earth . . .

"We too must do everything in our power to pull souls out of the pit, even if we are living through an endless Sabbath."

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9. You were able to meet Pope Francis. What recollection do you have of him?

The programme that Pope Francis imposed upon the universal Church is sufficiently well known and has been widely commented upon by the Society of Saint Pius X. I believe that, unfortunately, the word 'disaster' is the most apt to sum up the legacy he has left.

Despite this, Pope Francis was able to recognize, in his own way, the good that the Society of Saint Pius X does for souls. From this assessment was born an apparently equivocal attitude towards us, a form of tolerance that surprised more superficial observers, and that at times deeply irritated conservative milieus.

Many of Pope Francis's choices caused genuine sadness in large sectors of the Church, but it would be unjust to accuse him of having been a rigid and schematic person in his assessment of the people he encountered, or in his application of the law. His attitude often demonstrated this. It is perhaps a small detail, but when I asked to meet him at the Vatican, I was granted an audience with him within twenty-four hours, and he was particularly affable.

10. In recent years, in the name of tolerance erected into a principle, the Vatican has demonstrated great openness in the face of certain complex situations. Do you think the Society of Saint Pius X might benefit from this?

In the final analysis, the application of any law, good or bad, depends on the will of the legislator. It is for him to determine the manner in which he intends to deal with the Society of Saint Pius X.

That said, the openness that the Vatican has shown cannot be desired for its own sake, for it goes so far as to justify the absurd: blessing couples who practise unnatural vice, or solemnly pledging not to convert the adherents of other religions, to give but two examples. We are confronted with an ideological and totalitarian dictatorship of tolerance.

Now, the Tradition of the Church, which the Society of Saint Pius X strives to embody, itself represents a condemnation of these aberrations, unbearable to those who promote such tolerance. If one analyses the situation carefully, the sanctions, past or future, aimed at the Society of Saint Pius X, oppose not so much an act of disobedience but the fact that the Society constitutes a living condemnation with regard to the current ecclesiastical line.

The role that Providence seems to reserve for the Society of Saint Pius X is the singular one of being a sign of contradiction: which means, concretely, a thorn in the side of the reformers. And the peculiarity of this thorn is that the more one seeks to remove it, the deeper it penetrates: it is not the thorn itself that determines this therapeutic effect, but the two thousand years of Tradition that it embodies and represents.

The Society of Saint Pius X may be sanctioned, the Tridentine Mass forbidden . . . but these two thousand years can never be suppressed. This is the real reason why, despite past condemnations, the Society has never ceased to be a voice that challenges the Church; and this also explains why it is not so simple to be tolerant of it.

A day will come when a pope decides to remove this thorn from his side: he will then be able to use it as a docile instrument to contribute—as is our deepest wish—to restoring all things in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. One hears that the forthcoming consecrations could create a schism. Yet some within the Church consider the Society of Saint Pius X to be schismatic already. How can this contradiction be explained?

The contradiction is real and highlights a jurisprudence that might be described as 'fluid' on the part of the Vatican. Let us try to see it more clearly.

Speaking canonically, after having been declared schismatic in 1988, the Society of Saint Pius X has never been released from this censure: in 2009, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunications weighing upon its bishops, but without revisiting the prior declaration of schism. At the same time, the Society of Saint Pius X has not altered its doctrinal positions and has maintained exactly the same justification of episcopal consecrations, past or future. In other words, consistent with the fact that it regards the censures that struck it as null, the Society has never retracted.

For these reasons, 'rigorous' canonists still consider it schismatic. It is in this sense that one must understand the explicit declarations of Cardinal Raymond Burke, former Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, and of Mgr. Camille Perl, former Secretary of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission—suppressed in 2019. It is in this same perspective that one must also understand the treatment of priests who left the Society of Saint Pius X to join official structures: the excommunication for schism and the suspension were lifted from them, and they were asked to confess so as to be absolved in the internal forum as well.

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Against this interpretation stands the figure of Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos,[2] who was far more flexible, and above all that of Pope Francis, who never treated the Society of Saint Pius X as schismatic and who told us explicitly that he would never condemn it. Indeed, one could include in

[2] Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos stated on several occasions during the 2000s that the Society of Saint Pius X "is not in schism", but finds itself in an "irregular canonical situation", which ought to be regularized within the Church.

this list Cardinal Fernández and Pope Leo XIV themselves: if they are currently seeking to prevent a schism, this means that they do not consider us already schismatic. The same applies to the cardinals and bishops who are currently trying to discourage the consecrations in order to avoid a schism.

But then a twofold question arises: first, if such is their fear, we do not understand when, how, or why we would have ceased to be schismatic in their eyes. And on the other hand, if the Holy See itself, in practice, does not regard the declaration of schism in 1988 as valid, what value could a new declaration of schism have, pronounced for reasons and in circumstances entirely equivalent?

What is certain is that in 1988 the Vatican expected that the Society of Saint Pius X, having been declared schismatic, would dissolve within a few years. Yet not only did it not dissolve, it continued to grow. And above all, despite a manifestly unjust declaration of schism, it has never ceased to be a work of the Church, and to labour for the Church: this reality imposes itself with such force that, despite the condemnation of 1988, the Holy See itself has ended up recognizing it in practice.

One possible cause of this canonical incoherence lies in the 'fluid' and modernist concept of 'partial communion', according to which one and the same subject can be considered simultaneously as Catholic and non-Catholic, as a member and a non-member of the Church. Obviously, if someone is 'partially' a son of the Church, the law of the Church can be applied to him only in equally partial fashion, according to arbitrary and variable criteria . . .

This shows how an ecclesiological error inevitably leads to juridical errors, or at any rate to confused, incoherent, and 'fluid' judgements.

12. To substantiate the charge of schism, it is claimed that an episcopal consecration would always imply, regardless of the circumstances, the transmission to the new bishop of the power of jurisdiction, with the inevitable consequence, in the absence of the pope's consent, of the creation of a parallel hierarchy—and hence of a parallel Church. The Society of Saint Pius X has already responded to this objection.[3] As it is an extremely sensitive point, do you wish to add a few considerations?

This point is absolutely central. In fact, the accusation rests on a modernist premise. I think it is interesting to try to understand why the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council teaches that a new bishop receives, always and in all circumstances, the power of jurisdiction together with that of order.

Let us briefly recall that the power of order consists in the capacity to administer the sacraments, whilst jurisdiction designates the power to govern, *cum Petro et sub Petro*, a portion of the flock, ordinarily a diocese. In classical theology, confirmed by traditional canon law, and above all, by the constant practice of the Church—we may say: according to Tradition—the power of governing is conferred upon the bishop directly by the pope, independently of the consecration. This is why there can exist regularly consecrated bishops to whom no proper jurisdiction is entrusted, such as auxiliary bishops or those charged with specific diplomatic missions.

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At the time of the Council, this view was considered too traditional, too medieval, too Roman: the direct and exclusive intervention of the Vicar of Christ in the attribution of jurisdiction reduced mandated bishops to mere delegates or representatives of the pope. Conversely, the idea that each bishop receives immediately from God, in his consecration, a universal jurisdiction, made it possible to render him in some sense an equal of the pope, reducing the role of the Vicar of Christ to that of a

[3] Letter from Fr. Davide Pagliarani to Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández of 18 February 2026, Annex 2.

mere president of a college, 'first among equals'. Thus this new premise simply underpinned the modernist theory of collegiality,[4] the foundation of the democratization of the Church.

Another consequence: this redefinition moved in the direction of a greater ecumenism. Indeed, in order to be able to recognize a certain 'ecclesial character' in the schismatic Eastern communities (those which are truly schismatic) and to consider them as 'sister Churches', thus establishing a solid basis for ecumenical dialogue, it was necessary to value their apostolic succession to the point of recognizing a real jurisdiction over their faithful—despite their complete separation from Rome and from the pope. Their status as 'Church' would therefore derive from the fact of having bishops who are not only validly consecrated but also endowed with a real authority over souls that flows from the consecration itself, independently of any intervention by the pope. This bias made it easier to conceive, in these communities, of the existence of a true ecclesiastical hierarchy in the fullest sense. Without this prior ecclesiological manipulation, it would have been impossible to recognize in them a true 'ecclesiality'.

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Connected to this same ecumenical perspective is another ecclesiological manipulation, the elastic concept of 'partial communion' mentioned in the previous question: concretely, all Christian 'Churches' would form part of a 'super-Church'—the Church of Christ, vaster than the Catholic Church—and would maintain with it a more or less complete communion, according to the deficiencies of their doctrine. This concept, also modernist, aims to promote a supposed nascent unity with other 'Churches'. But it is misleading. For either one is in communion with the Catholic Church in all respects, or one is separated from it: there is no intermediate position. Paradoxically, this notion, conceived as an instrument at the service of ecumenical dialogue, intended to justify a common progression between 'Churches' that recognize one another as 'sisters', is used with regard to the Society of Saint Pius X, which considers it absurd.

What is particularly regrettable in the reproach addressed to the Society is that this specific accusation of schism or of 'partial communion', which rests on modernist, collegial, and ecumenical premises, should be formulated not only by the Vatican, but also by certain leaders of the circles and institutes called '*Ecclesia Dei*'.[5] Paradoxically, they attack the Society of Saint Pius X by citing and defending the ecclesiological errors of the Second Vatican Council . . . Instead of highlighting these errors constructively—as they could in theory—they use them to stone the Society of Saint Pius X. Still, these are rubber stones.

13. With regard to jurisdiction and authority within the Church, how does the Society of Saint Pius X analyse the possibility of appointing religious sisters or laypeople to positions of responsibility?

The question is entirely pertinent, especially when one considers that currently a Roman dicastery, the one in charge of institutes of consecrated life, instead of having a cardinal and a bishop as prefect and secretary respectively, is entrusted to two religious sisters.

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[4] This doctrine regards the episcopal college, as such, as a second subject of supreme authority in the Church, alongside the pope: consequently, it tends to transform the Church into a kind of permanent council, justifying the all-encompassing power of episcopal conferences and the ongoing synodal reform.

[5] One notes in particular the studies of Fr. Josef Bisig, founder of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter, and of Fr. Louis-Marie de Blignères, founder of the Fraternity of Saint Vincent Ferrer.

I do not wish to be ironic, as that would be discourteous. I shall confine myself to pointing out that the Vatican, in its own way, proves that it is still perfectly capable of distinguishing between the power of order and the attribution of the power of jurisdiction: indeed, to my knowledge, Sr. Simona Brambilla, the current Prefect, has never been ordained deacon, priest, or bishop; she has not even received the clerical tonsure . . . The same applies to the Sister-Secretary.

14. Outside the Society of Saint Pius X, many now acknowledge sincerely that there is a crisis within the Church, particularly in the area of the Faith. However, some reproach the Society of Saint Pius X for isolating itself in its own line of conduct, without taking enough account of the existence of other diagnoses. Does this criticism seem well-founded to you?

I think that the Society of Saint Pius X, on this precise point, puts its finger on the wound. Many of us agree that there is a crisis in the Church and that this crisis touches the Faith: the Society of Saint Pius X acknowledges and confirms this.

But one cannot confine oneself to deploring effects without tracing them back to their true causes: one must have the courage to go further and to recognize that this crisis has its origin in official teachings, often ambiguous and sometimes clearly breaking with Tradition. Practically speaking, one must realize that the present crisis has this specific character: it affects the hierarchy of the Church in the teaching it provides.

Now, in such a situation, one cannot avoid acknowledging what is: errors must be clearly recognized and denounced by those who are in a position to do so. It is not sufficient to pretend not to see them or to hope that they will disappear with time. Texts such as *Amoris lætitia* and *Fiducia supplicans*, for example, provoked considerable uproar; then everything calmed down, people moved on to other things, and almost no one speaks of them any more. But the decisions and the errors they contain remain in force: they are not corrected by hoping they will be forgotten.

The Society of Saint Pius X exists to reassert this, to the faithful no less than to the hierarchy. It considers this to be its duty, not in a spirit of defiance or disobedience, but as a service rendered to the Church. In this sense, it is not right to say that it isolates itself: it speaks before the whole Church and addresses itself to all perplexed Catholics, without distinction.

For anyone who approaches these questions without ideological prejudice, one observation is unavoidable: the rupture does not come from the Society of Saint Pius X, but from the flagrant divergence of official teachings from Tradition and the constant Magisterium of the Church.

"The Society of Saint Pius X remains in perfect communion with all the popes of history, without exception, in what they have in common: the deposit of the Faith, faithfully received, preserved, and transmitted through the centuries."

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15. How could the official teaching of the Church contain errors?

The question is extremely delicate and complex, and only the Church itself will one day be able to provide a satisfactory and definitive explanation of what has happened and is still happening today. What is certain is that an error cannot be taught by the Magisterium of the Church properly so called. Yet the fact remains: we are confronted, alas, with the teaching of certain grave errors. But whether it is a matter of the texts of a Council that expressly intended to be non-dogmatic, or mere pastoral exhortations, homilies, or incidental declarations—or even dialogues with the world, improvised speeches on aeroplanes, and conversations with journalists—when non-dogmatic elements are presented as such, this cannot correspond to an authentic Magisterium.

To take an example, an eminent Roman prelate recently explained to me that the Abu Dhabi Declaration should not be considered as belonging to the Magisterium, since it is a mere circumstantial text. I think that one day, with a little flexibility and good sense, a pope will affirm—

and publicly—something equivalent about an entire series of problematic texts that cannot be regarded as magisterial in the technical sense of the term. The Roman Curia possesses an unparalleled experience and finesse in drawing the necessary distinctions: all that is lacking is the will to do so.

In any case, it is for the Church itself, and not the Society of Saint Pius X, to make a definitive clarification. Our role is limited to faithfully rejecting all that breaks with Tradition and with the constant Magisterium. In so doing, the Society of Saint Pius X remains in perfect communion with all the popes of history, without exception, in what they have in common: the deposit of the Faith, faithfully received, preserved, and transmitted through the centuries.

16. In many areas of the life of the Church, as in the liturgical domain, it is evident that there are abuses. Why does the Society of Saint Pius X always speak of errors rather than of abuses?

It is evident that there are abuses, which go beyond the limits of the reforms themselves. The Society of Saint Pius X acknowledges this without difficulty.

But the constant rhetoric of abuse, particularly in vogue under the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI, is not sufficient to account for the crisis. It even creates a systematic alibi that prevents one from getting to the root of the problems. The liturgical reform, for example, involves difficulties that certainly pertain to its very principles, independently of any possible abuses. Ecumenical and interreligious prayers, to take another example, are the expression of a theological error, even when one tries to avoid explicit acts of syncretism, in order to avoid what might appear as an abuse.

Above all, the rhetoric of liturgical abuse, or of abuse in the interpretation of texts, tends to implicate the persons involved—regarded as responsible for these abuses, or as incapable of suppressing them—rather than the erroneous principles that lie at the origin of the present catastrophe. And it is precisely these principles that deserve to be denounced.

"It is not a matter of rebellion, but of responding to a cruel necessity."

I admit to having been struck in recent years by the bitter and systematic reaction of a certain rather short-sighted conservative milieu, which has attacked in a very personal way the figure of Pope Francis, rather than the Council and the continuity of its doctrinal application to the present day. Such an attitude means that with each election of a new pope, one hopes, at least for a few months, for a recovery from the crisis—without questioning the new principles, as if everything depended on the personal will of the new pontiff, more or less determined to condemn or suppress the abuses. This is a superficial rhetoric that no longer convinces the attentive and honest observer.

17. Does it not seem exaggerated to you to consider that an authentic Christian life in an ordinary parish is impossible today, as has already been emphasized by the Society of Saint Pius X on other occasions? Is the 'state of necessity' corresponding to this assertion so obvious? Is it not a convenient concept, devised to justify the consecrations which the institution needs?

The Society of Saint Pius X is fully aware of the tragic and painful character of this assertion. It is an extremely grave consideration, which demands to be well understood.

First of all, it is not a matter of contesting that, despite all the problems and deficiencies that confront ordinary parishes, good priests and good faithful may nonetheless succeed in sanctifying themselves and in saving their souls. Despite fundamentally unfavourable circumstances, the grace of God can touch souls, and we know of such cases. For many, moreover, the real suffering of their situation becomes a genuine source of sanctification, which often drives them towards the search for Tradition.

That said, what the Society of Saint Pius X affirms must be understood on an objective, not a subjective, level. In order to truly assess the situation of these parishes, it falls to each soul of good will to ask

itself precise questions before God, in prayer, seeking a supernatural answer dictated not by positive or negative impressions, nor by an ideological prejudice, but by reason enlightened by faith.

Can the Mass of Paul VI fully express and nourish the Catholic Faith? Does it sufficiently transmit the sense of the sacred, of the transcendent, of the supernatural, of the divine? Does this rite allow one to grasp the true meaning of the Catholic priesthood?

In an ordinary parish or pastoral centre, that is, in a place where one preaches in conformity with current doctrinal orientations, is the Catholic Faith still taught in its full integrity? Is the catechism provided for children still Catholic and capable of forming them for their whole life?

Are the very delicate and very pressing questions of conjugal morality, or of access to the Eucharist in irregular situations, still addressed in conformity with the law of the Church? Is the sacrament of penance still administered with a genuine sense of Redemption and of sin, of its gravity and its consequences?

More generally, what fruits have the reforms universally produced in the practical lives of the faithful?

To all these questions—and to others of a similar nature—the Society of Saint Pius X gives a clear and coherent answer; and then, starting from this analysis, because the reality is unavoidable, it comes to ascertain the 'state of necessity'.

The affirmation of the Society of Saint Pius X is therefore the fruit of a sound realism, not of an ideological *a priori*. The tragic character of this assessment is simply commensurate with the tragedy of reality.

18. Do you not think that, despite the best intentions, the Society of Saint Pius X risks once again tearing apart families, the world of Tradition, and the Church itself?

Never, perhaps, has the Church known division as it does today, and no one can rejoice in it.

However, this division is not produced by fidelity to Tradition, but rather by departure from it: the crisis of the Magisterium, the ambiguities, the errors, the inculturation, impel one to interpret and reinterpret everything, multiplying the divergent ways of judging which, in the long run, produce inevitable divisions. To use a well-known image, it is indeed all of this that tears the tunic of Christ. The Society of Saint Pius X, through fidelity to Tradition, simply strives to contribute ceaselessly to restitching it.

As for the possibility for all traditionalists to work and combat together, the Society of Saint Pius X desires this with all its heart. But this must not be achieved through a kind of ecumenism in miniature: it can only come about in full fidelity to the whole of Tradition, if this open combat is to benefit all, including those who do not agree with us.

"The only possible foundation of true unity, lasting and unshakeable, is the Tradition of the Church."

Finally, with regard to possible divisions within the same family, one must courageously recall these words of Our Lord, without being scandalized, without falling into bitterness, whilst supporting those who suffer:

"Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." (Mt 10:34–37)

19. A retrospective question. The particular period that the Society of Saint Pius X is now passing through reawakens in older members the memories and emotions of 1988. Without any doubt, this marked a decisive turning point in the work of Archbishop Lefebvre. What declaration of the founder of the Society of Saint Pius X comes to mind above all others?

In the course of a private conversation, Archbishop Lefebvre confided that he would have preferred to die rather than find himself in opposition to the Vatican. This shows the spirit in which he prepared for the consecrations of 1988. At that time, as today, it was not a matter of rebellion, but of responding to a cruel necessity: a necessary and inevitable decision, but one made with great reluctance.

On another occasion, Archbishop Lefebvre declared, serenely and in a profoundly supernatural manner, that if the Society of Saint Pius X were not the work of God, it would not continue and would not survive him. It is not for us to provide an answer to this question. But history has already begun to pronounce itself.

20. In your view, when and how can the crisis in the Church come to an end, and with it, this feeling of general disintegration, both inside and outside the Church?

Providence alone holds the precise answer to this question. For my part, I suppose that, after having sought desperately and in vain for peace and unity in collegiality, synodality, ecumenism, dialogue, listening, inclusion, shared ecological concern, human fraternity, the incessant proclamation of the rights of man, etc., the authorities will end up realizing—far too late—that the only possible foundation of true unity, lasting and unshakeable, is the Tradition of the Church.

Thus, when the crisis has manifested all its consequences, when apostasy is yet more widespread, and the churches are empty, these authorities will finally understand that there was nothing to invent: it was necessary simply to be faithful to Christ the King and to proclaim, after the example of the first martyrs, His inviolable rights in the face of a neo-pagan world.

One thing is certain: insofar as it is from Rome that the self-demolition of the Church has come, it is only from Rome and through Rome that this terrible crisis will come to an end. Nevertheless, the seeds of this rebuilding of the Church are already at work: they bear fruit humbly in the souls vivified by the spirit of Our Lord, in whom is being prepared in silence the coming of those who will one day restore the kingship of Jesus Christ in its splendour.

"It is only from Rome and through Rome that this terrible crisis will come to an end."

Certainly, the crisis has lasted longer than one could have imagined. This is due, in my humble opinion, to the intrinsic difficulty that the Church has today in reacting. A healthy body manages fairly easily to react to the pathogens that attack it; but the weaker a body becomes, the more difficult this is for it. Likewise, the crisis in which we are living has been brought about by the assault of pernicious principles upon minds already weakened—a weakening that began well before the reforms.

However, as in every trial, one must see Providence at work and arm oneself with patience. The longer the crisis lasts, and the more Satan rages, the greater the resplendence of the triumph of Tradition will be, and above all, the more it will be manifested to the world that the Church is indefectible and divine.

Never has the promise of Our Lord filled us with joy and hope as it does today: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18).

And what is more, the certainty of this triumph is assured above all by She who crushes all heresies: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."

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Good Shepherd Sunday.