



S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

SSPX 50th Anniversary

The Origins of the SSPX

The Archbishop, the Society, and Rome

For the Love of the Church

“I had a glimpse of this task in a sort of dream in Dakar around 1958. It could very well be said that God prepared me for this task for a very long time. Blessed be God for His ineffable inspirations and for the immediate support from the many benefactors that this work received, and which even visibly (the benefactors as well) were brought by Providence. Did I save the Catholic priesthood, the Catholic Mass, and the Catholic Faith? Certain people attribute these wonderful things to me. But, you see, I am for nothing in this.”

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

A large, stylized graphic of the letters 'LM' in a serif font. The letters are white with a thin yellow outline. The 'L' is on the left and the 'M' is on the right, both with a classic, slightly decorative design.



The Origins

of the Society of Saint Pius X

By Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

Editor's Note: This article is based on extracts from the biography of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre by Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais. They attempt to capture the effort and mood of the Society of Saint Pius X's founder in the face of countless difficulties.

As Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers until 1968, Archbishop Lefebvre was already at work leading seminarians. Hence, he directed the 20 or so who knocked at his door towards his own *Alma Mater*, the French Seminary of Santa Chiara in Rome. Soon he realized that this option was not conducive to proper training any longer both at Santa Chiara and the adjacent Gregorian University, so he thought of other universities which could give a Thomistic formation.

In anguish, the seminarians became more insistent: "Your Grace, if you do not intervene, the priesthood will be closed off to us." The

Archbishop would later say: "I could not have imagined where that cry of distress would lead. With great sorrow we had to give in and look for other places, other universities." Two were still sound in what they taught: the Lateran and Fribourg. In 1967, he sent a group to Fr. Theodosius's society, sponsored by Cardinal Siri, who followed courses at the Lateran University. The following year, he sent some seminarians to Fribourg University, all the while staying at the Holy Ghost Fathers' priory. That was the situation until June 1968 when he resigned as Superior General.



The Archbishop, the Society, and Rome

By Bishop Bernard Fellay

Editor's Note: The following recollections of Bishop Fellay were provided in response to a series of questions. As such, the impromptu character of his replies have been retained throughout.

If we look through the history of the relations between Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X on one hand, and the Vatican on the other, we will be struck by the fact that despite the various intensity of these relations during time, and the various aspects of it, Archbishop Lefebvre never changed his fundamental desire toward Rome.

Rome is the Heart of the Church

Rome is the heart of the Church; we are Roman Catholic, and so in the midst of the battle,

Archbishop Lefebvre will repeat unceasingly that we are attached with our whole heart to eternal Rome. That unchanging Head of an unchanging Church, the very Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

From this Church, we expect everything, because from her, we have received all the treasures of our Faith, and of sanctifying grace. From this Church, at the first step of baptism, we have said we desired Faith, because it gives eternal life. From this Church and only her, we know we can and must receive the words which save, the discipline, commandments and sacraments which bring us to Heaven. But when

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Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Fr. Schmidberger and Fr. Lorans during the press conference before the consecration of bishops.

open controversy at the time was the Society's refusal to celebrate Pope Paul VI's new Mass. At least this is what the Archbishop was later told following the canonical visit; he never received the actual report.

This canonical visitation was the start of many hard years for Archbishop Lefebvre. In 1975 came the unjust suppression of the Society by Bishop Pierre Mamie of Fribourg. Then, like a chain reaction, came the Archbishop's unjust suspension *a divinis* in 1976.

We may certainly qualify this period as "aggressive" on the side of Rome. Pope Paul VI expects the total destruction of the Society, along with the transmission of all its goods and properties to Rome—the dissolution of the whole

work.

The audience in the autumn of 1976 with Paul VI will not bring peace back.

Evolution of Rome's Attitude

We may divide in two the main phases of Rome's attitude towards the Society. The first, which lasted until the year 2000, was aggressive. Rome rejected this work of divine Providence and wanted its destruction. Then after 2000, a new attitude, desiring to keep the Society alive, but expecting acceptance of the novelties of the Council and the New Mass.

The first phase, 1974-2000, is still beset by

For the Love of the Church

Excerpt from the Life of Marcel Lefebvre

By Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

To make a personal legacy, to single himself out, to see himself preferred to the pope...these are, according to his detractors, the desires and *modus operandi* of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. What are these in reality? Let us go through the stages of his life which were indeed varied and at the same time were animated by very simple considerations and impulsions.

Marcel Lefebvre's First Desires

The desires of the young Marcel Lefebvre were before all things, very simple, he thus finished his high school studies at Tourcoing, in 1923. "It is true that I was always drawn to the altar, to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that I went to serve it every day during the war, in 1915, at the risk of

my health. I left the house before the enforced curfew was lifted to be an acolyte for the dear Fr. Desmarchelier, my professor and confessor.

But the priesthood seemed extremely elevated to me; one had to be a saint to pursue it. I required the insistent words of Fr. Alphonsus, Trappist of the Abby of St. Sixtus in Belgium to aid my decision: "You, you will be a priest! You should become a priest!" And so, my father sent me to Rome, against my will, to the French seminary to study "the solid Roman doctrine, in Latin, under the gaze of the pope (Pius XI) at the Gregorian University."

How did I become a missionary?

"Oh, it was because of my older brother, Fr. Rene Lefebvre, who convinced me to follow him to Gabon. He bombarded me with letters! "What are you still doing in France? Second

This is why we are doing this ceremony. Far be it from me to set myself up as pope! I am simply a bishop of the Catholic Church who is continuing to transmit Catholic doctrine. I think, and this will certainly not be too far off, that you will be able to engrave on my tombstone these words of St. Paul: "*Tradidi quod et accepi*—I have transmitted to you what I have received," nothing else. I am just the postman bringing you a letter. I did not write the letter, the message, this Word of God. God Himself wrote it; Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave it to us. As for us, we just handed it down, through these dear priests here present and through all those who have chosen to resist this wave of apostasy in the Church, by keeping the eternal Faith and giving it to the faithful. We are just carriers of this good news, of this Gospel which Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to us, as well as of the means of sanctification: the Holy Mass, the true Holy Mass, the true sacraments which truly give the spiritual life.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Sermon on the occasion of the Episcopal Consecrations







Establishing the First District

By Fr. Patrick Groche

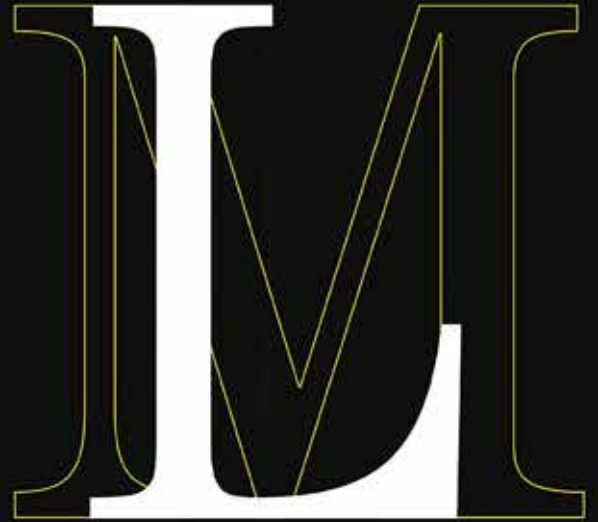
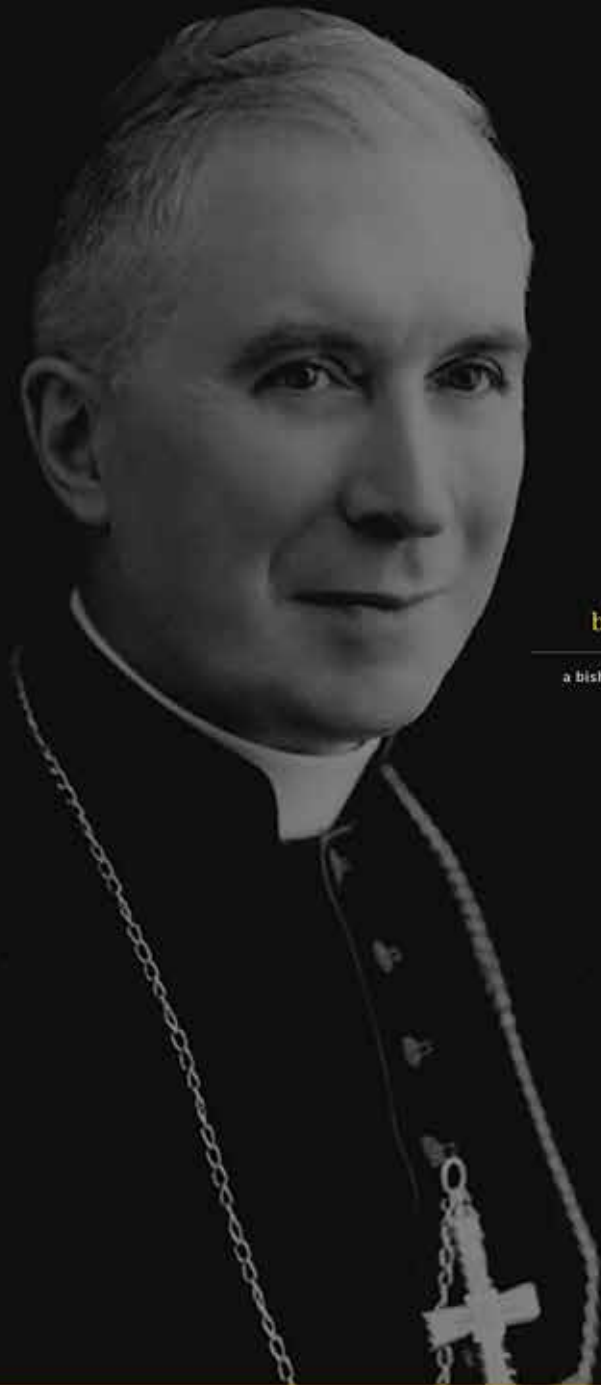
It was in 1976 that the first ordinations of the seminarians who had completed all their seminary studies at Écône took place. That year, Archbishop Lefebvre established the District of France for the Society. By that time, other seminarians had been ordained before us because they had already completed part of their seminary either in Rome or elsewhere, and finished their studies in Fribourg, Switzerland. This was the case for Frs. Aulagnier, Tissier de Mallerais, Post and also the Frs. Bolduc and Bernard Waltz, who are now deceased, and others...

The academic year of 1975-1976 had been draining for the Archbishop because Rome demanded the official closure of his seminary and, later on, the suspension *a divinis* was imposed on him by Pope Paul VI on the occasion of the priestly ordinations of June 29, 1976. This is when

Archbishop Lefebvre made Fr. Paul Aulagnier responsible for the foundation of the District of France. He thus became the first superior of the first district of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X. Just after my first Mass celebrated at Besançon on Sunday, September 4 (which was the Sunday following the famous Mass at Lille of Archbishop Lefebvre), I became Fr. Aulagnier's first District Treasurer.

Organizing the District

Fr. Aulagnier organized the District of France from the centrally located Le Pointet, a house bought shortly before the ordinations of June 1976 by the Archbishop. This became our "first" retreat house of the Exercises of St. Ignatius.



Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

biography

a Bishop for the Church

the man

we have believed in
charity

doctrine

I have handed on that
which I received

Visit the dedicated website on
marcellefebvre.info

Archbishop Lefebvre and Shakespeare

By Andrew J. Clarendon

In *Ideas Have Consequences*, Richard Weaver writes: “Evidently it is the poet’s unique command of language which gives him his ability to see the potencies in circumstances. He is the greatest teacher of cause and effect in human affairs; ...poets are the quickest to apprehend necessary truth.” Dealing in “the evocative power of words...[and] the mighty power of symbolism,” it is not surprising that a poet can teach profound truths even centuries after his death; at the highest level, poetic lessons have perennial value. Such is the power of inspiration that poets even seem to prophesize: one thinks of Virgil’s famous Fourth Eclogue, often called the Messianic because it reads like a foretelling of the coming of Christ. In English, the greatest poet is, of course, Shakespeare, whose plays, while presenting a certain plot with certain characters, nevertheless

express universal themes. The lessons conveyed can therefore be applied to other situations and can be useful in understanding the cause and effect in human affairs that Weaver identifies above. For this year’s celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Saint Pius X, reviewing some themes in Shakespeare’s tragedy *King Lear* and his comedy *As You Like It* is a poetic, connatural way to further appreciate Archbishop Lefebvre’s stand for tradition and orthodoxy.

The Bard’s Greatest Work

Generally regarded as his greatest work, Shakespeare’s tragedy *King Lear* involves a crisis of authority; the play is a study of how the

The Last Mass of Padre Pio

The startling truths uncovered by this book will forever change the way Catholics view the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

By **Alessandro Gnocchi and Mario Palmaro**



“Later, as an aged Capuchin friar, the mere thought of the liturgical reform, which would take effect in 1969, was sufficient to raise in him a holy horror. Throughout his life the holy friar had been obedient even unto martyrdom, but at this time the only request he dared to put forth to the authorities of the Church was to be exempted from the novelties of the impending liturgical reform.”

On September 23, 1968 after having borne the stigmata for exactly 50 years, the saintly Padre Pio died. This holy mystic spent his life as a living imitation of Christ and is the only priest in history to bear the stigmata. During his life, in spite of the physical pain he endured, Padre Pio continued to say his daily Mass. But part of his suffering was unknown. Padre Pio wrote a petition appealing directly to Pope Paul VI so as to obtain permission, from the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth, to never be required to say the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The existence of this petition was kept secret from the public...until now.

For the first time published in English, read the startling testimony and eyewitness accounts of close friends and spiritual sons of Padre Pio as they reveal his thoughts on the sanctity of the Mass, the changes occurring in the Church during his lifetime, and the chilling effects they would have on the future.

Look behind the cloister wall and discover a side of Padre Pio you've never seen before.

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Why Is the SSPX Necessary?

By Benjamin Bielinski

As history looks back on the accomplishments of the Archbishop, many are quick to judge. His decision to start a priestly society, which began to take form in the early 1960s, is often criticized as egotistical, unnecessary, and disobedient. But this couldn't be further from the truth. His priestly society was founded with the support and approval of his local ordinary and the later episcopal ordinations, though questioned at the time, are now recognized as legitimate and free of any negative juridical effect as made clear by Benedict XVI through Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re in the decree "Remitting the Excommunication *latae sententiae* of the bishops of the Society of Saint Pius X." While this decree lifted the excommunications but imposed no additional changes, belief, or action on the part of the Society, some still question the actions

of the Archbishop. For even though Archbishop Lefebvre's actions were just and right the more frequently asked question is why?

Motivations of the Archbishop

Why did he choose to act as he did at that specific time? Anyone who has read the works of the Archbishop will quickly understand that he did what he did to preserve the sacred priesthood and all that this holy office touches. Few realize that his actions were not the result of his own desires, but rather in response to the many requests he received from seminarians who were unable to find a traditional seminary that remained true to the teachings of Holy Mother Church. The 1960s were the culmination



The seminarians and professors at the beginning of the academic year in Écône, October 1971.

of changes that had been in motion for a long time and these changes attempted to alter what it meant to be a priest. In hindsight, we can now say these changes have resulted in the single most devastating reduction in the number of priests worldwide since the institution of the priesthood by Christ Himself. But if priests are so important, the seminaries that train them are equally so.

Priestly Seminaries in the 1960s

It may be hard for some of us to accurately imagine a young man seeking to live out his priestly vocation in the 1960s as tradition was still visible in most Churches and cities. The rot that has eroded doctrine in the minds of so many today had not yet completely spread to the world at large but it bloomed in the houses of priestly formation. Sadly, the French seminary of the Congregation of Holy Ghost Fathers in Rome was no exception to this blight and by the 1960s it appears to be all but complete. The rector of the French seminary in Rome recalls a rebuke of Archbishop Lefebvre which took place in the spring of 1962.

“He took me to task for having told the bishops who were staying at the seminary that I was determined to train students to work for them in their dioceses, according to their directives and in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. He reminded me that the Holy Ghost Fathers, not the French bishops, had founded and were responsible for the French seminary.”

This was not an isolated incident and in fact mirrored what was rapidly taking place around the world as ecclesiastical leaders fell to the allure of modernism already prevalent in society. The Gregorian University in Rome founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1551 quickly altered its age-old requirement of teaching its courses in Latin. While many accepted the changes, a few voiced their concern:

“If the courses are no longer taught in Latin, the seminarians will not be able to understand their breviaries or the Church Fathers. They will no longer be able to read the commentators of St. Thomas, and the liturgy would not be able to remain in Latin. It would be a terrible impoverishment for the priests, who would be cut off definitely from the Church’s inheritance.”

Despite protests like this, the changes still took place and their implementation was rapid, >

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incisive, and radical, but Providence had other plans.

Providential Timing

The timing was providential to begin this work as the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968 were in the process of bringing their constitutions into conformity with the Second Vatican Council, during which they immediately requested that the Archbishop take an extended leave of absence. This was done as a result of the opposition he had already voiced against the Council and, consequently, he tendered his resignation. It is interesting to note that if the Holy Ghost Fathers hadn't rejected the Archbishop due to his adherence to the unchanging Catholic doctrine, he would not have been able to devote his later years to the creation and growth of a new Society whose sole purpose was to preserve that same doctrine. Also, if the liberal seminary rectors and professors allowed traditional seminarians to be ordained, there would have never been a reason for Society of Saint Pius X to exist, as those same seminarians would never have sought out the Archbishop. Both the Archbishop and seminarians found a new home on November 1, 1970 when the Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva, and Fribourg approved and confirmed the constitutions and proceeds to the canonical foundation of the International Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in his diocese. This is the context for the creation of the Society. Both seminarians and bishop were rejected along with the traditional teachings of the Church. The needs of the seminarians and the blessing and approval of the local ordinary made it clear to the archbishop what he needed to do.

Testimony of Seminarians over the Years

As seminaries around the world continued to worsen, the little Society began to see its first growth. One seminarian recalls the early years and his own impression of the Archbishop at that time.



"I joined the seminary during the hot summer of 1976, just when the Archbishop had been suspended by Pope Paul VI and had given his polemical sermon of Lille in late July. It was clear there was a war between two opposing positions, and that the Archbishop, for all his combative statements and attacks against the progressives, made total sense, whereas his detractors were simply snarling at his position and failing to refute his arguments against the new Mass, the new Catechism, *etc.* It was clear that the rug was being pulled out from under the Church and many of the younger priests were leaving their sacred duties to go back into the world—sorry times indeed."

The sentiments echoed in this eyewitness account illustrates how a tiny organization was successful precisely because it was dedicated to the preservation of the Catholic priesthood in its entirety without compromise. A recently ordained priest of the Society of Saint Pius X had this to say when asked this question.

"Why did you choose to join the Society of Saint Pius X?"

"A couple years after I entered the seminary,



A Bishop for All Seasons

By Fr. Dominique Bourmaud

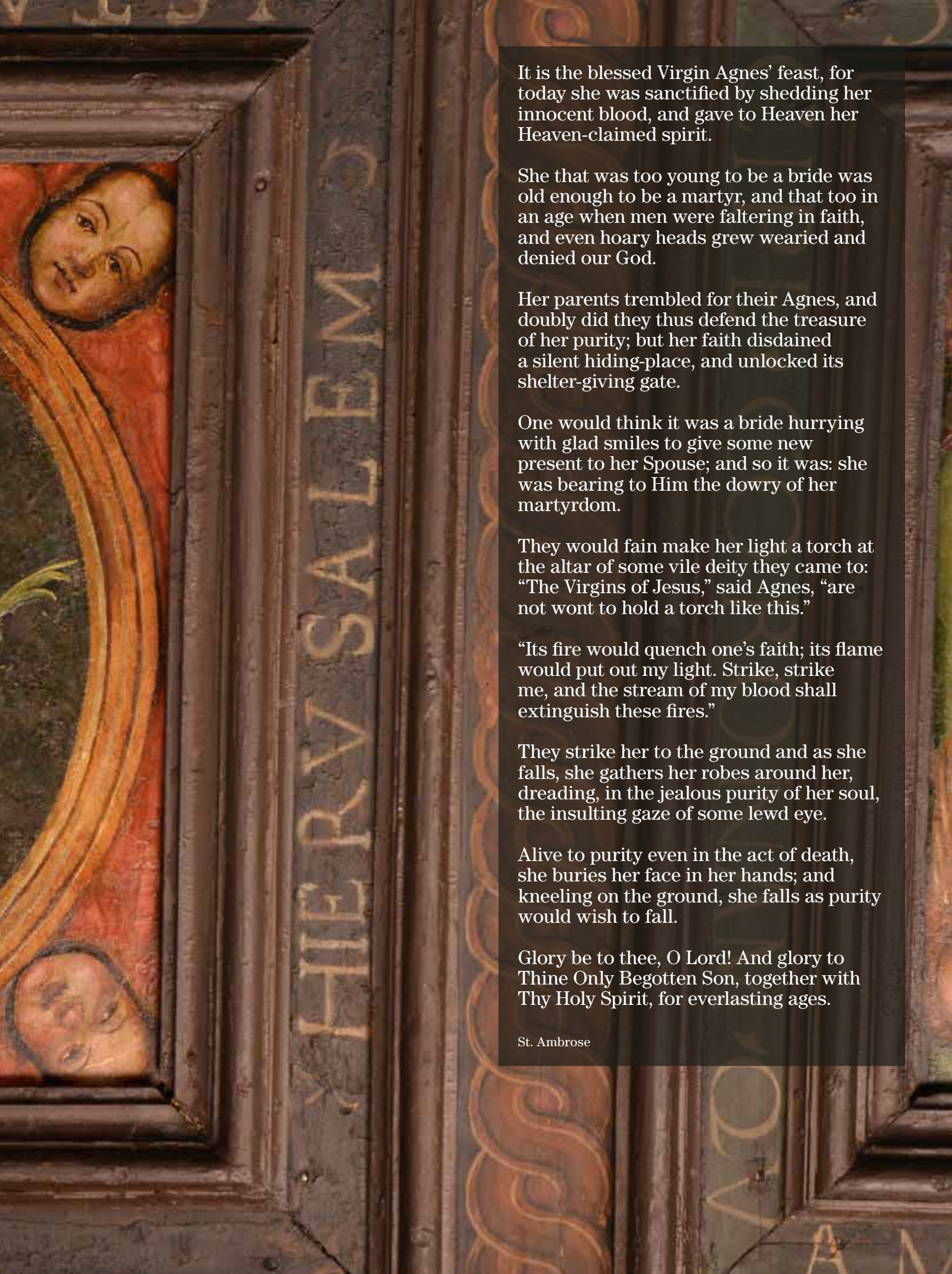
“In this Feast of All Saints, we contemplate those saints who teach us to remain in Tradition, to do that very thing they did to become saints. We are repeating the same rites, the same gestures; we recite the same prayers. We believe in the same perennial catechism which they believed in, and that is what made them get to Heaven”—Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, November 1, 1980

This sermon is hardly going to raise an eyebrow. Yet, this was pronounced by a man who had been ostracized as tearing the Church’s unity, and received the epithet of “rebel,” “disobedient” to the pope, and “another Luther” leading souls into schism and error.

The Iron Bishop

When Archbishop Lefebvre and his close friends realized that things were becoming heated at the Vatican II Council, he urged on to keep flying the flag of Tradition against the odds in the face of a powerful Modernist faction leading the Church astray. Some of the good bishops, like Bishop Adam of Sion (where Écône is located) were so disgusted at the turn of events

that they refused to return to the next conciliar session. When later, the new Mass was being implemented, 6,000 Spanish priests begged the pope for the privilege of keeping the Mass of all times and were promptly silenced under the magic word “Obey!” Nothing was heard from them anymore. Few were those who resisted and kept business as usual regarding the Mass and catechism and preaching which they had always



It is the blessed Virgin Agnes' feast, for today she was sanctified by shedding her innocent blood, and gave to Heaven her Heaven-claimed spirit.

She that was too young to be a bride was old enough to be a martyr, and that too in an age when men were faltering in faith, and even hoary heads grew wearied and denied our God.

Her parents trembled for their Agnes, and doubly did they thus defend the treasure of her purity; but her faith disdained a silent hiding-place, and unlocked its shelter-giving gate.

One would think it was a bride hurrying with glad smiles to give some new present to her Spouse; and so it was: she was bearing to Him the dowry of her martyrdom.

They would fain make her light a torch at the altar of some vile deity they came to: "The Virgins of Jesus," said Agnes, "are not wont to hold a torch like this."

"Its fire would quench one's faith; its flame would put out my light. Strike, strike me, and the stream of my blood shall extinguish these fires."

They strike her to the ground and as she falls, she gathers her robes around her, dreading, in the jealous purity of her soul, the insulting gaze of some lewd eye.

Alive to purity even in the act of death, she buries her face in her hands; and kneeling on the ground, she falls as purity would wish to fall.

Glory be to thee, O Lord! And glory to Thine Only Begotten Son, together with Thy Holy Spirit, for everlasting ages.

St. Ambrose

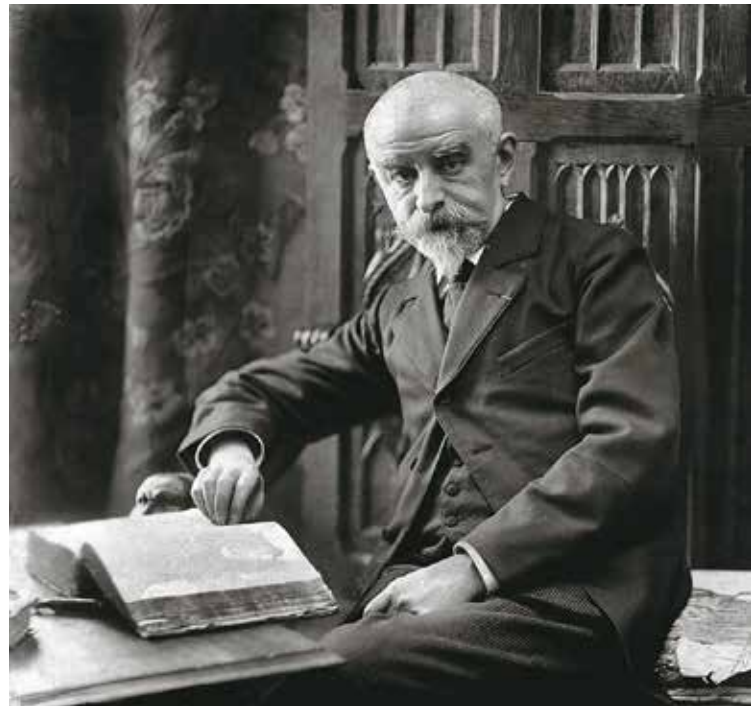


presented by the positivist with a life guided by a proper understanding of the natural world as taught by the Incarnate Word in four further novels: *Là-bas* (*The Damned*, 1891), *En Route* (1895), *La Cathédrale* (1898), and *L'Oblat* (*The Oblate*, 1903). Here, the main character, another autobiographical figure named Durtal, flees the dangerous flirtation with demonic forces to which his decadence has led him. He goes *en route* to a Catholicism whose full effect on nature is symbolized by the cathedral of Chartres, which inspires him to become an oblate in a Benedictine monastery. Durtal-Huysmans has come to realize that he lives in a good natural world flawed by sin where the believer has to accept the need for suffering and expiation on his way to eternal glory.

A man like Huysmans was always an outsider from the standpoint of many Catholics who did not grasp the different kind of path that people who started with Baudelaire and moved through Decadence and the subsequent Symbolist Movement had taken to arrive at the fullness of the Faith. Huysmans's truly "insider's" sense of the importance of orthodox belief and the dangers to which the dominant mentality exposed someone seeking to find and maintain it, can be seen in the alarmed warning regarding theological Modernism sounded in *The Oblate*, which was published the year of St. Pius X's election to the See of Peter.

Biographies such as Huysmans's and his fellow Decadent-to-Symbolist-to Catholic literary colleagues are of great interest to me for two reasons, the first of which is that they contribute to an understanding of something very important in the history of the Church: the apostolate of the outsiders. This apostolate has repeatedly proven to be an incomparable blessing to the Mystical Body of Christ, whose "insiders," clergy, religious, and laity alike, can often lose their way, if not in terms of "officially" rejecting the Faith and destroying the sacraments, certainly in the sense of neglecting, obscuring, and giving public scandal to them. It is at such moments that those who are "outsiders," whether through their lack of any power to correct what has gone badly wrong or their sincere longing for deeper knowledge of the substance of the Way, the Truth, and Life—

and not its disfigured image— have repeatedly entered onto the scene to fulfill their role. This outsider call to "jump start" a failing engine has the occupational hazard of being misunderstood and maltreated by the insiders who are not doing their own job properly. All one has to do is to look at the accusations of schismatic and heretical behavior hurled at the monks of Cluny in the 10th century and the initial reformers of the Renaissance and Catholic Reformation era to verify this fact.



Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), Albert Harlingue/Roger-Viollet 1905

By now, it will be clear to all of my readers that the specific and incomparably important apostolate of the outsiders that concerns me here is the one that has been exercised for 50 years by the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX). Founded by a man who never dreamed that the term "insider" could possibly be denied him, this apostolate has unashamedly dedicated itself to teaching and doing nothing other than what Archbishop Lefebvre had had the highest official approval for preaching and promoting throughout his entire previous vocational career. Moreover, it has >

Questions
Complex & Simple
Answers

Part One: Prof. Felix Otten, O.P. and C.F. Pauwels

Editor's Note: This article is the first in a series of straightforward responses to frequently encountered questions and objections concerning the Catholic Faith. The questions and answers are adapted from Professor Felix Otten, O.P. and C.F. Pauwels O.P.'s *The Most Frequently Encountered Difficulties*, published originally in Dutch in 1939.

How can there be a God if there is so much misery in the world?

It is common to hear people contend that there is no God because the world is full of misery. Whether man-made or the product of natural disasters (tornadoes, volcanoes, earthquakes, etc.), misery is everywhere. Then there are as well the miseries caused by starvation, economic inequality, and conflicts between peoples and nations.

We must have a very strange idea of God to

conclude from such facts that there is no God: as if God should be ready everywhere to take away the harshness and cruelty of life. Certainly, there are atrocities in nature, but that is a necessary consequence of the interacting parts of nature, which is part of creation and therefore limited and finite in perfection. Parasites, for example, live and enjoy life at the expense of others. But the animals on which they parasitize often live and also enjoy life. The pain caused by the parasites can be borne by them; otherwise they could not live.

All forces of nature are good for the whole; there are no purely destructive forces of nature

Bishop Schneider on the Problem of a

Heretical Pope

By Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize

On March 21, 2019, the “Blog de Jeanne Smits” published a French translation of a long text by His Excellency Bishop Athanasius Schneider published in English the day before on Rorate-Caeli.blogspot.com. The French journalist presented her translation under the suggestive title “On the Question of a Heretical Pope: Bishop Athanasius Schneider Sheds Light on the Debate.” Bishop Schneider seeks to bring everything down to one specific question: “How to handle a heretical pope, in concrete terms?”¹ The question is considered on the practical level. This level must include not only necessary and absolute principles, but also variable and relative circumstances. The difficult part is putting each of the two in its proper place, in a truly heavenly perspective.

Schneider’s Principles and the Society’s

Are Bishop Schneider’s considerations inspired by the same principles as those held by Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX)? Without denying the grave harm heresy represents for the Church or underestimating the importance of the integrity of the Faith, the prelate rather insists upon a different aspect of the question raised by the supposed heresy of the pope. In his eyes, the opinion according to which the Church has an authority over the pope and in the event of a heresy on his part could depose him or at least declare his demise manifests “the unhealthy attitude of a pope-centrism, of *papolatria* ultimately.”

He says those who hold this opinion make the pope “a kind of half-god, who cannot commit any errors, not even in the realm outside the object of papal infallibility.” It is “an indirect or subconscious