sì sì no no

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Let your speech be "Yes, yes: no, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • **January 2009**
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THE STATE OF NECESSITY

In a letter dated July 8, 1987, Archbishop Lefebvre wrote to Cardinal Ratzinger: "The permanent will to annihilate Tradition is a suicidal will, which justifies, by its very existence, true and faithful Catholics when they make the decisions necessary for the survival of the Church and the salvation of souls."[1] In his homily on the day of the episcopal consecrations of June 30, 1988, the Archbishop returned to this rule, from which he deduced the legitimacy of his actions. "Thus," he explained, "we find ourselves in a case of necessity.... This is why we are convinced that, by the act of these consecrations today, we are obeying...the call of God."[2]

The Real Reason for the Society's Stand

The attitude of Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of St. Pius X is not reducible to a certain personal attachment to the Church's Tradition. If it only involved a personal attachment, we should have accepted long ago (as ultimately the priests of Campos did in 2002, and the priests of the Institute of the Good Shepherd in 2006) the principle of the personal apostolic administration or of a personal parish, which are particular, limited legal frameworks within which the expression of a personal attachment to the Tradition of the Church can legitimately prevail, more or less, according to the terms of the agreements. And because this attachment is merely personal, there is no room for challenging the gains of the Second Vatican Council to which one must willy-nilly pledge allegiance, even if it is only by signing the New Profession of Faith of 1989.[3] Archbishop Lefebvre never refused in principle Rome's extended hand, and, following its founder, the Society of St. Pius X always remains ready to respond favorably to the opportunity of these discussions with the authorities of the hierarchy. But these contacts have only one goal: to let the pure and integral voice of Catholic Tradition be heard in Rome so that it might recover its rights in the whole Church. The discussions will be in vain for as long as Rome maintains in principle the corrupted teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Things stand thus because the liturgical and doctrinal Tradition reigning prior to Vatican II is not just one form of Catholic expression among others in the Church. It cannot be defended by pleading only the cause of "all those Catholic faithful who feel attached to some previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition."[4] The defense of this Tradition is nothing more nor less than the defense of the integrity of the Catholic Faith, which is *the common good of the Church*; by this very fact it entails the fight against the reforms that issued from Vatican II which challenge fundamental truths of faith and thus endanger the common good of the Church. When this common good of the Catholic Faith is considered by the authorities as the object of a simple personal attachment, a state of necessity exists.

The State of Necessity

A state of necessity is an extraordinary situation in which the necessaries of natural or supernatural life are threatened in such a way that to safeguard them one finds oneself habitually obliged to break the law. Now, law is essentially intended by legislators to procure

these necessaries to their subjects. In the Church, the whole edifice of ecclesiastical law is by definition ordered to the preaching of the doctrine of faith and the administration of the sacraments.[5] If the application of the law goes against the end of the law intended by the legislators, it is no longer legitimate because self-contradictory. The subjects can and must take no notice of it in order to obtain the end of the law despite the authorities who apply the law contrary to the law.

It is clear that since the Second Vatican Council the Church has found herself in such a situation. The common good of the Church is the handing down of the Catholic Faith, and if the pope has received authority from Christ, it is uniquely to safeguard Tradition. Now, since the Council, instead of continuing to transmit the deposit of faith as did all their predecessors for two thousand years, the men of the Church have taken it upon themselves to impose on the faithful the principal theses of the new theology condemned by Pius XII in *Humani Generis* and then confirmed by Vatican Council II and the reforms that followed, novelties absolutely contrary to all that our Lord taught. Since 1965, the authorities of the Church have imposed a new Creed in three articles, with religious liberty, ecumenism, and collegiality; since 1969, they have also imposed a reformed liturgy with a new Mass of Protestant spirit and sacraments renewed in an ecumenical sense. These popes have imposed the grave errors of neo-modernism, already condemned by their predecessors. Faced with this generalized protestantization, the Church must react. A state of necessity exists that legitimates resistance; it is this resistance that explains the work of Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X.

The Enduring Dilemma

Archbishop Lefebvre perceived the dilemma: either capitulate to tyranny under pretext of obedience, or else resist tyranny by rejecting false obedience.

> If this government [the conciliar Church] abandons its duty and turns against the Faith, what ought we to do? Remain attached to the government, or attached to the Faith? We have a choice. Does the Faith take precedence? Or is it the government that takes precedence? We are faced with a dilemma and we are indeed obliged to make a choice.[6]

The choice was made and the defense of the Faith prevailed over false obedience:

> We do not reject the pope's authority, but rather what he does. We do indeed recognize the pope's authority, but when he makes use of it to do the opposite of that for which it was given him, it is obvious that we cannot follow him.[7]

These words were spoken 20 years ago. Today, everything still hinges on this state of necessity. If one believes that it no longer exists, deeming that Pope Benedict XVI has set about correcting not only the abuses but also the false principles of the Council, it becomes necessary to cease a resistance that can no longer be justified; it becomes necessary to accept the canonical statute proposed by Rome. This is what the priests of Campos and those of the Institute of the Good Shepherd have done. But if one has kept one's eyes open, one sees that the state of necessity still exists, and this is why the resistance must continue. Just as in June 1988 Archbishop Lefebvre would have performed "Operation Suicide"[8] had he decided against consecrating the four bishops, so also today, obtaining a purely canonical solution for the Society of St. Pius X from Rome would be "very imprudent and hasty," as Bishop Fellay recently reaffirmed.[9] In fact, it is possible that circumstances have evolved on this or that point since the Roman authorities have been trying to establish a new equilibrium far removed from the shameful abuses that followed the implementation of the Council. But for all that, the circumstances have not changed fundamentally insofar as the same Roman authorities in charge of reforming abuses are still imbued with the same false principles of Vatican II, which are the ultimate source of the abuses.

This analysis, moreover, has been confirmed by the events of the last 20 years, which correspond with an aggravation of the crisis. The distance that has opened between the two liturgies amounts to an abyss separating two conceptions of the Church and the Faith.[10] The extent of this separation can be measured by the force with which the national episcopacies oppose the initiative of the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*. Even if the traditional rite of the Church is not supposed to exclude the new rite, its extension is viewed badly. The same opposition was to be seen when the Vatican proposed correcting the mistranslations of "*pro multis,*" which is part of the words of consecration in the Mass. These two examples show that Rome is not followed when it comes to reining in abuses. On the other hand, Rome is pursuing ecumenical dialogue more than ever and continues to preach the principle of the secular State. Another very tangible result of the crisis is the steep decline in vocations in the last two decades.[11]

A Doubly False Argumentation

In a little book published last year by Éditions Sainte Madeleine of the Monastery of Le Barroux, the Most Reverend Fernando Arêas Rifan reasons exactly as if a state of necessity not only no longer exists more than 20 years after the episcopal consecrations at Ecône, but that it never existed. The book, entitled *Tradition and the Living Magisterium*, is a revision of a "pastoral orientation" addressed to the priests of the St. John Vianney Apostolic Administration of Campos. It comprises three chapters. The first claims to recall the basic givens of traditional theology on the magisterium. The following two chapters apply these principles, the second to the question of the Mass, and the third

to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The fundamental flaw of this reflection is twofold: it presents a warped idea of the magisterium, and it denies the state of necessity.

A False Idea of the Magisterium of the Church

Bishop Rifan has a false idea of the magisterium. The first chapter of his book *Tradition and the Living Magisterium* overlooks the fundamental points of the actual doctrine of the Church on the pope's power and the Church's magisterium [teaching authority]. Yet Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer had underlined these points in a remarkable study published in *Heri et Hodie* (No.3, May 1983), the monthly periodical of the priests of Campos. This study was included in a booklet that came out in several languages, the English version being published in 2000 under the title *Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman*: *A Summary Defense of Catholic Tradition* (pages 22-23).

The Bishop Emeritus of Campos emphasized this fundamental truth: "the pope is essentially the Vicar of Jesus Christ." From this he draws several consequences:

> This aspect is of the very essence of the papacy. It cannot be put aside. Forgetting it would have the worst consequences, leading people to believe that the pope is master of the Church, that he can do what he wants, ordain and rescind according to that which might seem best to him, the faithful being always and absolutely obliged to obey him. Upon reflection, it is clear that this conception attributes to the pope omniscience and omnipotence, exclusive attributes of God. It would be idolatry, transferring to the creature that which is proper to divinity. This is why the First Vatican Council, in defining the powers of the pope, took care to also define its purpose and its limits. The pope must keep intact the Church of Christ, through which the Divine Savior perpetuates His work of salvation. Therefore he must maintain the structure of Holy Church as the Lord has constituted it, and he must vigilantly preserve and wholly transmit the faith and morality received from the Apostolic Tradition....
>
> Should the pope be unfaithful to this mission, the grave duty of Catholics is to resist him in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, of whom the pope is only the vicar.
>
> ...Whence it follows that the priests of Campos, in rejecting the New Mass, do not reject John Paul II, nor communion with the entire Church, since the New Mass is prejudicial to the Faith....

Contrary to these luminous considerations, Bishop Rifan preaches blind obedience to a pseudo-magisterium, to an absolute rule independent of the objective tradition of past centuries:

> Being content with quoting earlier popes alone as if they were the current pope, or earlier bishops as if they were the present bishop, would be to betray the lack of a good Catholic spirit. It would be the negation of the living magisterium and the institution of a posthumous magisterium in the Protestant style.

But is he not forgetting rather quickly that the Church's magisterium is essentially a traditional magisterium: in every age of history, the present teachings of the Catholic hierarchy always rest upon those of the past, in keeping with the words of St. Paul: "*Tradidi quod et accept*–I have handed down to you what I received." The Church's teaching is a constant teaching, for it accomplishes the integral transmission of the inalterable deposit of divine revelation. Therefore, if the faithful Catholic observes a break in the Church's preaching, this can only be because the men charged with making this teaching heard have been unfaithful to the mission received from God; the faithful must then remain as constant as divine Tradition itself and not allow themselves to be swayed by the winds of new doctrines. Acting thus, the faithful do not place themselves above the magisterium; on the contrary, they do but show their submission to the magisterium of yesterday, which is the still living, and as indefectible as divine revelation, condemnation of today's now unfaithful pseudo-magisterium.[12]

Rejection of the Obvious

Not content with falsifying the Catholic notion of the Church's magisterium, Bishop Rifan also denies the state of necessity, which is nonetheless a tangible reality. Anyone used to hearing Archbishop Lefebvre preach could not but be struck by an expression that recurred incessantly, every time the former Archbishop of Dakar expounded the profound reasons for the Society's combat: "We are obliged to observe..." This is a decisive expression, for it indicates the point of departure for all of our analysis: these are facts that have no need of demonstration because they impose themselves upon the consciences of Catholics who are the least bit lucid. From the beginning of the Society's opposition, the attitude of Churchmen, who abuse their power by imposing on Catholics the errors already condemned by the whole of the preceding magisterium, especially by Pope St. Pius X and his successors until the venerated Pope Pius XII, has been obvious. The Conciliar apostasy is a fact against which no theoretical argument can prevail. Either one sees or one does not see. Or else one no longer sees.[13] And once one has become blind, one can no longer bear the brightness of the light: then "you're a libertine if you have good eyes."

Bishop Rifan denies the obvious. And the negation of the obvious is already contained in the false idea that he makes of the magisterium. If one ascribes to the magisterium the exclusive attributes of God, neither the pope nor the bishops could ever be unfaithful to their charge, not even outside the strict limits of their infallibility. The faithful will always offer to their pastors an absolute obedience. The state of necessity is by definition an impossibility. With such a postulate, the only thing left to do is to deny the fact of the crisis in

the Church, to minimize and then reduce to nothing the serious detriment caused by the teachings and reforms of Vatican II: religious liberty, ecumenism, the new ecclesiology, and the new Mass. This is the natural bent of the *Ecclesia Dei* movement. Chapters 2 and 3 of Bishop Rifan's book are a striking illustration of this.

The New Liturgy and the State of Necessity

It suffices to examine the normative text of the *Novus Ordo* of 1969 to realize that the liturgical reform constitutes as such and in its principles a grave detriment for the common good of the unity of faith and worship in the Church. The conclusion of the *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass* presented on September 25, 1969, to Pope Paul VI by Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci is well known. The *Novus Ordo Missae* "represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session 22 of the Council of Trent."[14] This conclusion pertains independently of all the abuses which could have followed during the implementation of the new rite (defective translations, innovations and glosses exceeding the letter of the text, *etc.*). The critique in this case applies, not to abuses, but to the rite itself as it is expressed in the normative text of the 1969 typical edition.

An Incontestable Examination

As was to be expected, Bishop Rifan attempts to challenge the worth of the *Short Critical Study*; but for lack of valid arguments he is obliged to stoop to false reasoning, which the attentive reader will have no trouble discerning.

a. A simplistic amalgam

We start with the most flagrant of these untruths: the *Short Critical Study* is not reliable because "the majority of the radical critiques of the *Novus Ordo* originate with persons inclined to sedevacantism."[15] Many Communists think that two and two are four. Because they are Communists, should we think that two and two do not make four? Does Bishop Rifan suspect that, among those who, like him, are attached to the traditional rite of the Mass of St. Pius V, there are a good number of "persons inclined to sedevacantism"? Does he then conclude the illegitimacy of the traditional rite? It may be that one of the principal authors of the *Short Critical Study,* Fr. Guérard des Lauriers, ended up in sedevacantism,[16] but that was in 1977, long after the drafting and publication of the analysis of the New Mass. Should all the works of Tertullian written before his adhesion to Montanism be put on the Index? In fact, do the priests of Campos still use the *Catholic Catechism of Marriage* by Fr. Barbara, a sedevacantist of the first hour like Fr. Guérard des Lauriers?

b. The apocryphal letter of Cardinal Ottaviani

The second sophism is rather sly. Bishop Rifan presents it in §8 of Chapter 2, in which he makes much ado of the famous letter of February 17, 1970, which Cardinal Ottaviani purportedly addressed to Dom Marie-Gérard Lafond, O.S.B., and in which the eminent prelate would have claimed that he never authorized anyone to publish the *Short Critical Study.*[17] However, this letter is a forgery. In a study which is by now quite old, Jean Madiran demolished this imposture. He had only to relate a few facts of which he was the direct witness. In October 1969, Cardinal Ottaviani personally gave authorization to publish the *Short Critical Study* to Fr. Raymond Dulac, one of the principal collaborators of the journal *Itinéraires.* One month after the letter to Dom Lafond, Jean Madiran personally obtained assurance from Cardinal Ottaviani that the authorization was authentic. Until now, it has been generally granted that the objection derived from the purported Ottaviani letter to Dom Lafond was unfounded. By resorting to it anew, 35 years after Jean Madiran's refutation, Bishop Rifan deprives the *Ecclesia Dei* cause of a sizable part of its credibility.

c. Bishop de Castro Mayer Reread and Corrected

Chapter 2 concludes with a §9 in which, for the purposes of his cause, Bishop Rifan quotes Bishop de Castro Mayer's September 12, 1969, letter to Pope Paul VI. The short excerpt[18] could make one believe that Dom Antonio was seeking papal indulgence just for the privilege of continuing to use the Tridentine liturgy. But when the letter is read in its entirety,[19] it becomes clear that it constitutes an unflinching list of charges against the New Mass.[20] Contrary to what Bishop Rifan tries to make us believe, Bishop de Castro Mayer was seeking from Paul VI permission to keep the traditional rite to the exclusion of the new. Bishop Rifan quotes a short excerpt from a second letter sent by Bishop de Castro Mayer to Pope Paul VI on January 25, 1974.[21] This passage expresses a protestation of obedience towards the pope in everything that he might decide in conformity with Church Tradition. But Bishop Rifan avoids specifying the precise tenor of this letter. The letter accompanied three documented studies,[22] in which the Bishop of Campos explained to the Pope the acts of the pontifical magisterium that were unacceptable: ecumenism, religious liberty, and the New Mass. The third of these studies is by the Brazilian Lawyer Xavier da Silveira; it was subsequently published under the title *What Should We Think of Paul VI's New Mass?* Bishop Rifan speaks of it, but elsewhere, in order to deny him any credibility under the pretext that the author delves into the (entirely hypothetical) question of a possible heresy of the Sovereign Pontiff. Yet the letter of January 25, 1974, quoted only partially by Bishop Rifan in §9, in a passage that Bishop Rifan does not quote, unreservedly praises this study on the

New Mass, asserting that the arguments employed by Xavier da Silveira express the thought of the Bishop of Campos.[23] Fourteen years later, Dom Antonio had not changed his mind, since, having resolved to go to Ecône in person to attend the episcopal consecrations of June 30, 1988, he publicly protested against "these pernicious errors of which they [the faithful] are the victims, deceived by many persons who have received the fullness of the Holy Ghost!"[24]

Despite Bishop Rifan's untruths, two facts remain uncontestable: the *Short Critical Study* always kept its value in the eyes of Cardinal Ottaviani, and Bishop de Castro Mayer, basing himself upon this study and that of Xavier da Silveira, always contested the grounds of Paul VI's liturgical reform.

The Illegitimacy of the New Rite

In light of these two studies, it appears clearly that the reformed new rite of Paul VI is illegitimate. Certainly, Pope Paul VI desired to impose this reform, but that is not sufficient to constitute a legitimate exercise of authority. A pope can abuse his authority, and Paul VI undoubtedly exceeded the limits of his powers by promoting a rite so far removed from the Catholic definition of the Mass. Such a rite cannot be placed on the same rank as the traditional rite of St. Pius V:

> To compare the current reform to the reform, or rather, the act by which St. Pius V canonized the Latin rite of the Mass with the aim of protecting the faith against Protestant ideology is to give proof of a serious ignorance of the history both of the Council of Trent and of the Second Vatican Council and its liturgical reform. On the one hand everything was done to safeguard the traditional expression of the true faith; on the other, the ecumenical idea so attenuated this expression that doubt invaded the minds of the faithful and of priests.[25]

The reformed rite of Paul VI is an intruder; it is not only less good than the traditional rite, and the latter is not only preferable. The rite of Saint Pius V is good and legitimate; the rite of Paul VI is bad and illegitimate. Without affirming as much, no one can refuse in principle to celebrate the New Mass.[26]

Bishop Rifan's Preferences

In favor of the traditional rite of St. Pius V, Bishop Rifan from now on professes a simple preference:

> We keep the rite of Mass in its traditional form, that is to say, the ancient form of the Roman rite....We love it, we ***prefer*** it, and we keep it because it is, ***for us***, ***the best*** liturgical expression of Eucharistic dogma and a solid spiritual nourishment. We keep it for its richness, its beauty, its elevation, its nobility and the solemnity of its ceremonies, for its sense of the sacred and reverence, for its sense of mystery, for its greater clarity and rigor in the rubrics, which represent a greater security and protection against abuses by not leaving room for the "ambiguities, liberties, creativity, adaptations, reductions, and instrumentalizations" of which Pope John Paul II complained.[27]

For Bishop Rifan, the traditional rite of Mass is no longer the perfect expression of the Church's faith, in contrast with a new rite that represents a striking departure from it both as a whole and in its details. The traditional rite is the object of a personal preference for motives extrinsic to the profession of Catholic faith, which does not exclude the legitimacy and the intrinsic goodness of Pope Paul's new rite:

> Although we have the Mass in the traditional Roman rite as the rite proper to our Apostolic Administration, the participation of the faithful or the concelebration of one of our priests or its bishop at a Mass in the rite officially promulgated by the Church's hierarchy, determined by it to be legitimate and adopted by it, as is the case of the Mass celebrated in the current Roman rite, cannot be considered a bad action or one susceptible of the least criticism....[28]
>
> Our purpose, assuredly, is to combat herewith the doctrinal error of those who consider the New Mass as it was officially promulgated by the Church's hierarchy to be sinful, and, consequently, who think it impossible to attend it without committing a sin, violently attacking those who in certain circumstances participate in it as if they had committed an offense against God.[29]

The Limits of Pope Benedict XVI's Motu Proprio

In lines that were written before the promulgation of the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, Bishop Rifan already displays an enthusiastic welcome for the extension of the traditional liturgy: "Our applause is won over by the much desired Motu Proprio of Benedict XVI, who will grant universal freedom for the Mass in the traditional Roman rite, which will be of benefit to the whole Church."

It is undeniable that the recent Motu Proprio of July 7, 2007, represents an unprecedented expansion since 1969. But this expansion does not go so far as to make the traditional rite the ordinary and common expression of the law of prayer; the ordinary expression of this law remains the *Novus Ordo Missæ* of Paul VI. In the text of the Motu Proprio, Article 1 contains the decisions made:

> The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is the ordinary expression of the *Lex orandi* (Law of prayer) of the Catholic Church of the Latin rite. Nonetheless, the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V and reissued by Bl. John XXIII is to be considered as an extraordinary expression of that same *Lex orandi*, and must be given due honour for its venerable and ancient usage.

For the same "*lex orandi*," we are told, there are two expressions, one of which is extraordinary in relation to the other.

The Motu Proprio of July 2007 thus introduced the cohabitation of the two missals, except that the two are not on the same level: a place is kept for the Catholic

Mass; honorable by reason of the antiquity of its usage, it was never abrogated and remains the extraordinary expression of the liturgical law. But the Catholic Mass must take a place beside the *Novus Ordo Missae*, which remains the ordinary expression of the liturgical law. Certainly, from the standpoint of the faithful and priests who want to continue defending Catholic worship, a small place is not nothing, and it is even better than nothing at all. But from the standpoint of the Roman authorities, who want to continue imposing the liturgical reform of 1969 as the ordinary expression of the law, this little place must be inscribed in the liturgical pantheon, which is on an equal footing with the catechetical and dogmatic pantheon. A Pantheon or caravansary: such is the conciliar Church, in the image of modernism, which recognizes to all the religions, cults, and liturgies their expression, provided that they be living, that they be the spontaneous fruit of conscience and sensibility, the traditional sensibility included–why not? But with Archbishop Lefebvre, we persist in believing that the Catholic Mass merits much better than a little place beside the reformed Mass of Paul VI.

The conclusion that retains our interest is the following[30]: the Motu Proprio of Benedict XVI does not put an end to the state of necessity, and necessitates the continuing resistance of faithful Catholics in favor of the Catholic rite of the Mass, which must be recognized as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Catholic Church, to the exclusion of the new reformed rite of 1969. The law of belief does indeed depend upon the law of prayer. If there are two expressions, one good and the other bad, of the "*lex orandi*," then there are equally two beliefs, one good and the other bad. The same principle holds true: "*Lex orandi statuat legem credendi*." The belief of the people must be regulated by the expression of the liturgy (this is a necessary consequence). The missal conditions the faithful's profession of faith. Corresponding to a bad missal is bad belief. In order to restore the good belief completely, it does not enough to set the good missal beside the bad one; it is necessary to re-establish the traditional Missal of 1962 as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer to the exclusion of the missal of Paul VI.

In spite of certain undeniably positive aspects, Benedict XVI's act brings nothing that might justify Bishop Rifan's attitude. There is matter to justify, to the contrary, the attitude of the Society of St. Pius X.[31]

Religious Liberty and the State of Necessity

The declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* on Religious Freedom explicitly contradicts the teaching of the preceding Tradition.

A Twofold Error Condemned by Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX

Religious liberty was condemned by Pope Gregory XVI (1830-46) in the Encyclical *Mirari Vos* of August 15, 1832, then by Pope Pius IX (8146-78) in the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of December 8, 1864. This error can be summarized in two points: (1) "the best political regime and the progress of civil society absolutely require that human society be constituted and governed without making any distinction between the true and false religions" and consequently, "the best condition of society is that in which the civil authority does not have a duty to suppress by legal penalties the violators of Catholic law, except insofar as keeping the peace may require; (2) freedom of conscience and of worship is a right due to every man; this right must be proclaimed and guaranteed by the law in every well-organized society; the citizens have a right to complete freedom to manifest openly and publicly their opinions whatever they may be, by means of speech, the printed word or any other means, which neither the civil nor ecclesiastical authority may limit."

This twofold condemnation bears upon two different expressions of one and the same error, the error of the religious indifferentism of the public power. The first expression: Civil authorities must not intervene to repress the external manifestations of false religions in the framework of life in society. Second expression: individuals have a right not to be prevented by the civil authorities from exercising the exterior acts of their religion, true or false, in the external forum of life in society. This condemned error now forms the basis of all modern democracies. In his recent speech at the UN, Pope Benedict XVI, far from challenging this state of affairs, sees in it the logical culmination of the reforms undertaken by the Second Vatican Council. The false principle condemned by Gregory XVI and Pius IX has become the charter of the new social doctrine of the Conciliar Church.

Religious Liberty in the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*

a. The text of *Dignitatis Humanae*

The essential passage is in §2:

> This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The Synod further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional

law whereby society is governed. Thus it is to become a civil right.

This passage can be broken down into the following three propositions: (1) Religious freedom is a right proper to the human person; (2) This right must be recognized and guaranteed by the law in every society; (3) This right means that everyone must be free from all constraint whether from individuals or social groups or any human power whatsoever, such that in matters religious, no one may be compelled to act against his conscience nor prevented from acting, according to his conscience, in private as in public, alone or in association with others, within due limits.

b. The meaning of the text

The text does not teach (at least in §2) freedom of individual consciences in matters religious in the sense of the religious indifferentism of individuals; that is to say, in the sense that every man would have the right to choose the religion he likes (whether it be true or false objectively), without regard for any objective moral order.[32] The text teaches the freedom of individual external actions in matters religious in the sense that every man has the right not to be prevented by the civil authorities from exercising in the external forum of life in society, the religious acts that he feels in conscience obliged to accomplish, provided that these acts do not trouble the public order; this amounts to the teaching of the religious indifferentism of the civil authorities. In effect, the right thus defined implies that the civil authorities must not intervene in the external forum of life in society, whether in favor of the true religion or disfavor of false religions unless the public order would happen to be threatened.

Religious indifferentism in general corresponds to two distinct errors: the religious indifferentism of individuals and the religious indifferentism of the secular power. Section 2 of *Dignitatis Humanae* teaches the second error without teaching the first. But the teaching prior to Vatican II condemns the second error as well as the first, for there is a link of cause and effect between the second error and the first: man being a political animal, if he lives in a society in which the public powers profess indifferentism, he will finish by professing the same indifferentism. This is why this passage of *Dignitatis Humanae* is condemned as such by the previous magisterium. This passage teaches the second error, which is the very negation of the Social Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

c. The question of due limits

The indifferentism of civil authorities is described when No. 2 of *Dignitatis Humanae* indicates what are the external acts which men may, as a consequence of this freedom from constraint, accomplish or not. The text then speaks of "due limits." But this mention does not aim at restraining the specifically religious domain of the liberty in question. The exercise of a right can have extrinsic limits when the concrete exercise of a right, specifically defined by a property (in this instance the "religious" domain), oversteps this domain in virtue of other related properties. There are mixed matters, where certain limits will restrain the exercise of a right not by reason of the proper matter of the right, but by reason of another matter that coincides in fact with the proper matter of the right.

For example, a religious procession on a public thoroughfare involves the religious domain as such, but also affects the domain of traffic circulation. The two facts coincide, but remain distinct nonetheless. If the procession is limited because it impinges on the traffic of the route followed, the limit in question is ***extrinsic*** to the religious domain. On the other hand, the fact of exercising a true or false religion is an action intrinsic to the religious domain, and if this action is limited (for example, if the authorities allow the funeral procession of Baron James de Rothschild to the Père-Lachaise Cemetery while forbidding the Corpus Christi procession), the limit in question is ***intrinsic*** to the religious domain. As such, the properly religious domain of the right recognized by *Dignitatis Humanae* is without intrinsic limits because it is ascribed to all religions, true or false. At most there will be extrinsic limits taking into account the circumstances in which the right in favor of religion (whether true or false) is exercised.

d. A coherent text

This mention of "due limits" must be understood, then, not in relation to the objective order of the true religion, but in relation to the objective order of civil society, and signifies that the exercise of a religion, whether true or false, must respect good order and public peace. That is why this restriction of the right takes away absolutely nothing of the fundamental perversity of the false principle of religious liberty. Even if it imposes on the exercise of religion the limits required for the sake of public tranquility, the State remains absolutely indifferent to the truth or falseness of religion.[33]

(***To be continued***.)

Authored by Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize, SSPX. Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *Courrier de Rome*, July-August, 2008.

1 English version: Fr. François Laisney, *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican*, 2nd ed. (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1999), p.22.
2 *Ibid*., pp.118-19.
3 See Archbishop Lefebvre, Homily at Ecône, May 14, 1989, in *Vu de Haut*, No. 13, Fall 2006, p.70.
4 John Paul II, Motu Proprio *Ecclesia DeiAdflicta*, §5 [English version from Vatican web site].
5 Code of Canon Law (1917), Canon 682, and 1983 Code, Canon 213: "The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the word of God and the sacraments."
6 Archbishop Lefebvre, Homily at Ecône for the Chrismal Mass of Holy Thursday, March 27, 1986.
7 Archbishop Lefebvre quoted in *Fideliter*, November-December 1988, pp.27-31.
8 "Today, this day, is Operation Survival. If I had made this deal with Rome, by continuing with the agreements we had signed, and by putting them into practice, I would have

performed 'Operation Suicide'." Archbishop Lefebvre, Homily of June 30, 1988, in *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican*, p.119.

[9] Bishop Fellay, Letter to Friends and Benefactors No. 72, April 14, 2008.

[10] "The liturgy is a theological place. The *Ordo Missae* of 1969 implements in particular the theology of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. *Lumen Gentium* presents the Church as both the Mystical Body of Christ and as the People of God gathered in the name of Christ....The desire to encourage in the Latin Church a return to another theological accent by extending the 1962 *Ordo* is to cause a deep disturbance in the People of God": Dom Jean-Pierre Longeat, "L'Unité de la Liturgie Romaine en Question," *La Croix*, October 23, 2006, p.25.

[11] According to figures reported by the newspaper *La Croix* of April 11, 2008, p.17, France, "the Eldest Daughter of the Church," numbered 20,523 priests (diocesan and religious) in 2007, compared to 28,780 in 1995. The total number of seminarians declined from 1155 in 1995 to 756 in 2007. The number of entrants into the first year of seminary studies went from 247 in 1995 to 133 in 2007. The same newspaper in its May 29-31, 2004, edition (p.13) reported that France still compares favorably with Africa (one priest per 4700 inhabitants) or South America (one priest per 7100 inhabitants).

[12] Having explained this in detail in a previous article, "À propos de St. Vincent de Lérins," published in the February 2008 edition of *Courrier de Rome* [English version: see *SiSiNoNo*, May 2008], we shall not develop this point further. The reader who would like to delve into this should consult this study.

[13] "It seems that if one excludes from Assisi every thought of religious syncretism, this meeting can be situated on the level of natural religion; and that, having as its goal peace in the world, it should be understood as a highly and soundly political diplomatic act" (Jean Madiran, editorial of the newspaper *Présent*, No. 5001, January 26, 2002, p.1). Citing these reflections, Fr. Louis-Marie de Blignières, O.P., comments: "Unfortunately, Madiran's interpretation was practically unnoticed by the public nor was it picked up by Catholic commentators. It presents, however, the advantage of showing that Assisi can, thanks be to God, be considered other than as 'a public sin against the unicity of God,' as Archbishop Lefebvre asserted in 1986, or as a 'blasphemy' as his successor at the head of the SSPX maintained in 2002" ("Reflections on Assisi," *Sedes Sapientiae*, No. 80, Summer 2002, p.23). It would suffice for Mr. Madiran and Fr. de Blignières to reread the Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI (January 6, 1928) to be reminded that a natural religion never existed in the pure state. God promulgated a supernatural revelation which obliges all men to practise religion as it has been established in the one and only Catholic Roman Church. The claim that one is abiding by the precepts of the natural law alone already constitutes an admission of religious syncretism. The scandal of the ecumenical meetings at Assisi I (19886) and II (20002) and of Naples (2007) merely renews the error of the pan-Christians condemned by Pius XI.

[14] Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci, *The Ottaviani Intervention: Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass*, translated by Fr. Anthony Cekada (1969; reprint, Rockford, Ill.: TAN Books & Publishers, 1992, p. 27.

[15] Rifan, *Tradition*, p. 16.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 54, n. 71.

[17] *Ibid*., p. 65-66, with n. 97. Source of information on the the affair: Jean Madiran, "Sur la Lettre du Cardinal Ottaviani à Paul VI," *Supplément au no. 142 d'* Itinéraires," April 1970. On page 6, this study shows that the letter was published at the instigation of Msgr. Gilberto Agustoni, Cardinal Ottaviani's secretary. Since Ottaviani was already blind, it was easy for his secretary to abuse his trust by getting him to sign texts without telling him their precise content.

[18] *Ibid*., p.67.

[19] Reproduced in the journal *Le Sel de la Terre*, No. 37, Summer 2001, p.29.

[20] "The *Novus Ordo Missæ*, by the omissions and mutations it introduces into the Ordinary of the Mass and by many of its general norms, which indicate the conception and the nature of the new missal in its essential points, does not express as it should the theology of the holy sacrifice of the Mass established by the holy Council of Trent in its Session 22, a fact which simple catechesis does not succeed in counterbalancing....The *Novus Ordo* not only does not sustain fervor but on the contrary diminishes faith in the central truths of the Catholic life, such as the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the reality of the propitiatory sacrifice, and hierarchical priesthood."

[21] Rifan, *Tradition*, p.54, n.70.

[22] See *Le Sel de la Terre,* No. 37, Summer 2001, p.33ff.

[23] *Le Sel de la Terre*, No. 37, Summer 2001, p.34. Bishop de Castro Mayer was careful to state that the considerations on an eventual heresy of the Sovereign Pontiff remained purely theoretcial and did not imply any intention of analyzing the particulars of the present situation in the Church.

[24] Declaration of Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer in Laisney, *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican*, p.125.

[25] Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, *Courrier de Rome*, July 1974.

[26] "The New Mass is not good! If it were good, then tomorrow we would have to start saying it, obviously. If it is good, we must obey. If the Church gives us something good and tells us 'You must take it,' what reason could there be to say no? Whereas, if we say, 'This Mass is corrupted; this Mass is bad: it makes us gradually lose the faith,' then we are indeed obliged to refuse it." Quoted in *The Mass of All Time* (2005; English version: Angelus Press, 2007), p. 271.

[27] Rifan, *Tradition and the Living Magisterium*, p.38-9.

[28] *Ibid*., p.47.

[29] *Ibid*., p.49. Archbishop Lefebvre said just the opposite: "The New Mass leads to sin against faith, and that is one of the most serious of sins, the most dangerous of sins, ...the loss of faith..." (*The Mass of All Time*, p.284).

[30] For more details about the Motu Proprio, the reader may refer to the article published in the September 2007 of *Courrier de Rome* [and in the January 2008 issue of *SiSiNoNo*].

[31] For more details, the reader may wish to consult the exclusive interview with the Most Reverend Bernard Fellay, in *Nouvelles de Chrétienté*, No. 111, May-June 2008, online at www.dici.org.

[32] The religious indifferentism of individuals is condemned in Proposition 15 of Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors (DS 2915).

[33] This reading of §2 of *Dignitatis Humanae* is confirmed in parallel places of the document: the end of §§3, 7, 10, and 12.

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