

# **The Third Order of the FSSPX: its importance at the present time**

Dear faithful and friends of the Society of Saint Pius X,

This letter is addressed to all those who aspire to holiness; to all those who seek an easy way and effective help to reach Heaven; to all Catholics who sincerely love the Society of Saint Pius X and who would like to be more closely united to it. Above all, it is addressed to all those sincere souls who love Our Lord and who want to prove it to Him by giving Him "something more".

I will not speak to you here of the priesthood, nor of religious life, but of another means that the Church gives the faithful to help them: the Third Order. All major religious orders have one, and if Archbishop Lefebvre desired to found a Third Order for the Society, it is because he saw it as a powerful means of sanctification.

The Third Order is one of the "branches" of the Society. To become a member of the Third Order is therefore to belong to the family of the Society, in the same way as priests, brothers or oblates. It means entering into its life, its struggle, its joys and worries; it means supporting all the other members by one's own fidelity, and being helped in turn by all when the fight becomes tiring and courage is lacking. This is, in short, the dogma of the Communion of Saints, so beautiful and consoling, lived every day!

On this 1st November 2020, the feast of all the Saints, it is exactly forty years since our founder wrote the Rule of the Third Order of Saint Pius X. Like his life, this rule is discreet, concise, but very rich and profound; and if followed faithfully and generously, it traces a clear path to holiness.

Reading it, one realises that it requires nothing extraordinary, nothing very difficult, nothing frightening: morning and evening prayer, recitation of the rosary, attendance at Mass, a few days of fasting and abstention from morally dangerous leisure activities. Isn't this the normal life of a Christian, that to which he has been committed since his baptism?

But one might object: isn't a Third Order reserved for an elite, for those who are advanced in the spiritual life? Could one be tempted to think: "The Third Order is not for me"?

If the Third Order is reserved for an elite, it is an elite of love. What makes the Third Order both great and easily accessible is that the spirit that animates it is no different from that of the Church itself, that of the Heart of Our Lord: a spirit of love for God and love for souls. And the flame of this love burns, is rekindled and maintained simply at the foot of the altar, by attending the sacrifice of the Mass with an ardent, attentive, generous heart.

The Third Order is therefore open to all, great and small (from the age of twelve, if parents consent), strong and weak, faithful and sinners: provided that all are ready to love the One who loves them with a love so great that he came down from Heaven for them to ascend to Calvary and die upon the Cross.

There are many advantages for members of the Third Order. The first advantage is their own sanctification: participating in the spiritual treasure of the Society: in all the supernatural riches acquired by the members, they personally receive a greater abundance of graces. Every Mass celebrated daily throughout the world, every prayer recited, the sacrifices and merits of all, all belong to them and they can draw freely from them.

But there is more: each tertiary has the immense consolation of being able to help the Society directly in its apostolate, in its struggle: by the efforts he makes every day to fulfil his commitments, by the prayers and sacrifices he offers to God, he increases this spiritual treasure and powerfully supports the great family of which he is a part.

How much all these considerations must encourage you, dear faithful, to commit yourselves to this humble army of the Society so dear to the heart of God! Its fiftieth anniversary, which we are celebrating today, is a wonderful opportunity to take the step and decide personally, or even as a family, to enlist ardently under the banner of Christ our King. "*Dominus Rex noster, ipse salvabit nos!* The Lord is our King, it is He who will save us." (Antiphon of Vespers of Christ the King). Ask the priests of your priories: they will explain how to register to become tertiaries of the Society.

What a joy for the Heart of God, what a support for the Church, what an honour for you and what a help for the Society, if this year new members would come in great numbers, and if all the old members would become more fervent and holier! This is one of my dearest wishes. I entrust it to the burning Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank you for your generosity.

I gladly give you all my blessing.

Don Davide Pagliarani  
Superior General

Menzingen, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020