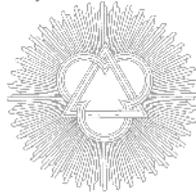


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# Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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NOVEMBER 2021

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Published by Most Holy Trinity Seminary, 1000 Spring Lake Highway, Brooksville, Florida 34602. This newsletter is sent free of charge to all Seminary benefactors who contribute \$75.00 or more annually. If you would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us by mail, or at [piuspapax@gmail.com](mailto:piuspapax@gmail.com). Please visit our website at [mostholytrinityseminary.org](http://mostholytrinityseminary.org)

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My dear Catholic people,

At long last, the remodeling of our building in Pennsylvania has begun. It has come in the form of what is known as *demolition*, which simply means the destruction of certain walls and ceilings which need to be out of the way for the remodeling.

The original price given to me for this work was \$2.5 million, which was more, much more, than we had, so it was necessary for me to cut back on many things which would have been ideal, but not absolutely necessary in order to occupy the building.

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the past year or so, in some cases with very extraordinary donations. We are still asking, however, for more donations so as to do as much as we can while the new seminary is under the construction of remodeling.

I am also hoping, if we could possibly afford it, to purchase a church in the Philadelphia area. Not only would this church provide Mass for the whole area, including the suburbs in New Jersey, but would also be a source of income for the seminary. The seminary has no source of income except from outside of itself. We collect very little of our operating

expenses from what the families of seminarians contribute. Furthermore, we will have many priests at the seminary who could say Mass in the whole region. Reading is very well placed for it. Maryland is not very far away, nor New Jersey, nor Delaware, nor the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre area. Midtown Manhattan is only two hours away, one hundred miles exactly. Pittsburgh area is four hours away.

All of these places are heavily Catholic.



#### THE PERFECT CHURCH

*A church located in Norristown, Pennsylvania, which would serve the seminary perfectly. They are asking \$645,000.*

The church to which I am referring is located in Norristown, a suburb to the northwest of Philadelphia. It is exactly one hour from the seminary. There is a church for sale there which is absolutely perfect for us. It is a protestant church in a great neighborhood, with plenty of on-street parking. We looked at a few churches in Reading itself, but the problem there is that central Reading was built up before the advent of the automobile, with the effect that the houses have no garages. So everyone parks on the street. Consequently,

although there are some magnificent churches for sale cheap (\$350,000), none of our parishioners would be able to park. These old churches were built at a time when people would walk to church.

They were neighborhood churches. But times have changed.

The price of this “perfect church” in Norristown is \$645,000, but the realtor says that the owner would entertain all offers. But right now I cannot even think about buying it until we get the remodeling done in the Reading seminary.

We are showing well for vocations thus far. Two are certain. There are another four who have expressed interest. It is in the spring that most of the applications come. But six at this time indicates that the number will go much higher, at least according to our models in the past. Again, however, I do not count them until Christmas, that is, the Christmas of 2022. It is because some do come, but do not survive, for various reasons, the first trimester.

At present, in Brooksville, we are at capacity, with fourteen seminarians. Four of these will be ordained in June, and will be dispersed in various apostolates. At least one, however, will join the faculty of the seminary.

**Bishop Dolan.** You may have seen recently a video in which I responded to Bishop Dolan about the *Thesis*, the common name given to the theological explanation given by the late Bishop Guérard des Lauriers as an explanation of the present problem in the Church.

The central theological problem to solve is this: It is Catholic dogma that there must be an unbroken succession of the Catholic hierarchy (popes and bishops) from the time of Christ to the end of the world.

How does the sedevacantist explain this? We are saying that there is neither pope nor bishops. All the Vatican II “popes” and “bishops” are deprived of authority for the reason of their intention to impose upon the Church the heresy of Modernism, as well as the liturgical and disciplinary observances in conformity with it.

That, of course, makes sense. But then how do you solve the problem of the continuity of the hierarchy until the end of time?

There are two theories concerning the current vacancy of the Roman see and the episcopal sees. One is called *totalism*, to which Bishop Dolan and his clergy adhere, as well as the CMRI clergy, if I am not mistaken. It says that not only do the Novus Ordo hierarchs lack the jurisdiction to teach, rule, and sanctify the Church, but also lack any claim to a legitimate designation (i.e., appointment or election) to receive such jurisdiction.

The *Thesis*, on the other hand, agrees that the Novus Ordo hierarchs lack the jurisdiction to teach, rule, and sanctify the Church, but that they retain a legitimate title of election or appointment to receive this jurisdiction, should they repudiate Modernism and embrace Catholicism. The adherents of the Thesis hope for a conversion of some hierarchs whereby they would obtain jurisdiction.

From the totalist side, I have only heard these explanations: (1) a conclave of traditional bishops will elect a pope; (2) Christ will appear in the heavens and choose a pope; (3) there is a “bishop in the woods,” that is, a real, live Catholic bishop existing secretly somewhere who was appointed by Pius XII and is validly consecrated.

All of these theories would require more explanation, but there is no space for that here.

My point is that for the past twenty-five years, Bishop Dolan and I *agreed to disagree* on this theological matter, and we got along very well. There were tight connections between Cincinnati and Brooksville.

Recently, however, I have perceived a change in Bishop Dolan’s thinking, whereby he sees the Thesis as a dangerous theological error, one that leads to the Novus Ordo. These thoughts have come to us by word of mouth from comments he has made to people. But he never made his thoughts public, to my knowledge.



### THE GOOD OLD DAYS

*February 22, 2018. Four bishops, representing three different organizations, in a happy Catholic unity after the consecration of Bishop Selway, and this despite some differences in theological positions.*

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, however, his parish bulletin contained an obvious reference to the Thesis, saying that to hold that Bergoglio is a validly elected pope is a theological error and savoring of heresy.

In the first place, we do not hold him to be a “validly elected pope,” but merely a pope-elect, someone elected but with no jurisdiction to rule the church, and therefore a false pope.

If he had stopped at *theological error*, I would have thought nothing of it, for I knew that he disagreed with our position, but the term *savoring of heresy* was something that I could not let pass.

*Savoring of heresy* is a technical term in theology. It refers to a proposition (the Thesis) which gives reason to suspect that it may contain heresy. It means that those who hold the Thesis to be true may indeed be heretics. It is practically the same as *suspicion of heresy*.

This was a direct attack on me, the seminary, the faculty of the seminary, the members of the Roman Catholic Institute, and the members of the Institute of Our Mother of Good Counsel headquartered in Verrua, Italy. I had to say something.

Hence I did a short video in which I pointed out that for twenty-five years we have agreed to disagree about the Thesis versus the totalist theories. I pointed out all of the ways in which this peace and toleration between us was borne out in cooperation and friendship.

Then I asked him questions which manifested the inconsistency of his position. For if he is saying that the Modernists founded a separate church, the “Novus Ordo Church,” then it would be necessary to receive back Novus Ordites into the Catholic Church in the same way in which you would receive a Lutheran, that is, with public abjuration and absolution from excommunication. To *not* do this means that *implicitly* you accept the position of the Thesis. The Thesis says that there is no new church formed, but that the Novus Ordo hierarchy, unfortunately, are in possession of the apostolic succession which belongs to the Catholic Church. In other words, they did not found a new church, but are attempting to use the Catholic Church for their ends.

*Status quo ante*. While some may have considered this video as an attack on Bishop Dolan, it was not. It was (1) an attempt to show him that his position contains inconsistency, which is a certain sign of error, and (2) a reminder in the past we got along very nicely on these issues, without any bitterness or accusations of heresy. I am appealing to him to reestablish between us the *status quo ante*,

that is, the peaceful relationship which existed up to a few months ago.

**Bishop Dolan’s preeminence in the traditional movement.** I have known Bishop Dolan for nearly forty-nine years, and I can attest that he has been a leader and a shining light in the traditional movement, and for us clergy.

Even in the seminary at Ecône, it was he who pointed out to me that I should not use the Bea translation of the psalms, that I should favor the use of the pre-1955 Holy Week, and that Paul VI was not a true pope.

It was he that brought about the liturgical change for the better at Ecône, whereby the seminary abandoned many Paul VI changes in the traditional Mass in favor of the 1962 missal. (This, of course, was not perfect, but at least it was a step in the right direction). He was the one who influenced me to take the pre-1955 Holy Week in the seminary, when I became rector in 1977. It was he that led the charge in 1983 to resist the liturgical and disciplinary changes made by Archbishop Lefebvre, which he instituted in the hope of being absorbed by the Novus Ordo.

It was Bishop Dolan who was the most zealous of all of us priests in the 1970’s and 1980’s in the founding of missions, bringing the Holy Mass and sacraments to many people in rural parts of this country. (I remember that on one Christmas he said five Masses in five different places. He said that at the end of the day he was “rather tired.”)

So my readers and viewers should not see my comments on the video as the beginning of some kind of war between Bishop Dolan and myself. I simply wish to go back to the “good old days” when everyone got along on these differing theological explanations.

**The vaccine.** Enclosed you will find a question and answer article on the Covid vaccine. My fundamental point in it is that there are many moral considerations regarding it, and that each person must apply the moral principles in order to make the correct decision.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn  
Rector

## PROGRESS IN THE NEW SEMINARY

*Although this does not look like “progress,” it really is. It means that finally these rooms are being prepared to hold the twenty-five seminar-ians who will one day, God willing, occupy them.*

