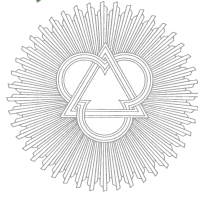


---

---

# Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



---

MARCH 2026

---

Published by Most Holy Trinity Seminary, 1711 Hampden Boulevard, Reading, Pennsylvania 19604. This newsletter is sent free of charge to all Seminary benefactors who contribute \$100.00 or more annually. If you would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us by mail, or at [contactform@mhtseminary.org](mailto:contactform@mhtseminary.org). Please visit our website at [mostholytrinityseminary.org](http://mostholytrinityseminary.org)

---

My dear Catholic people,

The controversy concerning the episcopal consecrations is still raging on the internet.

I wrote these words recently to a prominent podcaster:

I think that the attitude of making peace with the modernists is entirely the work of Archbishop Lefebvre. Despite the many good things he said and did, he has led the traditional movement down this catastrophic path of seeking to be a traditional branch of the modernist religion. He persecuted anyone in his Society of Saint Pius X who drew the obvious conclusion from his statements and writings, namely that the Vatican II popes were not true popes. He said to Cardinal Ratzinger in 1988, after signing the shameful Protocol, which concluded a peace with the Vatican: "This is the most beautiful day of my life."

If Leo and his Vatican II predecessors are true popes, then the following things flow logically, based on Roman Catholic ecclesiology: (1) Vatican II and all of its subsequent teachings, praxis, and reforms, are necessarily in conformity with the Catholic Faith; (2) to oppose these same things would be both heretical and schismatic; (3) to operate a parallel apostolate in defiance of these popes would be schismatic even before any declaration, according to Pope Pius IX.

The central problem must be addressed: Are these men, the Novus Ordo "popes," who have

promoted this defection from the Faith for sixty years, true popes or not? But it is impossible that they be true popes if they have promoted a defection from the Faith, for it would be contrary to the dogma of indefectibility to assert that, although they have promulgated false doctrines, they are true popes.

I think that any commentary that fails to address this central issue is simply talking around the problem.

What needs to be done is to make a public accusation of these "popes" as heretics, and worse, promoters of heresy, and to make a public assertion that for this reason they never had any authority in the Catholic Church. They are phony popes.

If they are popes, then let us obey them. If they are not popes, then let us denounce them. It is as simple as that, and nothing else needs to be said.

**The podcast of Father Damien Dutertre.** Shortly after the announcement of the consecrations, Father Dutertre, the superior of the RCI house in Nantes, France, gave an excellent talk on the internet summing up the incoherence and impossibility of the attempted justification provided by the SSPX for these consecrations. I am including a transcription and translation of this talk in this newsletter. When reading it, understand that it is a transcription of a talk, and therefore is not composed in the manner of an essay.

## What Archbishop Lefebvre conceded to the modernist inmates of the Vatican in 1988.

He conceded the following:

(1) The acceptance of paragraph 25 of *Lumen Gentium*, by which he implicitly accepts everything which Vatican II teaches, no exception made.

(2) To avoid all polemic (i.e., public criticism) regarding certain things taught by Vatican II, or concerning its subsequent reforms regarding liturgy and law.

(3) Recognition of the validity of the New Mass and of the Novus Ordo sacraments, provided they be used with the proper intention required for validity.

(4) To respect the ecclesiastical laws, especially those contained in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, promulgated by John Paul II.

(5) That John Paul II name a bishop to be consecrated from among the members of the Society of Saint Pius X.

Although not part of the agreement signed, Archbishop Lefebvre also mentioned that Cardinal Ratzinger wanted a New Mass to be celebrated at Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet, the Society's big church in Paris. The Archbishop's comment was "despite these disappointments, I signed the Protocol."

Yet only a few years earlier, this same Archbishop Lefebvre called the Second Vatican Council "a schismatic council." He also said: "Rome is in apostasy. They have left the Church. It is absolutely certain." "This conciliar church is a schismatic church, because it breaks with the Catholic Church of all time."

On the very day of the consecrations in 1988, he said this:

Since the Council and since *aggiornamento*, this change which has occurred in the Church is not Catholic, is not in conformity with the doctrine of all times. This ecumenism and all these errors, this collegiality—all this is contrary to the Faith of the Church, and is in the process of destroying the Church.

Why bring up these events of 1988? I review them with our readers to point out that the idea of

recognize and resist is absolutely contrary to Catholic doctrine concerning the papacy.

I furthermore want to emphasize that we must break with the two Lefebvrist ideas of (1) shameful compromise with the enemies of the Church and of Jesus Christ, and (2) the spirit of schism, whereby a parallel apostolate is mounted against the express will of the person whom they regard as the Roman Pontiff. Archbishop Lefebvre vacillated back and forth, to and fro, between these two positions of vocal condemnation of Vatican II and its reforms, on the one hand, and of unheroic compromise on the other.

**It is absolutely necessary that the traditional movement abandon Archbishop Lefebvre's approach to the solution of the problem of Vatican II.**

Since 1970, the year of the founding of the Society of Saint Pius X, and therefore for fifty-six years, the traditional movement has, for the most part, followed the path marked out by Archbishop Lefebvre. It has inconsistently swung back and forth between reconciliation with the heretics in the Vatican, and ferocious condemnation of these same heretics, all the way to referring to them as antichrists. **This makes no sense.**

Furthermore, this conduct has engendered a spirit of schism among traditionalists. Bishop McKenna termed it in this way: *Having your pope and eating him too*. As I said above, if Leo XIV is the pope then he has a solemn right to our obedience and submission. If, on the other hand, he has abandoned the Catholic Faith, and is imposing a false religion on the people and institutions of the Catholic Church, then he is a false pope. **It is one or the other. There is no middle ground between these two positions. Vatican II and its reforms are either in conformity with the Catholic Faith, or they are not. There is no middle ground between these two positions.**

Pope Pius IX said in his encyclical *Quartus Supra*:

Nor can the Eastern Churches preserve communion and unity of faith with Us without being subject to the Apostolic power in matters of discipline. **Teaching of this kind is heretical**, and not just since the definition of the power and nature of the papal primacy was determined by the ecumenical Vatican Coun-

cil: the Catholic Church has always considered it such and abhorred it.

Pope Gregory XVI said:

They [the clergy] will maintain obedience to this sovereign chair of Peter, in which Christ the Lord laid the foundation of this same Church, **and where, consequently, is to be found the entire and perfect stability of the Christian religion.**<sup>1</sup>

This assertion of the pope is in direct contradiction with the position of the Society of Saint Pius X, since their position requires them to identify with the Roman Catholic Church all of the doctrinal, moral, liturgical, and disciplinary aberrations of Vatican II. Such a position makes it impossible for the Catholic Church to be the “*entire and perfect stability of the Christian religion.*”

Pope Pius IX said, referring to the pope:

All those who glory in the title of Catholic must not only be united to him in matters of faith and dogmatic truth, but also be submissive to him in matters of liturgy and discipline.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously the Society of Saint Pius X is not submissive to the “pope” in matters of discipline and liturgy, and as a consequence cannot glory in the name Catholic, if Leo XIV is a true pope.

The same Pope Pius IX taught:

Both pastors and the faithful, both individually and collectively, are bound, by their duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, to submit, not only in matters which belong to faith and morals, but also in those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world. *He adds:* This is the teaching of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and of salvation.<sup>3</sup>

Yet again Pope Pius IX taught:

In fact, it is as contrary to the divine constitution of the Church as it is to perpetual and constant tradition for anyone to attempt to prove the catholicity of his faith and truly call himself a Catholic when he fails in obedience to the Apostolic See.<sup>4</sup>

Pope Leo XIII said:

The Church is man’s guide to whatever pertains to Heaven.

Therefore the Church cannot give us false doctrines, false liturgy, nor evil disciplines. We can absolutely trust the Church to give us what leads to salvation. The Society of Saint Pius X, however, accuses the Church of giving us false doctrine, false liturgy, and evil disciplines.

Pope Pius XI taught:

It follows then that the Church of Christ not only exists today and always, but is also exactly the same as it was in the time of the Apostles, unless we were to say, which God forbid, either that Christ our Lord could not effect His purpose, or that He erred when He asserted that the gates of hell should never prevail against it.<sup>5</sup>

Hence the position of the Society of Saint Pius X, inasmuch as they regard Leo XIV as a true pope, is wrong in rejecting the reforms of Vatican II and in mounting an anti-apostolate to that of the “pope.” In so doing, they are logically bound to say that the Church has erred in her universal teachings, liturgy, and discipline, **which would be heresy.**

**The attempted defense mounted by the SSPX.**

The apologists for the SSPX, both within their organization and without, are claiming that the consecrations will not be the cause of schism, since they are consecrating bishops who will have no jurisdiction, that is, they are not consecrating diocesan bishops.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter *Perlatum ad Nos*, July 17, 1841, to the Archbishop of Lemberg.

<sup>2</sup> Apostolic letter *Non sine gravissimo*, February 24, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Apostolic Constitution *Pastor aeternus*, July 18, 1870.

<sup>4</sup> Encyclical *Quartus supra*, January 6, 1873.

<sup>5</sup> Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, January 6, 1928

This argument, however, does not hold up. All bishops are considered to be part of the Catholic hierarchy, even those without jurisdiction. They all appear in the *Annuario Pontificio*, the official list, published every year by the Vatican, of all the bishops in the world.

In addition, any bishop, inasmuch as he can ordain priests and consecrate other bishops, pertains to the unity of the Church. In other words, the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops must be carefully regulated by the authority of the Church, since they all pertain, in a certain way, to the government of the Church. Priests are merely assistants to the apostolate and rule of the diocesan bishop. The same may be said for non-jurisdictional auxiliary bishops. Similarly, the diocesan bishops are merely extensions of the apostolate and rule of the pope. They are appointed by the pope and are given their power to rule by the pope.

The very purpose of the fullness of the priesthood given in the consecration of a bishop is to enable a bishop with jurisdiction to exercise his role as head of the diocese. An auxiliary bishop, a bishop without jurisdiction, is given the fullness of the priesthood *solely for the purpose of aiding the bishop of the diocese in his sacramental duties*. Hence the bishop without jurisdiction is necessarily attached to a bishop with jurisdiction, either the bishop of the diocese, or to the pope directly. But there is no such thing as a “wildcat” bishop. A bishop has no reason for being unless he is attached to a higher authority and is its functionary.

For these reasons, a priest cannot be legally ordained without the consent of the bishop of the diocese. Similarly, no bishop, not even a bishop without jurisdiction, can be legally consecrated without the consent of the Vatican. This permission is known as the *apostolic mandate*, and it must be read publicly as part of the ceremony of consecration.

Since the episcopacy is necessarily tied to jurisdiction, either to the diocesan bishop or that of the pope, it would be contrary to the unity of government of the Catholic Church to consecrate bishops, even non-jurisdictional, contrary to the will of the pope. Hence it would be a schismatic act.

An analogy could be made to the military. An admiral in the navy cannot make another admiral without the permission of the Department of the Navy, simply with the excuse that he will have no ship to command. The establishment of the military hierarchy, even of non-commissioned officers, must come from the government.

**The only justifying cause for the consecration of a bishop in these times.** The only way in which the consecration of a bishop in these times would not be schismatic, would be in the absence of authority in Rome.

There is a true necessity of keeping alive the valid priesthood and the valid episcopacy. Hence there is a serious reason why one may — nay, *must* — consecrate bishops. Saint Thomas Aquinas said: *Necessity knows no law*. This is because the law is for the common good, and where the law does not foresee circumstances which would impede the common good, there could be cases where the law does not apply. One cannot, however, cite this necessity against the Roman Pontiff. For if you are accusing him of promulgating false doctrines and evil disciplines, and of not fulfilling the *essential* function of the Catholic Church, you must draw the conclusion that *he does not have the authority to teach, rule, and sanctify the Church*. In other words, he would not be a true Roman Pontiff, despite a valid election.

In other words, there is only *necessity* if, in fact, the Novus Ordo hierarchy is not fulfilling the mission of the Catholic Church. But if it is not fulfilling this mission, it is *impossible* that they bear the authority to rule the Church. Otherwise it would be necessary to deny the dogma of the indefectibility of the Church.

Therefore, the only justifying cause which the Society of Saint Pius X can put forward is the absence of authority in Rome owing to the imposition of a false religion upon the Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Donald J. Sanborn  
Rector