

A STUDY OF EPISCOPAL CONSECRATIONS AGAINST THE WILL OF THE POPE
applied to the consecrations of 30th June 1988 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

Theological Essay

by members of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter under the direction of Fr. Josef Bisig
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Introduction: In Search of the Truth

On June 30 , 1988, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, former Archbishop of Tulle, founder of the Society of St. Pius X, consecrated four bishops against the entreaties of Pope John Paul II ¹. What should we think about it? Many of the laity claim to be in no position to judge the question, and too many priests declare that it is not possible to attain a sufficient degree of certitude on this question. But is this true? In addition, it is sad to note how many of our colleagues in the Society of Saint Pius X, requesting some enlightenment from their Superiors as to the decision that they had soon to make, came up against, not so much a wall of silence, but a certain theological confusion, either because the arguments presented evidently lacked value or logic, or because theological reflection in this matter was imputed to be a sign of pride or lack of confidence in Archbishop Lefebvre! It seems to us - Thomistic, therefore optimistic - impossible that God might require His children to judge an act, the outcome of which might well be schism, without their having the means to arrive at a conclusion other than by relation to a man considered as the guarantor of the correctness of this act. For the same reason, we refuse and abhor the argument, often heard in the mouth of SSPX priests, that theology, in its present state, is unable to cope with the question of the consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre within the context of the crisis currently raging within the Church. Yet, even if such a state of affairs could possibly exist, we would want to verify the truth of such an argument rather than accept it *a priori*.

This theological essay, whilst in no way exhaustive, seeks to demonstrate that it is indeed possible to attain total certitude in this question. We are fully aware that the topic, since it also concerns us personally, is a matter of passion: sermons, bulletins and other letters have shown this only too bluntly. We have sought to maintain objectivity and calm, yet it has sometimes been extremely difficult, above all when seeing the abuse done to certain texts and arguments. But should it happen that we fall into the same error, we would be happy to be corrected - *errare humanum est* - but - please! - by showing us the formal error of our reasoning or its application, not by entering into debates of a more general nature, the purpose of which is often to affirm one's own opinions and thus avoid the arguments that should have been refuted. Our work will divide into two parts: in the first, we will consider the question of episcopal consecration according to the teaching of the Catholic Church; in the second, we will refute the objections bearing upon the value of this teaching in the specific case that concerns us here.

¹ Letter of Pope John-Paul II to Archbishop Lefebvre, June 9, 1988.

Part One: The Catholic Episcopate

Methodology

The question is a theological one, and thus the method of investigation, since all investigation receives its specification from its object, will be equally theological. Yet, as theology is nothing other than reflection upon the Faith, the response to our question is to be found in the deposit of Faith. Thus, we can reject in advance any arguments of an "illuminist" or "charismatic" nature, which would rely upon private revelations or inspirations of whatever sort, since these do not belong to the deposit of Faith, to the acknowledged sources of theology (*loci theologici*). The deposit of faith is found in Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, the consensus of theologians or the particular authority of some of them, and, above all, in the Magisterium of the Church, namely the pontifical and conciliar documents. It is not uninteresting to note that the Society of Saint Pius X, in its efforts to prove the legitimacy of its position, achieves the extraordinary *tour de force* of not mentioning one single recognized theologian or Father of the Church, or quote a single text drawn from a pontifical or conciliar document, acknowledging the possibility of a legitimate episcopal consecration against the explicit will of the Pope (and with good reason, as we shall see!). This simple observation should give any theologian pause for thought. But on with our subject.

I. A Question of Canon Law or a Question of Faith?

It is understandable that the Society of Saint Pius X seeks to minimize the import of the 1988 Consecrations by reducing it to a simple problem of ecclesiastical law. We can grasp the significance of such a move: if the question of the Econe consecrations is purely canonical (legal), it should not be too difficult to argue that the law of the church does not apply to the case at hand. Indeed, who could have foreseen such a crisis? BUT, on the contrary, should this question be fundamentally one of theology, and thus immovably sure in its solution whatever the circumstances, then an ingenuous *lex positiva non obligat* seems too slick. For the Society of Saint Pius X, the question is nevertheless purely canonical. Is this position well founded? Let us apply the theological method mentioned above.

Whilst we will find nothing explicit on this subject in Sacred Scripture, the Living Magisterium of the Church, on the other hand, whose role is to specify and define Tradition by the mouth of the Popes, does furnish us with the reply. First, Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Ad Apostolorum gentes* (June 29, 1958), teaches that, as episcopal consecrations without a pontifical mandate are "serious offenses against the discipline and unity of the Church...We must in conscience warn all that this is completely at variance with the teachings and principles on which rests the right order of the society divinely instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord."² Thus, the Sovereign Pontiff holds that episcopal consecrations are indeed related to the law of the Church in reason of its *divine constitution*. Later in the same encyclical, he recalls that "no one can lawfully confer episcopal consecration unless he has received the mandate of the Apostolic See. Consequently, if consecration

² *Papal Teachings: The Church*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, tr. Mother E. O'Gorman, RSCJ, Boston, MA: St Paul Editions, 1962 (hereafter = Solesmes), # 1530.

of this kind is being done contrary to all right and law, and by all this crime the unity of the Church is being seriously attacked, an excommunication... has been established..."³. Thus, the teaching of the Vicar of Christ is a reminder of the principles of the divine constitution of the Church, and not, as some would have it, a condemnation which concerns only the Chinese schism.⁴

Pope Pius IX had already taught this: "As for our right to choose a subject not of the number of the three candidates proposed, We believed We should not be silent on that score...For the rest, even if We had not spoken of it, this right and this duty would have remained in all their integrity to the Chair of St. Peter. In fact, the rights and privileges granted to this Chair by Christ himself can be assailed, but they can never be taken from it, and it is not in a man's power to yield up a divine right..."⁵ **"The very first elements of Catholic Doctrine** teach that no one can be considered a legitimate bishop if he is not united by the communion of Faith and charity with the Rock on which the Church of Christ is built, if he does not adhere to the Supreme Pastor to whom are confided all the sheep so that he may feed them, and if he is not bound to him who has the office of confirming his brethren who are in the world. In fact, 'Our Lord spoke to Peter; he spoke to one alone to establish unity on one alone.' (St. Pacian)." ⁶

OBJECTION: It is well known that episcopal elections is a matter of Church discipline. But Church discipline is regulated by Canon Law.

Response: It is perfectly correct that, for example, the nomination of bishops is in the domain of discipline. But to conclude from this that ecclesiastical discipline can be reduced to purely human law, is to go too far. Did not Pope Pius IX, in a similar case, put the Armenians on their guard: "The defection⁷ which We have just had to deplore certainly does not concern rites but discipline; and if the Vicar of Jesus Christ cannot regulate discipline everywhere, it would have been in vain that the government of the entire Church had been confided to him; this is what gives to this defection the character of a deviation in the rectitude of the faith which all Catholics must have in what concerns the Primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff."⁸. The same Pope adds, a little later on: "as Our Predecessor Pius VI pointed out...discipline is often so closely united to dogma, it has such an influence on its preservation and on its purity, that the sacred Councils have not hesitated in many cases to pronounce anathemas against those guilty of disciplinary violations, and separated them from

³ Solesmes # 1537.

⁴ See, for example, Fr. François Pivert, *The Consecrations of Archbishop Lefebvre... a Schism?*

⁵ Pius IX, encyclical *Quartus supra*, January 6, 1873, Solesmes # 405.

⁶ Pius IX, encyclical *Etsi multa*, November 21, 1873, in Solesmes # 423.

⁷ The Pope learnt of the illicit consecrations of Armenian bishops after it happened; in his hope to find a solution to the conflict without too much damage, he speaks here only of "defection". Later, as we shall see, he will speak of schism.

⁸ Pius IX, letter *Quo impensiore*, May 20, 1870, Solesmes #355.

communion with the Church.”⁹

Thus, the Church's living Magisterium teaches undeniably that episcopal consecration is fundamentally a question of dogma, only subsequently one of Canon Law. It is important to bear this fact in mind throughout the rest of our expose.

Now let us see precisely how this discipline is entirely founded in dogma, in the divine constitution of the Church as established by Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

II. The Nature of the Episcopate and its violation

A. The Unity of Mission and Hierarchy

We know that the Church's mission is to "extend" through time and space the mission which Christ received from His Father. Yet this mission, the theologians tell us, whilst rich in prerogatives and functions, and thus multiple, is yet one.

Let us hear first Dom Gréa, OSB¹⁰ : "By one single mission of His Father, Jesus Christ is Doctor,¹¹ Sanctifier, and King"¹². Indeed, as St. Thomas specifies: "The mission (of Christ) includes the eternal procession and adds to it something else: a temporal effect"¹³. This effect in time consists of the three classic *munera*: teaching, sanctifying and governing. Is this triple prerogative divided in Christ? No, says Dom Gréa and the theologians with him: this triple prerogative was given to him "indivisibly and in the inviolable unity of one sole mission"¹⁴. It is this mission Christ received from His Eternal Father which gives a sense and legitimacy to His redemptive Work¹⁵. It is this same mission which Christ communicates to His Apostles: "As the

⁹ Pius IX, encyclical *Quartus supra* , January 6, 1873, Solesmes #397.

¹⁰ Dom Gréa OSB (1878 - 1917). Although he lived a century before the Council Vatican II, he had a great influence on the dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). So important was his influence that his theology of the church was reprinted after Vatican II. By going back to the Fathers of the Church, his treatment of the church was more theological than canonical. The Society of St. Pius X likes to quote his second volume in which he deals with the case of Eusebius of Samosata who would have consecrated bishops without the Pope's approval because of the emergency of the situation during the Arian crisis. See our treatment of the question further in this study.

¹¹ Doctor: in its etymological meaning, from *doceo, docere*: to teach. Vatican II prefers using the biblical trilogy of prophet, priest, king, or to speak of the threefold mission/function (*munus*) of teaching, sanctifying, governing.

¹² Dom Gréa, *De l' Eglise et de sa Divine Constitution*, Casterman, 1965 p. 105.

¹³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 43, a.2, ad 3.

¹⁴ Dom Gréa, op. cit. p. 107.

¹⁵ Heb 5:5: "So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, 'Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee!'"

Father has sent Me, even so I send you."¹⁶

So, "this unique mission is communicated, without being divided, to the Church in the episcopal college, and will form, through each bishop, the particular hierarchies. (...) These three elements, the power of teaching (or *Magisterium*), the power of sanctifying (or *Ministerium*), and the authority to govern (or *Imperium*), are not three powers distinct in their origin and independent in their essence one from another... Thus there is not an order of doctors, an order of sanctifiers and an order of spiritual lords separately constituted, and which chance, an arbitrary division or at best a simple convenience has reunited by a sort of accumulation on the heads of the same men, but there is between these three elements a logical connection and an essential link".¹⁷

Working less from the procession and Mission of Christ, as does Dom Gréa, than from the derivation of the Mystical Body from its Head, Who is Christ, Cardinal Journet arrives at the same conclusion: "Since the sovereign priesthood and the supreme kingship are inseparable in Christ who is the head, it is to be expected that the powers of jurisdiction and order, their two-fold derivative, should be strictly united in order to act upon the Church, which is His Body. They constitute, according to St. Paul's image, the system of joints and ligaments by which the increase of charity and truth, and, in a word, the unity of one life, descends from head to body. It would be an error therefore to think of two hierarchies, one of order and the other of jurisdiction. There is one sole hierarchy, with two distinct but interdependent powers".¹⁸

Having shown the interdependence of these two powers, Cardinal Journet concludes: "In Him (Christ, the Head of the Church), the power of instituting, by His Cross and His Sacraments, the new worship and of proclaiming the supreme revelation, that is to say the absolute priestly and royal power, are inseparably united. (...) In order to be authentic, in order to be Christian, the Hierarchy must indissolubly reunite within itself the two powers, that of order and of jurisdiction. They might well be accidentally separated in a particular individual, but neither of them can constitute on its own the hierarchy, this hierarchy which Christ has instituted in the Apostles, the Apostolic Hierarchy. Neither of them can, on their own, confer upon the Church this inalienable mark from its foundation by Christ: apostolicity."¹⁹

This is also the teaching of Vatican I: "In order that the episcopate also might be one and undivided, and that by means of a closely united priesthood the multitude of the faithful might be kept secure in the oneness of faith and *communio*²⁰ he set Blessed Peter over the rest of the

¹⁶ Jn 20:21. See also Mt 28:19.

¹⁷ Dom Gréa, op. cit. p. 105.

¹⁸ Cardinal Journet, *The Church of the Incarnate Word (l'Eglise du Verbe Incarné) Vol. I: The Apostolic Hierarchy*, Sheed and Ward, 1955, pp. 24-25.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 496-497.

²⁰ This unity of communion is not the same as the unity of faith, which is in the order of the mind and knowledge. It is the unity of charity, that is in the order of the will and action, which requires the submission of will to the discipline of the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes well these two kinds of unions and their respective sin: heresy against the unity of faith and schism against the unity of charity. See IIa IIae, q.39, a.1, corpus & ad 3.

Apostles, and fixed in him the abiding (*perpetuum*)²¹ principle of *this twofold unity and its visible foundation*, in the strength of which the everlasting temple should arise, and the Church in the firmness of that faith should lift her majestic front to heaven."²²

Note in passing that since the Econe bishops have received no jurisdiction -- according to the explicit affirmation of Archbishop Lefebvre -- neither have they the assistance of the Holy Ghost in their teaching, sanctifying, and governing.

But, it could be replied, the power of order can remain on its own, if only "accidentally" as Cardinal Journet says above. To find an answer to that, we will go on to examine the nature of the episcopate itself.

B. The Nature of the Episcopate

St. Thomas Aquinas says that "the priestly power is surpassed by the episcopal power as by a power of a different kind"²³ and the Council of Trent teaches that the bishops have been "placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God"²⁴. It is here that the bishops are fundamentally distinguished from the simple priest, who "are ordained to confect the Sacrament of the (physical) Body of Christ"²⁵; in other words the function or basic finality of the priest, that which determines his nature, is to celebrate Holy Mass: if that was all he did, he would be fully a priest. On the other hand, "by episcopal power, a man is not directly ordained to God, but to the Mystical Body"²⁶. This is the specific power of the bishop. Fr. Bouësse O.P. writes: "To rule the Christian multitude, the Christian flock, such is moreover for St.. Thomas, the specific ordination of the bishop". And again: "The episcopal power, as such, is not the power of sanctification but of government". We could multiply the texts of tradition and of the Magisterium which abound in the sense of a relationship of the episcopate "to the Church inasmuch as she constitutes a society, and a visible society."²⁷

Hence this particular relationship to the Mystical Body cannot be reduced to a simple power to ordain and confirm the baptized. "In the concept of the episcopate, such as Christ has established it, i.e. the episcopate properly so-called, two things are included: the fullness of the priesthood and destination to ecclesiastical government"²⁸. The bishop is first and foremost pastor: he must have

²¹ *Perpetuum* (perpetual) means until the end of time, always and everywhere. See Vatican I, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, July 18, 1870, Denzinger-Schönmetzer (hereafter DS) # 3056-7, Solesmes # 359 - 60.

²² Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3051, Solesmes # 356.

²³ *Summa Theologiae* Supplement q. 40, a. 6, ad 3.

²⁴ Council of Trent, Sess. 23, Ch. 4; DS 1768; Acts 20:28

²⁵ *Summa Theologiae* IIIa , q. 82, a.1

²⁶ *IV Sent. d. 25, q.1, a.2, ad 2um*

²⁷ H. Bouësse, O.P., "Episcopat et Sacerdoce", *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, Tome 28, 1954, p.373.

²⁸ Bouix, *Tractatus de episcopo*, Paris 1889, Tome 1, p. 90.

authority (jurisdiction) over his flock in order to guide (govern) and teach them. But to accomplish perfectly this mission, he needs supplementary or complementary powers which will be given to him by episcopal consecration, which gives the fullness of the priesthood.

III. A non-Catholic Episcopate

If, amongst the adherents of the Econe consecrations, more than one regrets the consecrations and their somewhat illicit (from the canonical point of view) aspect, all nevertheless agree that the four consecrations were valid, and that is what is essential. This, however is a false conclusion, from the Catholic point of view. In effect, not every episcopate is according to the will of God: for that, it must be Catholic. And how is a bishop Catholic? By the validity of his orders? No! A bishop is Catholic solely if he is situated in the line of the formal apostolic succession.

To explain and demonstrate this, let us first consider the efficient cause of the institution of the episcopate, and then analyze the meaning and necessity of formal apostolicity.

A. The Institution of the Bishop

We know that it is within the ordinary power of a bishop to ordain priests. Does he have the same (ordinary) power when it comes to consecrating bishops? If the nature of the episcopate is reduced to just the power of Order, we can easily understand that every bishop - since he has the fullness of the priesthood - could without any difficulty consecrate without necessarily consulting the Pope (save for avoiding anarchy), the latter having, from the point of view of orders, no powers superior to those of his colleagues in the episcopate. But as we have just seen, the nature of the episcopate requires, in an essential way, a determined jurisdiction; that is why the power of naming and establishing bishops originates not from Orders but jurisdiction. And when there is a superior in the jurisdictional order, it is for him to raise the inferior to this hierarchical level in accepting him as a collaborator, in elevating him to the level of a successor to the Apostles, in conferring upon him a determined jurisdiction. This power therefore is not within the domain of a bishop in any case whatsoever, as we have seen and will see, since this order of things is the will of Christ Himself.

Note in the liturgy a confirmation of this doctrine: a priest receives his power to absolve sins --which need not necessarily be accorded to him-- at the end of the ceremony of ordination; on the other hand, for a bishop (even an auxiliary), the liturgy foresees the question of mission right at the start of the ceremony. Is this not meant to signify that this mission is a necessity condition for the legitimacy of the consecration to follow?

1. Fathers of the Church

St. Gregory of Nyssa: "It is to Peter that it belongs to give himself colleagues in the apostolate and to raise them to this high dignity, and we know that it belongs to no other, other than Jesus Christ alone. For this power exceeds all dignity and all sovereignty, and amongst mortal men, Peter alone has received it, because he was established by Jesus Christ as head and prince in His

own place, and he alone holds that place of Christ in respect of the rest of men".²⁹

Pope St. Innocent I: "From the Apostolic See flows the episcopate and all its authority".³⁰
"Peter is the author both of the name and the dignity of the bishops".³¹

St Leo the Great: "All that Jesus Christ has given to the other bishops, he has given them through Peter".³² "Through him, as from the head, His gifts spread out upon the whole body".³³

Tertullian: "The Lord has given the keys to Peter, and through him to the Church".³⁴

St. Optatus of Milevis: "St. Peter alone has received the keys so as to communicate them to the other pastors".³⁵

Hence the exclusive efficient cause of the catholicity of an episcopal consecration is not the consecrating bishop (who is the material efficient cause) but the Sovereign Pontiff (the formal efficient cause).

2. The Magisterium

Chapter 3 of the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of Vatican I teaches (*de fide!*) very clearly the universal primacy of the Successor of St. Peter and shows in what theological context should stand the relations between the bishops and the Pope.³⁶

In addition to the Popes mentioned above, and the objection (see below), we will quote in addition:

Pope Pius IX : "And in truth, 'the successor of Peter, by the very fact that he holds the place of Peter, has, by divine right, the whole flock of Christ confided to his care, so that he receives, at the same time with the episcopacy, the power of universal government, while to the other bishops it is necessary to assign a special portion of the flock, so that they may exercise over that portion the

²⁹ Maximus Planudes, quoted under the name of St. Gregory, *Enconium in SS Petr. & Paul*, P.G. tomus CXLVII, col. 1071. (Cited by Dom Gréa, pp. 257 ff.)

³⁰ Letter 29 to the Council of Carthage (417), P. L. XX, 583.

³¹ Letter 30, to the Council of Milevum, P. L. XX, 590.

³² Sermon 4, "For His Anniversary," P. L. LIV, 150.

³³ Letter 10, "To the bishops of the Province of Vienna," P. L. LIV, 629.

³⁴ "Scorpiace" (against the Gnostics) 10, P. L. II, 142.

³⁵ "On the Donatist Schism", 1. 7, n. 3 ; P. L. XI, 1087.

³⁶ Solesmes # 362-367 (especially # 364).

ordinary power of government; and they do so, not by divine right, but by ecclesiastical right, not by virtue of an order from Jesus Christ, but by a disposition of the hierarchy....' '...it is only through the intermediary of Peter that (Christ) has given (the other princes of the Church) what He did not refuse to them.'"³⁷

Pius IX again: "We have been obliged to see that the power of instituting bishops be returned in its entirety to the Apostolic See whence it proceeds." "As for our right to choose a subject not of the number of the three candidates proposed, We believed We should not be silent on that score...even if We had not spoken of it, this right and this duty would have remained in all their integrity to the Chair of St. Peter. In fact, the rights and privileges granted to this Chair by Christ himself can be assailed, but they can never be taken from it, and it is not in a man's power to yield up a divine right ..."³⁸

The teaching of the Magisterium fully confirms that of the Church Fathers, and is just as strikingly clear: the power of instituting a bishop belongs to the Successor of St. Peter alone.

B. The Apostolicity of the Episcopate

1. The essence of Apostolicity

One of the notes (the most important) by which we recognize the true Church of Jesus Christ is apostolicity.

Apostolicity³⁹ is not simply any succession of episcopal consecration which can trace itself all the way back to the Apostles. In fact, we must distinguish between successions of which the apostolicity is founded solely upon valid consecration (what we call material apostolicity, such as is the case for the Church of Utrecht or the Orthodox) and the successions of bishops who are the "ligaments" of the visible Mystical Body, since they are in communion with the visible head of this Body; in this case we speak of formal apostolicity. So that the succession be formally apostolic, something particular is needed: the mission of the Pope. This mission is signified today by the apostolic mandate⁴⁰, and it is this which makes the new bishop enter into the Catholic Communion. "*Habetis mandatum?*" inquires, accordingly, the consecrating bishop before proceeding to the consecration (proof that for the legitimacy⁴¹ of a consecration, an external authority is required, superior to that of the bishop, who cannot himself furnish the mandate). Why are this mission and

³⁷ Pius IX, *Quartus supra*, citing Pius VI, decree *Super soliditate*, November 28, 1786, and St. Leo the Great, *Serm. 4 in ann. assumpt. suae*, Solesmes #399.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Solesmes # 404-5

³⁹ See Chapter on "Apostolicity" in Cardinal Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné*, t. 1.

⁴⁰ There have been other ways of manifesting the existence of this mission; cf. article "Election des évêques" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, IV, col. 2256.

⁴¹ Legitimacy is different from liceity.

mandate necessary? Is it of ecclesiastical law or does divine law require it?

We find the answer at the very root of the history of the Church, at the moment of her foundation: "All power in Heaven and upon the earth has been given to me"⁴²; "As the Father sent me, so I also send you"⁴³; "Go ye therefore and teach all nations..."⁴⁴. The Son of God was sent by His Father; it is from the Father that the Son draws all His power. In Catholic theology, this sending of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is called a mission. Christ Himself relies upon this mandate which "sends" Him, the mandate of the Father, so as to send, in His turn, the Apostles (in Greek "apostle" means "sent"). Thus He places them in the line of this mission and establishes them as His "commissioned missionaries". Yet this mandate Christ only gave directly once, to the Apostles. Since the Ascension, it is always He who sends missionaries and gives the mandate, but by His visible Vicar on earth, the successor of Peter, upon whom He built His Church. Pius XII teaches: "In ecclesiastical power the essence, the central point according to the express will of Christ, and therefore by divine right, is the mission given by Him to the ministers of the work of salvation..."⁴⁵

It is for this reason that Fr. Berto, the theologian of Archbishop Lefebvre at Vatican II, wrote to him speaking of the apostolic succession, "It would evidently be scandalous to suppose that, of his own authority, a bishop could, outside of his dependence upon Peter, invest another with the function of evangelization".

This formal apostolicity will only be ascertained if the bishop is found in this missionary line, which only comes about through the mandate of the only one who can send it: the Vicar of Christ.

Cardinal Billot develops a thesis which arrives at the same conclusion: "Within the Church, the authority of government can in no way be conceived without apostolicity. The obvious reason for this is that the Church is by nature the reign of Christ... she can only depend upon heads who have received from Christ their mission. Now those who have received from Christ their mission are none other than, from the time of the Apostles, those who conserve the transmission of this power. The apostolicity of government is truly considered as essential, for upon it depends everything in the Church which is necessary, with which exists everything that is necessary as the promise of Christ shows with evidence: 'Behold I am with you (the teachers, those who baptize) all days even unto the end of the world.'" But where does this apostolicity come from? Cardinal Billot answers: "It is easily and conclusively shown: apostolicity of government is found in fact only in communion with Rome".⁴⁶

⁴² Mt 28:18.

⁴³ Jn 20:21; 17:18.

⁴⁴ Mt 28:19-20.

⁴⁵ Pius XII, allocution to the members of the Rota, October 2, 1945, Solesmes # 1156.

⁴⁶ Billot, *De Ecclesia Christi*, Rome 1925 5th edition pp 261, 264

The same Cardinal sums up and puts into order Catholic teaching concerning the catholicity of all (Catholic) episcopacy: "This mode of derivation in episcopal jurisdiction was necessary so that the legitimacy of the whole of ecclesiastical government should be always visible and evident. In effect this legitimacy depends wholly upon the mission received from Christ, a mission of which the continuity appears clearly even to our own day. This is why we ordinarily say that apostolicity is our most important note. But the apostolicity of the whole ecclesiastical regime appears here in a very visible manner, in that the whole power of jurisdiction flows from the one Chair upon which this very mission which was conferred immediately by Christ Himself (Jn 21:15-17) remains identical with an unbroken succession of bishops from Peter until our own time. This is the argument by which the earliest Fathers were accustomed to refute all schismatics and heretics".⁴⁷

The theologian J. Bainvel says the same thing:

"It is a question here of the succession of pastors or identity of government. Identity of doctrine cannot on its own be a sufficient and exclusive mark. If a society teaches a doctrine contrary to that of Christ and the Apostles, it is judged. But if the doctrine is, or seems to be, truly apostolic, we can conclude nothing. But it is otherwise for the legitimate succession of pastors: with it, there is continuity, without it, not; with it, we are sure without further examination, of the true doctrine, for it is to the body of pastors that was confided the Deposit of Faith and was promised the Holy Ghost in order to guard and transmit it. (...) Without this legitimate succession, there is no mission to teach; by consequence, no authority, and, even more important, no Divine guarantee. (...) It is this which explains the agony of Luther to find a mission; which explains the desperate efforts of the Anglicans to uphold the validity of their orders, a necessary, although not sufficient, condition of legitimate succession, and to maintain, for good or bad, the continuity despite the schism. It is, in effect, obvious: the Church being a social hierarchical body, it is necessary to belong to this social body to possess a share in the authority of its hierarchy.

"Without apostolic succession, the hierarchy is no longer that which Christ founded; it is a human institution; and even when the Sacraments remain valid, authority is not there for the power of order does not include the power of jurisdiction: this is attached to the mission, the legitimate succession. It is not sufficient to claim to be Christ's, nor even to have the Sacraments. One is His, one is of His Church, (speaking of the external forum) when one obeys the Pastors established by Him, sent by Him.⁴⁸

2. The visibility of the Apostolicity

We must note that this communion with the (reigning) successor of Peter, in which formal apostolicity exists, must be more than a simple affirmation of one's communion.⁴⁹ This communion

⁴⁷ Billot, *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Thesis XXXII, ph. 2.

⁴⁸ J. Bainvel, article "Apostolicité" in D.T.C. T. 1, col. 1625

⁴⁹ Most members of the Society of St. Pius X protest that they are in communion with "Rome" or with "the Holy See" but rarely or never with the Pope currently reigning. Shortly after the 1988 consecrations of Bishops, the 24 Superiors of the Society of St. Pius X solemnly declared that they were in "full communion only with the popes and bishops who

must be visible. Indeed, when the legitimacy of a consecration is not, on account of circumstances, very clear, and the authorities of the two societies mutually excommunicate each other⁵⁰, how are we to know if those newly consecrated belong to the Catholic hierarchy? The Society of Saint Pius X answer: the consecrations performed by Archbishop Lefebvre are licit and legitimate because we have the true Faith, which we alone keep in all its integrity. Is not the finality of the hierarchy and of its institution, the integral transmission of the Faith, according to the words of Christ establishing them as his "successors": "Go... Teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you"⁵¹? Here is their argument put in form:

‘Because I have the true Faith, I belong to the true Church. But, just like me, these bishops have the true Faith; they therefore belong to the Church, and are at the service of the Church. The true Faith tells me where the true Church is.’

This, we recognize immediately, is the thesis of Protestants who reply to the question "Where is the true Church?" with "Where the true Faith is".⁵²

Catholic teaching and apologetical method are both diametrically opposed to this:

"The way - as much ontological as logical - which leads to true doctrine and to the saving benefits of Christ, is that which passes through the Church and not inversely." "The true doctrine can only be known through the mediation of the true Church".⁵³

It is thus that which is visible - the Church - which leads me to the invisible, the Faith, and not the contrary. I only receive the true Faith after having recognized the true Church, and from her alone. But the true Church is visible, necessarily visible upon the earth, in other words "locatable", recognizable as "true", even for the non-believer. She is the city built on the mountain, she is (and not "should be"), as the First Vatican Council teaches, " a great and perpetual argument for credibility, an unshakable testimony to her divine mission"⁵⁴. This is why we need, in order to

⁵⁰ See the letter of Cardinal Walter Cardinal Watkinson to the Superior of the Society of St. Pius X.

⁵¹ Mt 28:19-20

⁵² For Protestants, the criterion of the true faith is found in its conformity to the Bible. The Reformers worked at suppressing any human traditions which would have betrayed the true teaching of Christ. They wished to return to the purity of the Gospel. On the other hand, the Society of St. Pius X seems to see in the conformity to Tradition, the ultimate criterion of the true faith. The Church teaches that both Scripture and Tradition are source of our faith. Yet, although the living Magisterium of the church (the reigning Pope and College of Bishops in communion with him) cannot define nor propose anything to our faith which does not belong to or which has not a necessary connection with the revealed deposit, it is nonetheless the ultimate authority which decides what does or does not belong to the Deposit of Faith, and no one else.

⁵³ A. Lang, "Der Auftrag der Kirche", *Fund. Theol.*, 2nd Vol., 1962, p156.

⁵⁴ Vatican I, Apostolic Constitution *Dei Filius*, April 24, 1870, DS 3013, Solesmes #342.

recognize where the true Church of Christ is, a visible criterion, one we can see, even when one does not yet have the "true" Faith. Where is the Church? There where the Pope is: *Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia*.⁵⁵ As the Pope is the Vicar (representative) of Christ, necessarily visible, and also the visible head of the Church, he is, by that fact, the foundation and principle of the visible unity of the Church. And this is so strictly necessary that if a "Catholic" was not in visible communion with this visible principle of unity which is the reigning Vicar of Christ, he would not belong to the unique, visible and only true Church of Christ. "By the hierarchical communion, the bishop is received as such by the Universal Church... This communion, in making him a bishop of the Catholic Church, has the property of associating him to the episcopal college and giving him a participation in the solicitude and government of the Universal Church, in union with its head, Jesus Christ, and in absolute dependence on this Head and on the Vicar who represents Him."⁵⁶

OBJECTION: We must distinguish between the official Church and the visible Church: "It is a mistake to assimilate the official Church and the visible Church".⁵⁷

RESPONSE: In introducing a distinction between the visible Church and the official Church, one must mean that the official Church, because it is not the visible Church, is not the true Church (visibility being a mark of the "true" Church). In consequence of this, the "official Church" is no longer Catholic unless in name only. Indeed, if the official church were still Catholic, the distinction would be superfluous.

As for the marks of visibility, the first (about which Archbishop Lefebvre speaks in his conference) is that of unity. In speaking only of unity of Faith, he forgets to mention that the guarantee of the unity, as we have seen, is the Vicar of Christ. Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Satis cognitum*, teaches: "God could not have willed that the faith should be *one* if He did not provide means sufficient for the preservation of this unity"⁵⁸. Further on, quoting St Pacian, he explicitly specifies the guarantee of this unity: "To Peter the Lord spoke: to *one*, therefore, that he might establish unity upon one".⁵⁹ This is why, says Cardinal Journet, "Heresy actually saps the unity of the Church, even radically, for the faith to which it is opposed, is the radical principle of the unity of the Church. In this sense, that is to say, absolutely speaking, infidelity is more grave the schism. But schism is the immediate, and in a certain sense specific, destroyer of the unity of the Church, since in doing so it attacks charity. Since the unity of the Church is formally destroyed by schism, the Fathers considered that schism, which destroys what is best (charity), was worse than infidelity"⁶⁰. To play off the unity of faith against the unity of charity (or government) is to posit the

⁵⁵ St. Ambrose, *Ennar. in psalmos*, XL, 30 in P. L. XIV Col. 1082.

⁵⁶ Dom Gréa, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

⁵⁷ Archbishop Lefebvre, conference given during the priest retreat, Ecône, 9 September 1988.

⁵⁸ Leo XIII, encyclical *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896, Solesmes #560.

⁵⁹ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, quoting St. Pacian, "Ad Sempronium", epist. III, 11., Solesmes #583.

⁶⁰ Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, Vol. II, pp. 824- 830.

fundamental principle of all schism.

"So also for this same unity, inasmuch as the Church is a divinely constituted society," Leo XIII teaches, "unity of government (*unitas regiminis*), which effects and involves *unity of communion (unitas communionis)* is necessary *jure divino*." He also makes this pertinent remark: "From this, we can recognize that men separate themselves no less from the unity of the Church by schism than by heresy."⁶¹ Thus, in permitting himself to choose between these unities, Archbishop Lefebvre has made a choice⁶² which, from a Catholic perspective, cannot be made. Once the guarantee of the unity is put aside, the conclusion imposes itself logically: "It is we who have the marks of the visible Church".⁶³

To pretend after all that "to be still united to the Church and even to the Pope", means either to recognize for the Vicar of Christ a primacy of honor, as do the avowed schismatics, or to commit a blundering incoherence.

But how will this communion, which must be visible, between the new bishop and the Pope, be manifested? By the protestation of good intent by this bishop? No! for it is not the inferior (the new bishop, in this case) who enters into communion, who effectively chooses his superior, but quite the contrary: it is the superior who receives the inferior into communion. "To be received into the communion of the Pope, it is most certainly to be received by him into the episcopate, to such a point that if he refuses this communion, he will not be a bishop and can never be counted as such within the Catholic Church."⁶⁴ Dom Gréa notes that inferiors can strengthen their superiors, "but ... the bishops have never pretended to confirm their head either than by their obedience and the recognition of his rights; never have they pretended to confirm him in the sense that this confirmation comports collation of jurisdiction, as if the course of the canonical mission could be inverted and the streams would flow backwards towards the source".⁶⁵ "It is from this See that flow all the rights of that venerable communion"⁶⁶, recalls Pius IX. This union which the Pope recognizes and establishes with the one newly chosen is manifested by the apostolic mandate, which proves to the consecrating bishop that the "candidate" is approved, that union with him is recognized. Thus if a consecration take place against the explicit will of the Pope, the visible guarantee of the unity, and the mandate for performing the consecration is not received, then one places oneself - regardless of what one might say - outside of the unity which must necessarily be visible. "Men who rise up with such audacity against Our authority, who persist in their offense with such stubbornness, do they deserve Our credit for their words when they say that their thoughts on the Primacy of this Holy See are those which are proper to Catholics, and that they remain united to Us in the limits of

⁶¹ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, Solesmes # 580 ff.

⁶² Archbishop Lefebvre, Homily of Maundy Thursday, Ecône 1986.

⁶³ Archbishop Lefebvre, Ecône, September 9, 1988.

⁶⁴ Dom Gréa, op. cit. p. 267.

⁶⁵ Dom Gréa, op. cit. p. 268.

⁶⁶ Pius IX, encyclical *Neminem vestrum*, February 2, 1854, referring to St. Ambrose, Epistula XII, *Ad Damas.*, Nos 2, 4., Solesmes # 219.

obedience? You know the answer. Therefore, if you fear to leave this Catholic unity...beware of the artifices and the subtleties of these men." ⁶⁷ These clear and (justly) severe words are not from Pope John Paul II on the consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre, as one might think, but of Pope Pius IX to the Armenian Catholics who had allowed themselves to consecrate bishops against the will of the Pope, fearing that a new rite might be imposed upon them.⁶⁸ Strange similarities with identical consequences.

We sum up with Dom Gréa: "To depend upon Saint Peter clearly means, for the episcopate, to receive from him the mission and, by the very nature of the episcopate which is this dependence, it is necessary that the bishops be sent and established by him, and him alone. Hence, it is not by an arbitrary disposition, but by the very necessity of the divine order of the Church that Peter alone can make a bishop and that there is no legitimate or possible episcopate outside of this unique origin."⁶⁹ "The Pope alone establishes bishops. This right belongs to him sovereignly, exclusively and necessarily by the very constitution of the Church and of the hierarchy"⁷⁰. "These notions are so evident by the relation they have to the establishment of the hierarchical order, that one cannot deny or obscure them without destroying these foundations or, in shaking them, render uncertain the whole economy of the Church."⁷¹

The Council of Trent condemned in the same way the following proposition: "If anyone says that bishops who have been neither rightly ordained nor sent by ecclesiastical and canonical authority but come from elsewhere are lawful ministers of the word and the sacraments, let him be anathema".⁷²

Thus the consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre are seen as formally qualified as non-Catholic by the very texts of the living Magisterium of the Church! Furthermore, as if the fact of not being a Catholic (in the strict and unambiguous sense) bishop was not enough, these bishops are moreover schismatic.

IV. A schismatic Episcopate

A. The Bishop, head of a local church

To understand that the Econe consecrations are schismatic, it is necessary to understand what

⁶⁷ Pius IX, letter *Quo impensiore*, May 20, 1870, Solesmes #354.

⁶⁸ They also protested of their fidelity to the See of Rome

⁶⁹ Dom Gréa, op. cit. p. 256.

⁷⁰ Dom Gréa, op. cit., p. 259.

⁷¹ Dom Gréa, op. cit., p. 258-259.

⁷² Council of Trent, Session XXIII, DS 1777.

a bishop is. From Apostolic times, it has been common to speak of dioceses as "particular churches: John to the church of Laodicea (Apoc 2), Paul to the church of the Galatians (Gal 1). In effect, the bishop is by nature pastor and head of the portion of the flock confided to him, of a church. If this church is in communion with the Sovereign Pontiff (currently reigning), it is but a particular church within the Catholic (universal) Church. If the church (or its "pastor") is not in communion with the current reigning Pope, he is, by that very fact, the head of an independent church, in other words, schismatic. I am the door (Jn 10:9): he who does not enter by this door is not of the flock of Christ and can much less be a pastor of it. Now we have already seen (Part III b) that communion was refused these four bishops by him who could have received them into communion into the Catholic Church: the successor of Peter, Pope John Paul II. From its own side, the Society of Saint Pius X does not seem to consider necessary communion with the present visible church, since communion with Rome of years gone by suffices: "For us, we are in full communion with all the Popes and all the bishops who preceded Vatican II!"⁷³

The taking of this position is justified by saying "It's they who are in schism!". But is this possible? If it is possible that a person be schizophrenic, in other words, torn in his internal forum or comportment, because he could not renounce contradictory or irreconcilable ideas or compartments, in the same way a person cannot simultaneously be schismatic and Catholic. This elementary truth and the immediate consequences which devolve from it must be clearly and officially recognized by the competent authorities of the Society of Saint Pius X. Thus, either Pope John Paul is Catholic (hence the legitimate successor of St. Peter, with, as a necessary consequence, all the prerogatives accorded by Christ to His visible Vicar) or he is not Catholic, because he is schismatic.⁷⁴ Hence to say that the official Church is schismatic is to say that the Pope and all the Cardinals and bishops who are "officially" Catholic, do not in fact belong to the (visible) Catholic Church. There is no third alternative. This is also the conclusion at which Archbishop Lefebvre arrives: see his discourse at Ecône, 9th September 1988. To pretend afterwards, as some do, to be in communion with John Paul II despite everything, hence with a schismatic, is indeed intellectual schizophrenia.

On the other hand, just as an excommunication is pronounced against a person, not an idea, in the same way, when a person is declared schismatic, it is not his thesis or comportment which is separated from the Church, but the person who has this schismatic comportment. When the Society of Saint Pius X, in its open letter (6th July, 1988) replied to Cardinal Gantin: Judge for yourself on which side the rupture exists, it "explained" that it was "the others" (in other words, persons: the Pope, the cardinals, etc.) who were cut off from the true Church. "It is they who have made the schism; it is indeed they who are separated from the Church", the Archbishop assures us with conviction.⁷⁵ It is therefore a question of a real schism, no matter how hard one tries to explain or justify it: the Roman Catholic Church, in as much as it is a society of "schismatic" persons, and the

⁷³ Open Letter to His Eminence Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, 6 July 1988.

⁷⁴ If the Pope is not Catholic, if he is schismatic, he is not the Pope! One cannot be Pope and schismatic at the same time; it is a contradiction in terms (oxymoron). One fails to see how the Pope can be out of the unity of the church while remaining the guarantor of the same unity by his function itself! It would make more sense to affirm that there is no Pope.

⁷⁵ Archbishop Lefebvre, homily in Fanjeaux, 4 August 1988.

"Catholic" church of Ecône are indeed really, "physically", "socially", distinct and separate: one and one alone between them can be the true Church⁷⁶ founded by Jesus Christ and not the other.

Since these two societies are indeed separate, there can be no communion between the Church which has as its head the successor of St. Peter - currently Pope John Paul II - and which received from Christ the promise of indefectibility, and that of Ecône. It is indeed schism.⁷⁷

B. The definition of schism.

"One calls schismatics those who refuse to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff and those who refuse communion with the members of the Church who are in communion with him" (St. Thomas Aquinas). According to the illustrious Doctor, there are two points to consider: the refusal of submission to the Sovereign Pontiff, and refusal of communion with the members of the Church subject to the Pope.⁷⁸

1. Refusal of submission to Pope John Paul II, the reigning Sovereign Pontiff:

"No authority whatsoever, save that which is proper to the Supreme Pastor...no person or group, whether of priests or of laymen, can claim the right of nominating bishops...no one can lawfully confer episcopal consecration unless he has received the mandate of the Apostolic See...if consecration of this kind is being done, contrary to all right and law (*jus fasque*)⁷⁹, and by all this crime the unity of the Church is being seriously attacked, an excommunication...has been established ... What then is to be the opinion concerning the excuse...that they had to act as they alleged because of the need to tend to the souls in those dioceses which were then without a bishop? It is obvious that no thought is being taken of the spiritual good of the faithful if the Church's laws are being violated...so that the hierarchical order of the Church is overthrown and the authority of the Roman Pontiff is treacherously resisted."⁸⁰ Such are the general principles of divine law ruling the Church, which Pope Pius XII recalls for us.

The cause of schism is obviously not excommunication, which is merely one of its

⁷⁶ See Part II. There is only one true Church. There are not two Churches: one of the "pure" (*katharoi*) and truly Catholic and another one only "materially" (therefore not "truly") Catholic although the hierarchy, bishops and the Pope would be part of it.

⁷⁷ "Please, judge on which side is the rupture", say the Superiors of the Society of St. Pius X in their very official letter to Cardinal Gantin. Rupture/break means schism. The Cardinal was accusing the bishops of schism and telling them they were excommunicated not only *ipso facto* because of the consecrations made without papal mandate (CIC #1382) but also because of the declaration of schism (1364, ph. 1).

⁷⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 39 a.1.

⁷⁹ cf. A. Boni, *Constituzionalita divina ed umana del Diritto*, Rome, 1986, p.39.

⁸⁰ Pius XII, encyclical *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, June 29, 1958, Solesmes #1537-39.

consequences, nor even the fact that such or such an act be punished by excommunication⁸¹, although this could be an indication of it, but the fact of appropriating to oneself a power which by divine right is reserved to the Sovereign Pontiff alone. Yet Archbishop Lefebvre has said clearly: "We (= I) ourselves will give ourselves the means of continuing the work which providence has confided to us"⁸²: in other words by proceeding by himself and from himself to the consecration of bishops. The effect is, as a result, "a grave attack upon the very unity of the Church": in other words, objectively schism.

AN IMPORTANT REMARK: Cardinal Journet shows that there are several ways to become schismatic or create a schism: One can become schismatic directly, not in denying the right of primacy of the Pope (this would not be schism but heresy), but by refusing communion with the rest of the Church. One can also become schismatic indirectly, "if the will bears directly and as to its object, not towards the refusal of communion, but towards a thing, which, wished as such, causes a rupture of the communion. At the very limit, one would have the case of a schismatic despite himself, less chimeric than one might think: the man who does not desire to separate himself from the communion of the Church, but who does things in such and such a manner, or who abstains from doing them in such a manner that rupture unavoidably follows".⁸³ To appropriate to oneself the right to consecrate bishops, a right belonging to the Pope alone, is to be schismatic by usurpation.⁸⁴

2. Refusal of communion with members of the Church:

In what way does this refusal of Communion manifest itself?:

a) It is noticeable it in the way that the schismatic cuts himself off from all life and relations with the successors of the Apostles, the bishops. We know that the Society of Saint Pius X presently has no official relations with the visible hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

b) Let us listen to Archbishop Lefebvre explain the dangers of maintaining good relations with the members of the Hierarchy of the Church today, and the need to preserve a milieu which is pure and staunch: "Only a milieu entirely detached from modern errors and morals can permit renewal. This milieu, which was visited by Cardinal Gagnon and Msgr. Perl, is formed of families which are profoundly Christian, having numerous children, from which many excellent vocations spring. The development of the renewed milieu..."⁸⁵ The Archbishop, in his exposé on the reconciliation proposed by Rome (May 30, 1988), enumerates the inconveniences:

⁸¹ "No one, under any pretext, could believe them innocent of the sin of schism, even if they had not been denounced as schismatic by Apostolic authority" (Pius IX, *Quartus supra*, Solesmes #396)

⁸² Quoted in several documents, e.g. *Fideliter* special issue June 29-30, 1988.

⁸³ Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné*, t. II, p. 829.

⁸⁴ See in our second part the response to the objection: " Archbishop Lefebvre refuses the schism."

⁸⁵ Exposé given on March 30, 1988, published in *Fideliter* of June 29-30, 1988.

" - habitual dissociation of our moral unity created around my person... - relations with congregations and orders ... danger of contamination - relations with bishops and with a clergy and with faithful which are conciliar despite the very wide exemptions (...), there will be contacts of courtesy and perhaps even offers of cooperation... the whole world has a conciliar, ecumenical, charismatic spirit...

"We were, up to this point, naturally protected, the selection being assured of itself... henceforth, it will be necessary to seek continually to throw them off the scent, to forearm oneself without cease from the Roman and diocesan milieux... Is it necessary to take the risk of contact with these modernist milieux... with the hope of forearming oneself ... or is it indeed necessary above all to preserve the family of Tradition, this family which represents what is left of the Catholic Church?⁸⁶ This last affirmation is to be taken in the strict sense, and is shared by all the authorities of the Society of Saint Pius X: thus, according to "Bishop" Fellay and the superiors of the districts of Switzerland, Austria and Germany and of the seminary at Zaitzkofen, not less than "90-95% of the faithful are separated from the Catholic Church for reasons of heresy or apostasy", "the German Episcopal Conference (and hence all the bishops of Germany) has separated from the Church"⁸⁷ and "in reason of similar circumstance in the past, this is true for all the episcopal conferences of the world"! We can understand better now why they refuse union (communion) with the "enemies of Christ".

Still in the same vein, the Superior of the Society of Saint Pius X responds to a declaration of Dom Gérard that "it is prejudicial that the very tradition of the Church be banished outside of its official visible perimeter. (...) The visibility of the Church is one of her essential characters", thus: "Might it not be, on the contrary, in the plan of Providence that the Tradition of the Church not be reintegrated in the pluralism of the "Conciliar Church"...? Thus to go to Him (Christ), let us go out of the camp bearing His reproach (Heb 13:13).⁸⁸ You cannot be more explicit: Pope John Paul II and the current bishops in flesh and bone, are not the visible hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ.

Thus it is not solely a question of a rupture in negotiations, but also a rupture with the rest of the members of the Roman Catholic Church. Even a pilgrimage, organized and run solely by "Traditional" Catholics, with only "Tridentine" missals, were, after the event, considered as too dangerous and cast off.⁸⁹

Thus we find verified the definition of a schismatic by Cajetan: "One is schismatic by the very fact that he refuses to act as a part of the Church. And little matter what provokes this refusal.

⁸⁶ Expose of the situation of what Rome calls Reconciliation in *Fideliter*.

⁸⁷ Underlined in the original. The German Bishops allegedly would have proffered 11 heresies.

⁸⁸ "Remarques de la Fraternité Saint Pie X" in response to the declaration of Abbott Gérard (of the Abbey of St. Magdalene of Le Barroux) published in Present of August 18, 1988 in *Fideliter* #65, Sept-Oct. 1988.

⁸⁹ Conference given by Archbishop Lefebvre at the seminary of Flavigny (France) in June 1988. Archbishop Lefebvre thought that the Pilgrimage of Chartres 1988 --between 20 and 30,000 pilgrims -- represented a danger of contamination for the Society.

In effect, from that very moment when he gets to the point of refusing to act as a part of the One Catholic Church, he incurs schism... (They) refuse to be a part of the Church so as to set themselves up separated from the whole".⁹⁰ "Our family represents what is left of the true Catholic Church" confirms Archbishop Lefebvre (as above). From such a theological (?) attitude can come only one conclusion: We and we alone are the Church. The authorities of the Society of Saint Pius X think themselves able to make this step; the minds having accepted the schismatic consecrations, and the priests having been compromised by their (obligatory) Masses and pilgrimages of thanksgiving, they can no longer step away. Indeed, in the official German-language Bulletin, *Mitteilungsblatt* (Nov 1988), there is an article containing this very conclusion, so long under preparation: "Has the visible Mystical Body of the Church dwindled to just the Society of Saint Pius X?"

For this reason, the Society of Saint Pius X will not, and cannot, be in union with "them".

C. The Living Magisterium of the Church:

We have seen above that to be in communion with the successor of Peter, one must be "received" into communion by him, and that a refusal entails the absence of communion. Pope Pius IX drew the logical conclusion of this principle:

"All these declarations are so emphatic that we must conclude from them that every man that has been declared schismatic by the Roman Pontiff must cease absolutely to usurp the name of *Catholic*"⁹¹. Archbishop Lefebvre received first of all a double monition clearly warning him of the schismatic character of the consecrations he intended to perform against the will of the Vicar of Christ: the first from the Pope himself in his letter of June 9, the second from Cardinal Gantin, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, on June 17, 1988. After the consecrations, those concerned received from Card. Gantin, on July 1st, 1988, a double excommunication: the first explicitly for schism (Can 1364 1), and the second for forbidden consecrations (Can 1382).⁹² The Sovereign Pontiff himself declared in his Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei adflicta* (July 2, 1988) that the act of June 30th was schismatic. To pretend afterwards that it is not known what the Pope thinks of it in the depths of his heart, wishing by that to understand that he was not unfavorable to the consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre, is simply dishonest.

V. An implicit Heresy

A. The gravity of all schism

We have seen so far that the episcopate issuing from the Econe Consecrations was contrary to the very nature of the episcopate, non-Catholic and schismatic. Yet schism - according to the reaction we have heard so far - is diminished in its gravity as much by those who believe in

⁹⁰ Cardinal Cajetan in *Ila Ilae* q. 39 a. 1.

⁹¹ Pius IX, "Quantus Supra" of 1 June 1873 in Solesmes #393

⁹² Dr. Kaschewsky (*Una Voce Korrespondenz* 2/1988) thinks there is a contradiction there. In fact there is no contradiction to receive the same censure for two different reasons. The question of schism is the core of the debate. One cannot reduce the 1988 consecrations to a question of ecclesiastical law. The question regards the very constitution of the church, and because it is divine law, there is no exception. See Part I, ph. 1.

Archbishop Lefebvre to the point of following him into schism, as by the Archbishop himself. It is spoken of as merely a question of administrative difficulty or something in the past. Yet St. Augustine warns us: "There is nothing more grave than the sacrilege of schism: there is never a legitimate necessity to break unity".⁹³ St. John Chrysostom tells us why: "I say and I protest that to divide the Church is not less an evil than to fall into heresy".⁹⁴ Pius IX makes us note that schism includes "a deviation in the rectitude of faith which all Catholics must have in what concerns the primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff, and this is true, even if they recognize this primacy for Peter".⁹⁵ Fr. Simoulin, in an article in *Valeurs Actuelles*⁹⁶, allows the suggestion that it would be the non-recognition of the Pontifical Primacy which signified schism. But this is a grave error: non-recognition of the Roman Primacy is not schismatic but is a heresy, as the First Vatican Council formally defined.⁹⁷ As seen above, the schism of Archbishop Lefebvre consists not in the negation of the Pontifical Primacy, but in the usurpation of the exercise of a right of this Primacy.

B. "All schism includes a deviation of Faith":

But what is the immediate theological cause which has led to this act? What is this "deviation of Faith" of which Pius IX speaks? The origin of this deviation, we believe, is to be found in a false conception of the Church held by Archbishop Lefebvre:

"Was it because, between the two Vatican Councils, the papacy was dressed in a wholly divine aura, that she enjoyed such prestige that one pardoned its little mistakes? Did one not 'see' Christ behind the Sovereign Pontiff? Or was it not more this joy of seeing the Church spread the saving faith amongst the pagans? The victory of Jesus Christ, the true God, over the demonic idols? Incorporation by the sacrament of Baptism, into the Church, the one ark of salvation? Yet this so beautiful Church, did she not fall suddenly from her pedestal: the Pope, did he not seem to become one bishop amongst many equals, Christ nothing but an ordinary man, the Church one means amongst many to salvation? Were the mistakes which followed just that? Or were they not in fact intentional? Do they not confirm this revolution of the Council?

It seemed that after the Council, the Church was no longer what she had been. At the start, one deplored that the "human " (i.e.: both in its aspect of disorder due to Original Sin and in opposition to "divine" [horizontalism]) had invaded the Holy Church. Then, in the face of the persistence, not to speak of the pertinacity, of this state which did nothing but get worse, Archbishop Lefebvre concluded that the rhetorical expression, "the Church is not what she was" was henceforth a reality. For Archbishop Lefebvre and his followers, the "Gates of Hell" have prevailed:

⁹³ St. Augustine, *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*, 1-2, c. II, 25.

⁹⁴ St. John Chrysostom, Homily XI, *in ep. ad Ephes.* # 5.

⁹⁵ Pius IX, *Quo impensiore*, Solesmes # 355.

⁹⁶ *Valeurs Actuelles*, July 4, 1988.

⁹⁷ Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3053.

"The Chair of Peter and the posts of authority are occupied by antichrists"⁹⁸, "might it not be, on the contrary, in the plan of Providence that the tradition of the Church should not be reintegrated in the pluralism of the "Conciliar Church"? Thus, in order to go to him, let us go out of the camp... (Heb 13:13)"⁹⁹. It could not be more explicit: the camp is contaminated, unfaithful, no longer Catholic: it is the camp of Antichrist and Satan. But this camp, of which those who lead the Society of Saint Pius X speak, is the Roman Catholic Church, which received from Christ the promise of indefectibility!¹⁰⁰

And yet have not the Popes many times recalled the Church's teaching on this point? "So that...the faithful might be kept secure in the oneness of faith and communion, He set blessed Peter over the rest of the Apostles, and fixed in him the abiding principle of this twofold unity and its visible foundation, in the strength of which the everlasting temple should arise, and the Church in the firmness of that faith should lift her majestic front to heaven."¹⁰¹ And the promises of Our Lord are not vain, even if Peter hesitates: The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "What does it mean, against it? Does it mean against the Church? The phrase is ambiguous; is this to signify that the Rock and the Church are one and the same? Yes, that, I think, is the truth"¹⁰² (Origen). Leo XIII comments: "The meaning of the divine utterance is, that, notwithstanding the wiles and intrigues which they bring to bear against the Church, it can never be that the Church committed to the care of Peter shall succumb or in any wise fail."¹⁰³ Without doubt, it would be possible to admonish Peter, as Paul did in times gone by, but it is never permissible to take his place to save the Church. Here is what Pius VI replies to this classic argument of the heretics: such language is an imposture, "that which pretends that in designating the rock on which he built his Church Jesus Christ wished men to understand, not the person, but rather the faith and the confession, of Peter."¹⁰⁴ There we have implicit heresy: the petrine foundation is not enough! Pius IX teaches: "Let the faithful remember that here lives and presides, in the person of his successors, Peter the Prince of the Apostles, whose dignity is not eclipsed even in an unworthy heir. Let them remember that Jesus Christ Our Lord has placed in this Chair of Peter the unshakable foundation of His Church, that He prayed to obtain for Peter the faith that would never fail, commanding him to confirm his brethren

⁹⁸ Letter of Archbishop Lefebvre to the future bishops of August 29, 1987 in *Fideliter*, Special issue, June 1988.

⁹⁹ Remarks of the Society of St. Pius X quoted in *Fideliter* # 65.

¹⁰⁰ Beware of getting trapped by words! When confusion is made between doctrine and person, between rhetorical remarks and theological precision, there is a hasty step from the exclamation: "That's a heresy!" to this one: "That's a heretic!". Besides, most of the time, it is not a heresy in the strict sense of the word but at most a theological error (when it is not a different theological opinion). When one calls people heretics, apostates, antichrists while at the same time one recognizes they have not uttered explicitly any formal heresy, too easily one goes from suspicion to certitude of error or heresy.

¹⁰¹ Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3051, Solesmes # 356.

¹⁰² Origen, *Comm. in Matth* t. XII, n. II.

¹⁰³ Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, Solesmes # 585.

¹⁰⁴ Pius VI, decree *Super soliditate*, Solesmes # 33.

in that faith".¹⁰⁵ Thus it is a question of faith, of eternal salvation.

C) Latent Sedevacantism

This attitude presupposes a practical Sedevacantism. In effect there is no other explanation for this usurpation of a right exclusively reserved to the Vicar of Christ, by the will of Christ Himself. As we will see in the objection "the Pope is not Catholic", it is vital that the leaders of the Society of Saint Pius X recognize up on deck what certain recognize below deck, but discreetly naturally. But if minds are not yet ready, especially amongst SSPX priests, they are being worked on: Bishop de Castro-Meyer, co-Consecrator, said it quite clearly: "We have no Pope: one cannot remain Vicar of Christ, divinely assisted to confirm one's brethren in the faith, and nevertheless organize a reunion as at Assisi, where the true religion was put on the same level as the false".¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

For those who take the trouble to seek the theological principles seriously and search a little in the texts of the Magisterium, success is - in what concerns us here - assured. Contrary to what some may say, the divine constitution of the Church has been already sufficiently explained in her laws that a solution imposes itself with certitude. The different "oppositions" to the Chair of Peter since the beginning of the Church have enabled the Popes to pronounce and establish an infallible ordinary magisterial teaching. Doubtless the consecrations of the Anti-Concordatists, the Armenians or of the Chinese are, in their circumstances, different from those of Archbishop Lefebvre. Yet to pretend from that that the principles and solutions thence brought to bear by the Church no longer apply in the case of the Archbishop is to rely on the Modernist theology of historical relativism: the latest offspring of Nominalism. If, in order to be right, it is necessary to overthrow the principles of the faith, it is because one is wrong; you must review your opinion. It is for not having done this that the Donatist and Jansenist traditionalists fell into heresy or into schism. The Society of St. Pius X has rejected the obvious solution because it appears in contradiction with the analysis done. This solution consists on confidence in the promises of Christ to his Church: visibility, "petrinity", indefectibility, and formal apostolicity.

¹⁰⁵ Pius IX, encyclical *Nostis et nobiscum*, December 8, 1849, Solesmes # 207.

¹⁰⁶ Bulletin of the SAKA (Sedevacantist Association), Basel, November 1988, p.189.

Part Two: Replies to Objections

It should be said at the start that replying to objections on the teaching of the Church such as we have just seen - or on the justifications of the consecrations such as have been attempted by the Society of Saint Pius X - is a difficult task. It is not that the arguments put forward are particularly difficult to understand in themselves, but rather, besides their number, the fact that certain arguments are interconnected, one to another. Since they cannot be refuted in a single sentence, they create a certain confusion, whilst paradoxically giving a deceptive semblance of truth. Yet the weakness of such arguments is recognized by the very ones who propose them.¹⁰⁷ That is why another type of argument (other than theological) is presented, an argument of an affective or moral nature (confidence, charism, etc.), the aim of which is to reinforce the "deficient" speculative arguments.

We have tried to make a list of all the arguments in favor of the consecrations of which we are presently aware (in addition to those which we have dealt with in Part I). It is quite likely some will be lacking, since new theses are brought out on a regular basis; hence it is impossible to stay up to date. Yet the majority of these "arguments" will be reducible to the ones dealt with here, for, as they are essentially the same, they can be answered by analogy.

We have classified the arguments in defense of the Consecrations into three categories: (1) those primarily speculative; (2) those of a positive nature; (3) those which are "affective".

(1) ARGUMENTS OF A SPECULATIVE NATURE

A. "The Pope is possessed by an ecumenical and liberal ideology, ... he is morally inaccessible." In consequence of which, it is permitted to act against his incorrectly (in)formed will. This argument seeks to be an application by analogy of the classic theory of Canon Law and jurisprudence by which it is permitted to perform an act which of itself requires the permission of legitimate authority when this is physically impossible, in which case one presumes permission.

Response: Several assertions are made in this first argument: one comes from a theory of epikeia (of which we will speak in the response to argument C below); the other is in the domain of logic. The premise which underruns the whole argument is that the Pope is possessed by an ideology which is foreign to Catholic doctrine. But any such state of possession includes necessarily that of violence (i.e.: an outside influence which forces itself upon you). Thus a person can only be said to be possessed if this is done against his will. A person who in appearance suffers possession but in effect consents to it, has not in reality suffered any imposition, It can thus be understood that any "possession" must be of the physical, rather than of the spiritual order. In reason of His human nature, man possesses a spiritual soul endowed with free will. Other than God, nothing and no one can enter into this soul, and that which the subject freely permits to enter. This is why psychology

¹⁰⁷ See for example the letters of Bishop Tissier de Mallerais to Fr. Emmanuel Berger.

recalls for us that the ideas and theories to which man gives his assent are his own and not alien to him.

In consequence of this, we deny the "possession" (of the soul) of the Pope by anything - this is nothing other than elementary psychology.

Incidentally, we should note the catastrophic consequences of such a manner of judging others, and superiors in particular. Everyone who judges himself misunderstood by his superior could argue, from the fact that the superior thinks otherwise than himself, that the latter is occupied by false ideas and that he is therefore dispensed from taking account of orders against his own point of view. It is the beginning of anarchy.

B. In his habitual intention, the Pope can only will the good of the Church. This intention includes the consecration of Catholic bishops, even if outwardly he refuses it.

Response: Several points must be made in reply, since the proposition contains several affirmations.

a) The psychological response: That a person might be perplexed in face of a choice of what to do (e.g.: someone of weak virtue submitting to temptation) is something which is observed daily. But that an act posited with a contrary morality to habitual intention could be considered as non-existent under the pretext that the habitual (antecedent) intention is necessarily prevalent, is an unheard of theory. Is not every human act posited with its proper morality? That the habitual intention be thereby destroyed, this we do not affirm: on the contrary, we know, for example, that venial sin does not destroy the habitus of charity. But it is no less true that the habitus of charity does not render the venially sinful act good: this latter keeps its own morality. This is why to pretend that the good and habitual intention of the Pope could annihilate his actual intention is a gross error. One could further answer - ad hominem - that according to the apparent logic of the syllogism proposed, the intention of the Pope being habitually good (i.e.: the good of the Church), his decision to refuse the Consecrations would also have to be good. As far as knowing if this actual intention of the Pope goes against the habitual good of the Church, the thesis presupposes it, but does not prove it. All the less in view of:

b) (reply of logic): whilst it is true that the good of the Church includes the consecration of Catholic bishops (major), one can conclude from this neither who nor how many should be consecrated, nor the date of their Consecration.

When the Sovereign Pontiff reserves to himself the choice of candidate(s) and fixes a date for the consecrations, it cannot easily be seen how - based upon this line of argumentation - it could theologically or metaphysically be necessary be that these take place on, for example, June 30th and not August 15th.

C. "In the case of positive or probable doubt, the Church supplies jurisdiction" (1917 Code, c. 209; 1983 Code, c. 144)

This argument has as its aim to show that the necessary jurisdiction for a bishop - as required by Catholic dogma - is thus supplied.

Response: The "Church" which supplies for such a lack of jurisdiction is not some platonic archetype, but the Catholic Church itself, visible and structured as it exists on the earth today. This jurisdiction cannot be given - and this in an absolutely necessary way - save by the Vicar of Christ, whether explicitly *de jure* (as in the case of the laicized priest who received by law (i.e.: by an explicit papal will) jurisdiction for the absolution of a dying person), or implicitly when by *epikeia*, --that is transgression of the letter of the law in presumed accord with the intention of the legislator-- one can assume his accord

This thesis is perfectly correct as the major of the argument: even for episcopal consecrations, such suppliance of implicit accord of the Pope could exist and has in fact existed (E.g.: Eusebius of Samosata¹⁰⁸). But, as Dom Gréa reminds us, such episcopal consecrations presuppose (with moral certitude) the implicit assent of the Pope (= the minor). This classic point of doctrine within the Catholic Church is recalled also by Fr. Berto, the Archbishop's own theologian at Vatican II: "(...) bishops who were already established over their appointed flocks, established others for flocks yet to be formed, without having recourse on each occasion to the intervention of the Sovereign Pontiff, but founded on His implicit consent".¹⁰⁹

The problem of the Econe Consecrations is that they are contrary to the explicit will of him to whom all jurisdiction is given as the visible head of the Church. In other words, the Church cannot supply if the Vicar of Christ - its head - refuses it, since there is no Church outside of its head (*ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia*). It is he and he alone (not some conceptual or ideal "Church") who gives jurisdiction. To pretend that the Church supplies even when the Holy Father refuses jurisdiction is to construct a super-Church over and above the Pope, an invisible Church which is not ruled by the Vicar of Christ (but by Christ Himself!). This - we recognize - is the Protestant thesis of the invisible Church. "Do not forget...the expression of Saint Cyprian", Leo XII exhorts us, "the Bishop is in the Church and the Church in the Bishop."¹¹⁰ In wishing to deal only with Christ in Heaven as source of all power, this thesis necessarily denies the visibility of the Church and the Vicariate of the Successor of Peter. The agreement of the Pope is a "passage" which is not accidental but obligatory to obtain the power of jurisdiction (Mt 16:16).

NB: Let us keep in mind:

1) *Epikeia* is not an arbitrary theory, but has its laws and conditions. This is permitted to use it only if the legislator is inaccessible (which is not the case: see reply to argument A, above) and moreover

¹⁰⁸ The Society of St. Pius X likes to refer to Eusebius' consecrations. They are analyzed at II A.

¹⁰⁹ Abbé Berto, *Pour la Sainte Eglise Romaine*, Edition du Cèdre, 1976, p.302. If the nominations were not always made by the Pope in the past, as Fr. Berto reminds us, the "institution" (by implicit consent of the Pope), comes only from the Vicar of Christ. Do not confuse nomination and institution. Why Fr. Pivert quotes this text to prove his thesis is not very clear.

¹¹⁰ Leo XII, exhortation *Pastoris Aeterni*, July 2, 1826 to the anti-Concordat bishops, Solesmes #148, quoting St. Cyprian, Epist. LXXIX, n. 8.

if his accord can be presupposed: "If the legislator were there, he would permit me to act in this way". But in the case under discussion, he was there and not only did he not give permission but he forbade it explicitly! You cannot argue *epikeia* against the clear and expressed will of the legislator!

2) The argument according to which the Pope is not in a state to make a correct judgement (for example, he is "occupied", as in argument A) looks strangely like the thesis of Luther who appeals from a badly informed Pope to a better informed Pope. This thesis was evidently condemned by the Church (see below, next argument).

D. "The Popes of Tradition and a future Pope, or the current Pope once converted, who recognize/will recognize the legitimacy and catholicity of these consecrations and give/will give the necessary canonical mission, since the present Pope is not Catholic."

This is one of the more favored arguments of Archbishop Lefebvre.¹¹¹ It can only be a Pope who subscribes to "Tradition" who can be an effective source of jurisdiction. Recall that, on the occasion of the consecrations, when the question was asked "Do you have the mandate?", he replied "We do have it".

Response: This argument in fact is twofold: (1) the canonical mission is given by a Pope (or Popes) of "Tradition"; (2) the current Pope is no longer "Catholic". Here we find the very heart of the question, and here is the key to the solution to the whole problem of Archbishop Lefebvre: "Pope John Paul II is not Catholic."

1) The mission given by the Papacy:

a) Can a Catholic priest be consecrated if he has never received any mission and then become a Catholic bishop? To this question, we have cogently responded in the negative in Part I: it is the apostolic mission which makes a bishop a Catholic bishop. The power of orders cannot exist alone but must necessarily be actualized by the power of jurisdiction for a bishop to be considered as a Catholic bishop.

b) Can a bishop pretend to have received his mission from "Tradition" or from some deceased person (a dead Pope of "Tradition")? Can he claim that he will receive it one day from a person who is not yet Pope, or who is currently Pope, but has so far refused it (thereby effectively acknowledging that he does not in fact have it)? It is almost embarrassing to have to reply to such a question. It is obvious that it is not "Tradition" or the "Papacy" (disincarnate, conceptualized, like "the Holy See") which gives power and mandates in the Catholic Church - as with any society - but solely the superiors (in this case, the Pope), in flesh and bone, alive and functioning in their job at the time of the sending of the mandate. Leo XII, who had to deal with the schism of the "Petite Eglise", warned the faithful: "Beware of false leaders... they are seeking to snatch you from the bosom of the Church, then to bring about your final perdition, when they strive to separate you from communion with Us, the Holy See. They flatter themselves on a pretended communion with the

¹¹¹ E.g.: "Letter to the Future Bishops" in *Fideliter* special issue, *Angelus* special issue.

Apostolic See, while they refuse communion with the Roman Pontiff and with the bishops in communion with him."¹¹². *Nihil novi sub sole*.

A Catholic cannot but be alarmed in the face of the underlying conception of the Church in this manner of argumentation: the Church is taken for a concept or for a purely spiritual and disincarnate society, of which the members and hierarchy are necessary only in the material order, and, so, accidental to the essence of the Church, and merely useful to assure the temporal governing of things. If it were thus, the life and essential reality of this Church would be found above or outside herself. In consequence, one could ignore her visible and fleshly structure. Is this indeed the Church founded by Jesus Christ? Indeed not! It resembles strangely the church of the Protestants.

2) The second argument is Archbishop Lefebvre's solution to the problem of the current crisis in the Church: how could a Pope permit Assisi? Answer: a "Catholic" Pope could not. And then they give a listing of the scandalous (rightly or wrongly) acts committed by Pope John Paul II during the course of his pontificate. The ambiguity is there in all its fullness: what is meant by "the Pope is not Catholic"?

a) If it means that the "mentality" or the manner of considering or resolving certain problems is "not very Catholic", in other words, imperfect, "disordered" or sinful, one could - without pronouncing on the solid foundation of such assertions - accept such a thesis (which will become the major in our syllogism). Would the Pope on this account lose his jurisdiction and power to institute bishops (that would be the minor which remains to be proved)? Obviously not! (It would be necessary otherwise to remove the names of a large number of Popes from the list of legitimate successors of St.. Peter!)

b) If on the other hand, we understand "is not Catholic" in the stricter, theological sense of "has lost the Catholic faith", we find ourselves confronted by a dilemma:

(i) Either the Pope is still the Pope and retains his jurisdiction (validly albeit illicitly), and so it is still he and he alone who designates the members of the college of successors to the Apostles, and of which the Econe bishops are not accordingly a part.

(ii) Or the Pope is no longer Pope, and has no (longer) jurisdiction: this is sedevacantism. Whilst the Archbishop never pronounced upon the reality and theoretical possibility of such a situation and its consequences (publicly, he always denied it), the fact remains that, practically, it is in fact sedevacantism which guides him, for it alone can explain his position in any coherent way.

Note that Archbishop Lefebvre has never condemned this theory nor reproached those who have left him to uphold it. At the very most, they have been reproached with having reached such a conclusion "too quickly". We know that seminary professors who inferred logically from Archbishop Lefebvre's attitude theoretical and formal "sedevacantism" - and quite openly - have never been silenced as one might rightly expect. Today, talk of sedevacantism is met with shrieks

¹¹² Leo XII, *Pastoris Aeterni*, Solesmes #148

of horror, as was talk of the consecrations when they were first announced in June 1987. There, it took only a year to change opinions; how long will it take to make sedevacantism acceptable?

E. "Archbishop Lefebvre explicitly refused any idea of schism. The Econe consecrations are therefore not schismatic."

Response: 1) That Archbishop Lefebvre had good intentions, we are more than willing to accept!¹¹³ But does intention suffice to make an act good? Every moralist knows that the primary moral value of an act comes from its object (*finis operis*) and not from the purpose for which, or intention with which (*finis operantis*), it is done, which is but a circumstance. It is elementary, but apparently in theory only: the end does not justify the means. But as we have seen, a consecration against the expressed will of the Pope is a sinful means.

2) It is not sufficient to pretend not to wish to commit an evil act in order that - in committing it - it ceases to be evil. He who says he loves God above all but then steals a large sum of money commits an act opposed to his words, and the act makes the words worthless¹¹⁴. The same thing happens here: to recognize the primacy of John Paul II, and at the same time to deny him in practice the power to use it and moreover to usurp it to oneself is indeed to put one's actions out of accord with one's words. In this respect, it is not uninteresting to note that the Jansenists, who had created their own proper hierarchy to preserve their false teachings - which they considered to be part of Augustinian tradition and thus of the teaching of the Church - which were, according to them, attacked by the bull *Unigenitus*, gathered in council (1763), declared in their profession of faith to recognize the apostolic Primacy not only in matters of faith but of discipline also. The church of Utrecht founded by them has, notwithstanding, remained schismatic until this day: proof that what the mouth professes has no value if not followed by acts which concur.

F. Archbishop Lefebvre desires only auxiliary bishops. They are not to have the same powers as diocesan bishops, especially that of jurisdiction. Titular and auxiliary bishops have no territory to exercise the power of government, yet they are true bishops!

Response: "Without any doubt", Cardinal Billot tells us on this subject, "they are invested

¹¹³ Dr. Kaschewsky has tried to show that a censure is not incurred if the subject is in good faith when he commits an act punishable by ecclesiastical law. Now, this is a valid statement for crimes which, by themselves, do not imply a separation with the Mystical Body of Christ. If, for example, someone joins the Orthodox church in good faith, he is objectively and really separated from the visible Church, although he might be in the state of grace and thus belong to the Church in an invisible manner. The crime of schism is an objective fact which, as such, separates from the communion with the Catholic Church, independently of the interior disposition of the person who poses that schismatic act.

¹¹⁴ See Pius IX, *Quo impensiore* : "Men who rise up with such audacity against Our authority, who persist in their offense with such stubbornness, do they deserve Our credit for their words when they say that their thoughts on the Primacy of this Holy See are those which are proper to Catholics, and that they remain united to Us in the limits of obedience? You know the answer. Therefore, if you fear to leave this Catholic unity...beware of the artifices and the subtleties of these men." (Solesmes #354)

with a character which is ordained to the government of the Church"¹¹⁵. Auxiliary bishops have a jurisdiction which is subordinated to the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop in as much as they are like an instrumental cause of the ordinary of that diocese. Indeed, a bishop - be he auxiliary or the "ordinary" - has to be received into the hierarchical communion. "It is not sufficient to participate in a same sacramental grace giving a participation in this threefold function in order that the unity of episcopal mission be created. 'A communion of heart or sentiment cannot suffice; a hierarchical communion is needed, which manifests acceptance of the coordination willed by Christ between the members of the episcopal body' (J. Lécuyer), having the Successor of Peter at its head. This hierarchical communion takes concrete form in the assignment of a precise function or a determined flock on the part of the Head of the college".¹¹⁶

As to the expression itself, he who says "auxiliary bishop" says "bishop who helps" the one upon whom his jurisdiction depends, his superior. But who is the superior, endowed with the power of jurisdiction, upon whom the four Econe bishops depend? On the SSPX Superior General? But from whom has he received the power of jurisdiction?¹¹⁷

We can now see that the creation of an episcopate without any sort of jurisdictional determination, as explicitly desired by Archbishop Lefebvre, is a denatured episcopate, since it is intentionally deprived of its natural and necessary complement, which is jurisdiction or jurisdictional communion with the Successor of St. Peter. To promote such an episcopate deprived of jurisdiction is to undermine the very constitution of the Catholic episcopate.

G. *Salus animarum suprema lex!*¹¹⁸ The Econe consecrations were necessary for the salvation of many souls, and even of the Church. Hence, every law, precept ... is suspended.

Response: What does this proposition "the salvation of souls is the highest law" mean? Where does it come from? What value does it have? This proposition is nothing other than a rule of interpretation of positive law, relating exclusively to human laws and the application of certain moral precepts (e.g. Sunday observance). It cannot, however, be applied to divine constitutive laws, those which determine the nature of things in raising them up to the level of means of salvation. Thus, someone who has no water with which to baptize, cannot use orange juice, even to baptize a dying infant. One who is not a priest cannot give absolution to another who is dying and in need of it. The rule *salus animarum suprema lex* is without force in that case, and yet how necessary it would be to these two persons for their salvation if it were otherwise. Why does it not apply? Because it is Christ Himself Who has instituted this order of things: His divine will has given to

¹¹⁵ Cardinal Billot, *De Ecclesia Christi*, t. III, *de subj. pot.*, Rome 1900 p 227.

¹¹⁶ R. Pagé, *Les Eglises particulières*, Vol 1, Editions Paulines, 1985, p 37. See also *Nota explicativa of Lumen Gentium* n. 2 and C.I.C. c. 375 ph. 2.

¹¹⁷ Regarding the objection according which the Church would provide (*supplet*) this lack of jurisdiction, see the response to objection (G) below.

¹¹⁸ "The salvation of souls is the highest law" is a principle of moral theology which affirms that laws are suspended when obedience to them would jeopardize one's salvation.

these things a divine constitution - hence untouchable, whatever the cost - which supernaturalizes them. It is the same for the Church, a society which has been raised to the level of a means of salvation which, as proclaims the dogma *Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*, is absolutely necessary. Now the Apostles and their (legitimate) successors have been established to extend and cooperate in the saving mission of Christ¹¹⁹, and this under dependence of His visible Vicar¹²⁰, the Sovereign Pontiff. In consequence of this, nothing and no one can change this divine law, which is constitutive of the Church. (See Part I for more ample explanations).

H. For "Tradition" to survive, it requires the consecration of traditional bishops.

Response: This line of argument, at first sight somewhat banal, is however extremely important to understand how the supporters of the Econe Consecrations conceive the Catholic Church. Is "Tradition" the same as the Church? Or is it simply a movement, a current within the Church? What do we mean by "Tradition"¹²¹, its "survival" and "traditional" bishops? Can one dissociate within the Church a "traditional" episcopate from a "non-traditional" (or "Conciliar") episcopate? If yes, is the "non-traditional" episcopate still Catholic, thus part of the legitimate hierarchy of the One Catholic Church? Are its members part of the college of legitimate successors of the Apostles, and this in a formal manner? If it is not possible to dissociate thus the episcopate, and if the members of the hierarchy are part of the college of successors to the Apostles, then the distinction becomes pointless and in no way makes it necessary to ensure the survival of a "traditional" type of episcopate, since the other is sufficient for the survival of the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, if the "non-traditional" (i.e.: "Conciliar") episcopate¹²² is considered to be non-Catholic (i.e. not legitimate, not part of the college of successors to the Apostles), one would have to conclude that the Catholic Church existed solely in Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro-Meyer. Thus, the Catholic Church would exist only at Econe!

This conclusion, which seems daring to some perhaps -- but which is simply a heresy -- is heard less rarely than one might expect (and wish). The Open Letter of the Superiors of the Society of St. Pius X to Cardinal Gantin (mentioned above) reads completely in this sense. Bishop de

¹¹⁹ Mt 28:18 ff.

¹²⁰ Jn 21:17.

¹²¹ The word of "Tradition" is used in so many different ways by Archbishop Lefebvre and other members of the Society of St. Pius X, that one does not always see at first sight what they mean and sometimes one wonders if they see the difference between those different meanings. Tradition with a capital "T" is usually reserved for those oral teachings of Our Lord and the Apostles which have been handed on throughout centuries by oral teaching or writings of the Fathers of the Church, Doctors of the Church, etc., in distinction with those teachings which were written down and inspired by the Holy Ghost in Scripture. But sometimes they use the same term with a capital "T" to mean a particular liturgical or disciplinary custom or practice or even to refer to themselves as though the Society of St. Pius X and other friendly organizations owned the trademark Tradition™ !

¹²² By "traditional episcopate" or "traditional bishop", SSPX mean both the bishops consecrated with a pre-Vatican II rite, and the bishops particularly faithful to the teaching, rites, and spirituality of the church as they were lived before the Council Vatican II.

Castro-Meyer himself said to seminarians at Econe that the Church (or even the head of the Church) was now indeed at Econe. A clear and unambiguous declaration in this matter by those who govern the Society of Saint Pius X would be highly desirable, with adequate sanctions.

In consequence of all this, either there was no absolute urgency to consecrate "traditional" bishops at Econe on June 30, 1988, since every Catholic episcopal consecration is by nature "traditional" (theologically speaking), or there is not reason to deal with Rome and its "conciliar" episcopate since they are (in the strict sense) outside the Catholic Church. This dilemma leads to a double conclusion: either the first solution is true, and the Econe Consecrations are considered as illegitimate; or the second is true, which thus condemns in advance any future dealings with Rome as nonsensical.

I. The Church is currently in such a state of distress (modernism, ecumenism and their practice) that it is necessary to remedy it, even by unusual means.

It was in this spirit that Fr. Guérard de Lauriers - speculating on the meaning of "until the end of the ages" (since there are "ages" (plural), not all are included in the promise of Christ: between the first of the "ages" and the last age of Christ's return, there will yet be an age in which the constitution of the Church will be abolished) - had himself consecrated and then felt the need to consecrate others in his turn "in order to save the Church". This teaching goes formally against the dogma of the perpetuity of the Primacy, such as it is defined by the Church.¹²³ Fr. Laroche, SSPX, relies upon a brochure of Professor May to defend this line of argument.¹²⁴

Response: 1) It suffices to open the Code of Canon Law at the canons mentioned to realize that the Code explicitly excludes the case where the act is intrinsically evil¹²⁵, such as is the case for a schismatic or non-Catholic consecration. But even without opening the Code, it falls within common sense that such exemptions can only have any value in the case of human laws which - in reason of our limited and imperfect nature - can be deficient. Professor May makes specific reference to this fact¹²⁶, and it is known that the Professor has distanced himself just as explicitly from the conclusions which Fr. Laroche falsely drew from his text. For the rest of the response, refer to argument (C).

2) What do we mean by : "The Church is in a state of distress"? : What can we conclude from such a statement? In view of the indefectibility of the Church, one must exclude that it could be a question of a distress such that the divine constitutive laws (see argument G) be abrogated. Either the Pope is explicitly or implicitly in agreement with a Consecration, and thus there is no problem, or he is explicitly against, and the situation there is also clear (see arguments (A) and (B)). To claim that, by reason of a refusal declared unjust, the Church could be put in "mortal" peril (for the whole Church, evidently), means to fail anew to recognize the dogma of the indefectibility of

¹²³ See Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3056-57, Solesmes #359-60.

¹²⁴ "Letter aux anciens" in *Fideliter*, special issue, June 1988.

¹²⁵ CIC, canon 1323, pha. 4

¹²⁶ Fr. Laroche typically omits the explicit reference of Professor May.

the Church. Even if such a case could (hypothetically) occur, the Sovereign Pontiff would necessarily be moved by the Holy Ghost, who infallibly ensures that the promises of Our Lord are, in all times and in all circumstances, kept true.

J. "The infallible condemnation of canon 7 of the XXIII session of the Council of Trent¹²⁷: 1) concerns only the Protestants; 2) in reason of the *nec-nec* which is cumulative, is not in any case applicable to the Econe Consecrations."¹²⁸ Fr. Natterer draws upon the commentary of Héfélé¹²⁹ for this grammatical explanation. We recall the canon: " If anyone says that...the bishops who have not been lawfully ordained nor sent by an ecclesiastical and canonical authority (*potestas*) but come from somewhere else, are lawful ministers of the word and sacraments, may he be anathema."¹³⁰

Response: 1) When Héfélé wrote that the condemnations of these canons concerned only the Protestants (see the whole canon), he did not intend to exclude similar cases in the past or future, but to indicate that the Council did not want to put an end to the differences between the different Catholic schools, a classic problem during this Council. This is exactly what Héfélé himself recalls at the end of the paragraph.

2) Whether the *nec-nec* is cumulative or not changes nothing in the case in question, since the Econe consecrations fulfil both conditions foreseen by the condemnation. For not only the bishops have not received a mission, but also they have not been "ordained legitimately by the ecclesiastical and canonical power", for, as we have seen, there was no apostolic mandate. It might be said that the distinction made by the canon is pointless, since the two conditions amount to the same thing. On the contrary, as we have seen, the decree was first enacted in response to the Protestants, where there were two cases to deal with. The first, when a Catholic bishop joined the heretics, in which case he lost his mission, although he had formerly received it (= *nec missi sunt*). The mission remains valid until it is withdrawn by Rome or lost for some reason or other.¹³¹ The second case is that of the Protestant "pastor" who intends to presume to the episcopal state and authority, either without consecration (and thus be in no way a bishop) or by receiving consecration, but without any canonical provision. The canon does not however say explicitly that the "bishop" is schismatic, but simply that he is illegitimate: he is not a Catholic bishop. Is that not sufficient to refuse him communion?

¹²⁷ DS 1777.

¹²⁸ Fr. Paul Natterer SSPX, Rector of Zaitzkofen.

¹²⁹ Héfélé-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, livre 49, "Les décrets des conciles sous Pie IV", ch. 3.

¹³⁰ *Si quis dixerit, episcopos...qui nec ab ecclesiastica et canonica potestate rite ordinati nec missi sunt, sed aliunde veniunt, legitimos esse verbi et sacramentorum ministros: a.s.*

¹³¹ That is why, had the Society remained in full communion with the reigning Pope, the recognition of the Society given by the Church on November 1, 1970, would still remain valid.

II. ARGUMENTS OF THE POSITIVE ORDER

A. "In the course of her history the Church has known different modes of designating bishops. This clearly shows that it is nothing more than a purely canonical question." Here, we think of the power of metropolitans, who previously designated their own suffragan bishops.

Response: 1) If it is true that Metropolitans designated (or confirmed) their suffragans, it is solely as having been delegated to do so by the Sovereign Pontiff. "... the canonical institution flows from the Pope to all the bishops by the intermediate degrees, established by him, of Patriarchs and Metropolitans."¹³² This theological necessity of which we have spoken in Part I is verified by the First General Council of the Church¹³³, which designates metropolitans as competent in this matter.¹³⁴ It is not therefore surprising that the ecclesiastical discipline was thus.

This example of metropolitans shows us that the Church knows how to be realistic: it was obvious that one could not request Rome to intervene systematically for every episcopal nomination¹³⁵. We can even presume it was so before the Council of Nicea, which simply confirmed the state of things. But this in no way weakens our thesis. Moreover we know that Rome often did intervene in these nominations, and that bishops that the Supreme Pontiff did not receive into communion were considered deposed (although not all obeyed).¹³⁶

Some have overreached themselves in concluding that, if this power was of divine right, this delegation of the Pope would be impossible. This would be correct if this delegation were such that the power of institution came from the Metropolitan himself. But this is not the case: this power is inalienable, and its source is the Sovereign Pontiff. Pius IX recalls this in the conflict he had with the Armenians whose Patriarch had the delegated power to institute bishops: "We have been obliged to see that the power of instituting bishops be returned in its entirety to the Apostolic See whence it proceeds."¹³⁷

2) Too often we forget how a simple and clear dogmatic or theological formula is found difficult to verify under the dust of history. This was the case for Papal infallibility: Döllinger and others were well able to present numerous historical cases which they saw as weakening the "infallibilist" thesis, yet it was they, the experts in history (with minds that are too often positivist) who were wrong. We need to know exactly how to weigh the value of historical events to avoid making them say more than they do.

¹³² Dom Gréa, op. cit., p. 277.

¹³³ Council of Nicea I (AD 325), canon 4, cit. in Kirch, *Ench. fontum hist. eccl. antiquae*.

¹³⁴ Note that the Council Fathers mention explicitly the difficulty of communication. See also Leo the Great, quoted by Pius IX in letter *Reversurus*, July 12, 1867, Solesmes #307.

¹³⁵ Pius IX, *Quartus supra*, Solesmes #407.

¹³⁶ Regarding the institutions of the patriarchs: *ibid.*, Solesmes #406.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, Solesmes #404.

In the case of Eusebius of Samosata, we are first obliged to rectify the allegations of those who rely on the fact that St. Eusebius consecrated bishops in Syria, on his return from exile, without the accord of Rome, in order to draw a parallel with the Econe consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre. First of all, St. Eusebius acted without the permission of the Pope, but not against it. This is perfectly possible: we refer to the response to the objection (I. C.). We know from Theodoret of Cyr¹³⁸ that St. Eusebius was in close written contact with St. Basil the Great, Metropolitan of Cappadocia. If he was not in such contact with the Metropolitan of Antioch (who was more directly concerned, since Eusebius was consecrating in his territories) it is because, at that period, there were several claimants to the see, each representing different opinions or theological currents, each one "installed"! We can understand why St. Eusebius addressed himself to the nearest and most renowned Metropolitan. On the other hand - contrary to the "inexact" allegation of Fr. Schmidberger¹³⁹ - it was not Pope Liberius (who died in 366) but St. Damasus who was on the papal throne in 378 when Eusebius began to "consecrate" Catholic bishops in place of Arian ones - with the accord of the Metropolitan St. Basil. To pretend that he could not presume upon the permission of the Pope does not reflect at all the historical context. Furthermore, such an accord was not even immediately necessary, given that the Metropolitans were delegated by the Pope for such matters.

Without doubt, history can furnish a host of difficult cases: yet it can always be shown that they do not contradict our thesis, but on the contrary agree with them without exception. Consecration of bishops against papal order has always been considered as schismatic. See the case of Bishop Lucifer of Cagliari.¹⁴⁰

B. Before the schism of the Chinese bishops, the Code of Canon Law did not foresee any excommunication. This proves that such consecrations in themselves are not schismatic.

Many examples can be taken from history to corroborate this notion.

Response: We do not deny this line of argument. We simply note that it does not prove anything. As we have seen in Part I (4., B.), it is not the excommunication that makes the schism. Nor do we pretend that any consecration without express consent of the Pope is schismatic (cf. all of Part I). As supreme judge, the Sovereign Pontiff can decide to make a "friendly" solution to problems that can arise in this area, if the trespass against discipline is not aggravated by a refusal of real communion or an implicit negation of the Pontifical Primacy. Where this is the case, there is schism, and we have seen in Part I that this is unfortunately the case for the Econe consecrations (see 4. above, "A Schismatic Episcopate").

¹³⁸ Theodoret of Cyr, *Hist Eccl.* II.27- V.4.

¹³⁹ *Die Bischofskonsekrationen des 30 Juni 1988*, Stuttgart, revised and amended text of Fr. Schmidberger's conference held in Sarrebruck on 19 June 1988.

¹⁴⁰ Lucifer of Cagliari, the Bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia was exiled by the emperor for his support of Athanasius and defense of orthodoxy. When the exiled bishops were allowed to return to their see and an agreement was made between orthodox and semi-Arian bishops, he refused communion with the bishops who had once compromised with Arianism and later returned to orthodoxy. He became schismatic by ordaining a bishop for the see of Antioch which already had one who had compromised with Arianism. Lucifer of Cagliari died in schism. His followers were called "luciferians" because of his first name. "Lucifer" means bearer of light.

C. The Pope permitted Abp. Lefebvre to perform a consecration in the Protocol of May 5. Thus the consecrations of June 30 cannot be against the Pope's will.

Response: The Pope, on May 9, 1988, explicitly disavowed the intention of Archbishop Lefebvre: "With a paternal heart, but with all the gravity required by the present circumstances, I exhort you, Venerable Brother, to renounce your project, which, if realized, can be seen only as a schismatic act, the unavoidable theological and canonical consequences of which are known to you"¹⁴¹. It is obvious that the protocol of May 5 became a dead letter from the moment the Archbishop denounced it entirely. This retraction of his signature meant that the engagements made on both sides were *ipso facto* null in law and that both parties became dissociated once again.

He who signs a purchase contract for a vat of wine cannot, after having renounced the contract, still claim the vat without paying under the pretext that the vendor had previously agreed to his coming into possession of it! In the same way, a heretic, for example, who has been promised the episcopate in the case of his embracing the Catholic faith, but who at the last minute refuses to abjure, cannot get himself consecrated claiming the accord of Rome. And yet Society of Saint Pius X priests manage to produce such stories: how can one avoid seeing some degree of dishonesty there?

D. Many canonists and even cardinals affirm that there is no schism. Even in Rome, the idea is not taken seriously.

Is this assertion as true as some claim? Is it true that, even in Rome, the matter is not as serious as some maintain? The question is of the utmost consequence.

The sources quoted are the Dean of the faculty of canon Law at the Institute of Paris, Fr. Valdrini; Cardinal Castillo-Lara, President of the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of Legislative Texts; as well as unofficial but "very well informed" channels coming from Rome. Bishop Tissier de Mallerai sums them up: "Both of them (i.e.: Fr. Valdrini and Cardinal Lara) affirm that the consecration on June 30 is not a schismatic act. Cardinal Lara adds merely (*sic*) that we have already been schismatic for a long time, for we refuse the true notion of Tradition".¹⁴²

Response: Cardinal Lara shows a perfect clarity which is not only canonical but also theological. But as to the interpretation that has been made of his text, we have to say quite bluntly that we are dealing with a misuse of the text¹⁴³. The Cardinal says: "In the case of (Archbishop) Lefebvre, the crimes are two: schism and the consecration of a bishop." As opposed to the affirmations of "Bishop" Tissier: 1) the Cardinal does indeed declare the Econe consecrations to be an act of schism. He specifies: "The fundamental crime is that of schism, which consists in the refusal of submission to the Sovereign Pontiff and in the rupture of communion with the Church.

¹⁴¹ Letter of Pope John Paul II of May 9, 1988 to Archbishop Lefebvre, published in *Fideliter*, special issue.

¹⁴² *Lettre circulaire n° 50 aux Supérieurs de districts*, Rickenbach, September 15, 1988.

¹⁴³ We have already noted this lack of intellectual honesty regarding the thesis of Professor May (Thesis "I", First Part) and quotations of Fr. Berto (p.26-27).

This was the first crime. The crime of the consecration of bishops came second in order, in one sense, to make it formal, to render the schism concrete and explicit."¹⁴⁴ The Cardinal nowhere says that the consecrations by Archbishop Lefebvre are schismatic because the Archbishop has a false notion of Tradition, but that, by the action of consecrating bishops, one sets oneself on the path of creating a church with its own hierarchy".

"But Fr. Valdrini.....!" There are several replies to be given:

1) It is true that the words of Fr. Valdrini, at least such as they are printed in *Valeurs Actuelles*, permit us to understand that the consecrations performed by Archbishop Lefebvre are not of themselves schismatic. But the analysis is founded upon an error of fact: he assumes that the Archbishop was excommunicated solely for the illicit consecrations. If this were so, then the Society of Saint Pius X could indeed make arguments founded upon his opinion, but in fact it was for two motives (both different and cumulative) that Archbishop Lefebvre was excommunicated: not only on account of the illicit consecration (can. 1382), but also and explicitly for schism (can. 1364), as already seen.

2) As to the foundation of the argument: besides the grave theological problems posed by an episcopate frustrated in its most essential purpose (cf. Part I), it is clear that Pope Pius XII did not envisage exclusively the institution of a parallel hierarchy but also the conferring of "episcopal consecration (without) the mandate of the Apostolic See...if consecration of this kind is being done contrary to all right and law...by all this crime the unity of the Church is being seriously attacked..."¹⁴⁵ There is a usurpation, not necessarily that Archbishop Lefebvre has the intention of creating a parallel hierarchy, but because "We give ourselves the means to continue the work which Providence has confided to us"¹⁴⁶, i.e.: by introducing himself into a domain which concerns essentially and exclusively the Sovereign Pontiff: the institution of bishops (cf. above).

As to the noises coming from Rome, what do we make of them? To leave Rome is not so easy, and more than one is not very sure of his decision to do so. Who would not search to reassure himself in trying to convince himself that finally this Rome, which one vituperates in one's sermons, and from which one separates oneself with an (officially) joyful heart, is inhabited by good and well-meaning people (although one is willing to besmirch them page after page at one's leisure)? Did not the Jansenists say the day after the condemnation of the five propositions of their mentor: "The Five Propositions will not always be unfortunate!"?

As we have seen, many people are filled with illusions, and take their wild dreams for reality. But even if this desire is "sincere", does it excuse remaining united to a schismatic church whilst waiting? By delaying, a great deal is at risk - including one's own salvation.

¹⁴⁴ Daily newspaper *Repubblica*, July 10, 1988. See also the letter of Cardinal Lara to Beaumont in *Fidelity* magazine. Cardinal Lara in the same letter specifies also that Fr. Schmidberger and other superiors are also excommunicated because they have posed acts of formal adherence and communion to this new church.

¹⁴⁵ Pius XII, *Ad Apostolorum Principiis*, Solesmes #1537

¹⁴⁶ *Fideliter*, special issue.

III. ARGUMENTS OF THE AFFECTIVE ORDER:

As paradoxical as it may seem, it is this sort of argument which has played the greatest role in the decision of both priests and faithful to remain "faithful" to Archbishop Lefebvre. This fidelity does them honor, and more than one amongst us has hesitated to take the step: can the Archbishop really have made such a mistake?

A. "The Archbishop has never been wrong."

Response: This affirmation is evidently false, above all in the matter of theology. As we are perfectly aware that any remark in this domain would be (wrongly) perceived as a personal attack upon the Archbishop, we will not here present lists or demonstration. We will limit ourselves to several obvious cases. Thus, in signing the doctrinal part of the Protocol of May 5, the Archbishop disavowed the argument that certain sacraments were doubtful (we are not speaking here of abuses or defective translations of form). We recall that the Archbishop declared the election of Pope John Paul I invalid, under the pretext that the Cardinals aged over 80 had lost the right to vote. Later on, he retracted. We read, in the last pages of his book, *Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, where he writes most clearly: "It has also been said that after me, my work will disappear because there will be no bishop to replace me. I am certain of the contrary; I have no worries on that account. I may die tomorrow, the Good Lord answers all problems. Enough bishops will be found in the world to ordain our seminarians: this I know. Even if at the moment He is keeping quiet, one or another of these bishops will receive from the Holy Ghost the courage to arise in his turn. If my work is of God, He will guard it and use it for the good of the Church. Our Lord has promised us, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her."¹⁴⁷ Either the Archbishop was wrong in writing those lines so filled with faith and hope, or else, just a couple of years later, on June 30, 1988, he made a grave mistake.

B. "There are accorded to Founders (of religious communities) particular graces which enable them to make decisions which common mortals do not understand and which are always according to the will of God."

Response: We deny the conclusion. If founders effectively receive particular graces, these founders are not such that they could not be unfaithful to these graces. How many movements, having received at the start of their life a temporary approbation, did not bring forth the fruits that were expected. To wish to put Archbishop Lefebvre on the same level as a St. Francis of Assisi or St. Dominic is to go a little too far, too fast: it is only after long decades of examination that it is permitted to pass a judgement on a new order, and not amidst the flames of contestation. Let us state once more: we accept that in the face of the present crisis within the Church, there can be errors. Many great persons and even Saints objectively made mistakes (St. Vincent Ferrer), but this does not make the error become truth.

¹⁴⁷ Archbishop Lefebvre, *Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, Angelus Press.

C. "Archbishop Lefebvre is inspired by the Holy Ghost, Who is Master of His laws, hence He can dispense Archbishop Lefebvre from the accord of the Pope. "

Response: If God wished to change the divine constitution of the Church such as He had revealed it, it would be necessary that this change of will should also be made manifest in a public revelation so that everyone could be aware of it. But such a revelation has never yet taken place, and moreover, it is *de fide* that public revelation was closed with the death of the last Apostle.¹⁴⁸ It is also an essential anti-modernist principle that private revelation be judged in the light of Public Revelation, and not *vice versa*. We recall that the Church is nothing other than Jesus Christ Himself, Who does not change (Heb 13:8). If the Holy Ghost has changed or suspended the constitution of the Church for Archbishop Lefebvre, it would have to mean either that the Holy Ghost has disavowed Christ (!) or that Christ has not foreseen this case.

D. "To abandon the Archbishop in the midst of combat is nothing but treason."¹⁴⁹

Response: To abandon the fight through weakness or self-interest is indeed treason; but to abandon one who has fallen into schism in order to remain united to the Vicar of Christ is the duty of every Christian. The Archbishop himself in his book *Spiritual Conferences*, implored us to leave him if he ever became unfaithful. He at least knew his own limits.

E. "The work of Archbishop Lefebvre is a work of God."

Response: That Archbishop Lefebvre's movement was willed by God, we also believe. If we went to Econ e, it was to receive a Catholic formation. It is from him that we receive this fidelity to the Faith and we will be always indebted to him, well aware that our gratitude can never be adequately expressed. And yet it is precisely because we wished to remain faithful to the Catholic Faith that we had to leave him. We did not have the right to believe ourselves so necessary to the salvation of the Church that we could permit ourselves to bypass the divine laws of its constitution. It is because one does not sufficiently consider oneself an unprofitable servant that one starts to consider oneself indispensable. This magnificent work was willed by God, but is no longer so. For God can bring forth from dried bones - if necessary - new sons of Israel (cf. the prophetic vision of Ezechiel, ch. 37). Let us never forget:

**It is the Church who saves us,
and not we who save the Church.**

¹⁴⁸ Pius X, decree *Lamentabili*, DS 3421.

¹⁴⁹ Bishop Tissier de Mallerai in his *Bulletin de l' Oratoire St. Joseph de Colmar*, n° 89.