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ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE
April 24, 1983 - Conference with the seminarians of
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SEMINARY
(Reproduced from a tape recording):

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"It seldom happens that one can do good without
any trouble..."

-St. Vincent de Paul

ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE

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"I cannot give ordinations to you"

"My dear seminarians, I am always very happy to meet you and to stay with you in your seminary. I do not know myself how many times I have come...to Armada, and here...to meet you and your professors. It was always for me a pleasure. I have sought many times to give you ordinations; that is the principal gift to receive in the seminary. But you know that today I cannot give ordination to you. Why? You know that."

NON SERVIAM

"I cannot give ordination because in November (1982), I gave the priesthood to 3 of you, i.e., 3 young deacons, and I think in January...at the end of January, when I asked young Fr. Zapp to go to St. Mary's to help Fr. De LaTour, he said, 'No. I cannot go to St. Mary's. I refuse to go to St. Mary's.' For me it was very sad and very bad...a young priest, the first priest (to do this in the Society)...I ask him to go...and he said: 'I refuse'. Why?? Why refuse? Why? He said: 'I cannot go to St. Mary's, because at St. Mary's they have the rite (liturgy) of Pope John XXIII.'"

THE UNVEILING - SEDITION

"Well, this liturgy is the liturgy of Ecône. It is the liturgy I myself have been using now for 20 years. It is a liturgy we use, more or less, everywhere in the Fraternity."

"But this fact, this refusal of Fr. Zapp's was an unveiling of another thing more important...(of something far graver)...more sad. For I know as he said to me (himself) that he was supported by the director of the seminary (Fr. Sanborn). And so if the director of seminary of Ridgefield helps the seminarians to disobey to the Superior General of the Fraternity, then where are we going? Then what is the seminary? He (Fr. Zapp) is the first priest I ordain here...these 3 young priests (I ordained), who were here for all of their studies...(the first fruits of this seminary)...the first to refuse to go to the place (I assigned him) because he refused the liturgy of that place."

"The director (himself) of the seminary...he agreed with this young priest...that is impossible! Not only the director of the seminary was agreed with this young priest, but some professors and some priests from the Northeast District. They say (they agreed with Fr. Zapp) because the liturgy of Pope John XXIII is not good. And so they condemn it...they condemned me...and they condemned Ecône...How is this possible???...that they condemn the bishop who gave them their ordinations? When these priests, all of them, were at Ecône, they accepted this liturgy. When I gave them ordination, with the liturgy of Pope John XXIII (i.e., ordained in the liturgy of Pope John XXIII), they accepted this liturgy...they accepted it during 2 years, 3 years, etc.,...they accepted it during all that time. When they left Ecône, they changed, and they took another orientation. They decided to abandon what was practiced at Ecône and to keep (solely) to the liturgy of St. Pius X."

ON THE POPE

"Now, not only do they dispute about the liturgy, but also about the pope...you know that some of these priests...they are, in their hearts, against the fact that there is a pope in Rome. They say that there is no pope in Rome, no pope in the Church, no Cardinals in Rome, no more hierarchy in the Church. In their hearts they say all sacraments in the new reform...all sacraments, they are invalid. And so they show that 'their spirit' is not the same as my spirit and my teaching. The teaching I have always given in my seminaries, in Ecône, in Zeitskofen, in Buenos Aires, in Albano, its the same...I do not change...I cannot change. (This spirit of theirs), that is very very very sad."

"Certainly we are agreed in many doctrines, these priests and I. We have the same doctrine about the Church, about theology, i.e., we follow St. Thomas Aquinas in philosophy, in theology, etc. But to interpret the situation of the Church now, we have not the same meaning, nor the same thinking. This is very dangerous, i.e., the way they follow is very very dangerous. You know that there are other priests in the world, in France, in America, in Mexico, in Dutch-land, Germany,...there are some priests who follow the same dangerous way. They say: 'No more pope; no more...all sacraments are invalid, etc.' But now they are going, slowly, slowly, into SCHISM. That is very dangerous...very dangerous."

THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE

"What is the first principle to know what we must do in this circumstance, in this crisis in the Church? What is my principle? The principle of the Church is the principle of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is not my choice; its not my favor; its not my personal desire... I am nothing...I merely follow the doctrine of the Church...and this doctrine is expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas...So what does St. Thomas Aquinas say about the authority in the Church? When can we refuse something from the authority of the Church? PRINCIPLE: 'Only when the Faith is in question.' Only in this case. Not in other cases... only when the Faith is in question...and that is found in the Summa Theologica: II II Q.33, a.4, ad 2m:

St. Thomas' answer is that we cannot resist to the authority; we must obey: "Sciendum tamen est quod ubi immineret periculum fidei." Periculum fidei, i.e., the danger to our faith..."etiam publice essent praelate a subditis arguendi.", i.e., the subject can be opposed to the authority if the Faith is in question ("periculum fidei"); "Unde et Paulus, qui erat subditus Petro, propter imminens periculum scandalı circa fidem, Petrum publice arguit," i.e., St. Paul opposed St. Peter because it was a danger for the Faith (cf. Galatians 2:11)."

"That is the principle (of St. Thomas), and I cannot harbor another motive to resist the Pope...it is very serious to be opposed to the Pope, and to the Church. It is very serious, and if we think that we must do that, we must do it (resist the Holy Father) only to preserve our Faith, and not for any other motive."

"We must now do an application of the principle. For me I think that the liturgical reform of Pope John XXIII has nothing against

the Faith. You can take the Pontificale, the Rituale, the Breviary, the Roman Missal, and...what is in these books of Pope John XXIII that is against the Faith? Nothing! And so ((in an urgent tone)); ...I cannot refuse this book (of Pope John'), because he is the pope, and the pope gave me this book (and I must obey). It is quite another thing with the reform of Pope Paul VI...in this book of reform of Pope Paul VI is a very grave danger to my Faith...it is precisely: "Periculum Fidei". So I refuse it, because Ecumenism is the idea and motive of this reform...and this Ecumenism...they say themselves, i.e., Pope Paul VI, Bugnini, etc., all say the motive of their reform is Ecumenism, and this Ecumenism takes away all (Catholic) things which are displeasing to the Protestant. That is incredible! In our books of Catholic Liturgy? And not only in the liturgy do they remove all that displeases them, but also in canon law, in the institution of the Church...But what displeases the Protestant? The doctrine, the Faith, the Catholic Faith. The Sacrifice of the Mass, as Sacrifice, the Protestant cannot accept. If we ask to the Protestants they would verify to this...They were present (at the Council) and helped do this reform; and the definition of article 7 on the Mass, is a Protestant definition. So we cannot accept it! It is impossible!"

"I wrote to the Pope (John Paul II), ten days ago. I wrote that this reform is Ecumenism and this Ecumenism is bad, and I cannot accept it, and I cannot accept this Novus Ordo Mass. Thus my response is in the negative, because the Pope asked me to accept this New Mass. I said, 'No, I cannot accept the New Mass...never can I accept it.' If they do not change this 'New Mass', I cannot accept it. But I know the motive of the reform of Pope John XXIII. I have no reason (with the reform of Paul VI), but I have a reason and motive to accept (the reform of Pope John XXIII), because (this reform) uses the same principle (found in) 'Divino afflatu' (papal decree of Pope St. Pius X).

"Divino Afflatu"

"If you read this bull of Pope St. Pius X, to his liturgical reform, you will find the same principle that Pope John XXIII used for his reform. The first consideration of Pope Pius X is about the Psalter: he said, the psalter is the essential thing in the breviary...the psalms: 'Accedit quod in Psalmis mirabilis quaedam vis inest ad excitanda in animis omnium studia virtutum.' He has a consideration for the psalms, which is very magnificent! It shows that the heart of our breviary is this 'psalterium', and he has a citation of St. Augustine as well to support this. Thus, Pope St. Pius X says: 'Jure igitur optimo provisum est antiquitus et per decreta Romanorum Pontificum, et per canones Conciliorum, et per monasticas leges, ut homines ex utroque clero integrum Psalterium per singulas hebdomadas concinerent vel recitarent.' (Translation: 'Rightly therefore and most excellently as it has been provided for from ancient times, and through the decrees of the Roman Pontiffs and through the canons of the Councils, and through monastic laws, that both men and clergy should, each week, sing or recite the entire psalter..')

"That is the Tradition, i.e., to say every week all the psalms ...that is an ancient rule in the Church...to say all the psalms in the week...and ((emphatically))that is the rule of Pope John XXIII.

So after he said how magnificent the prayer of the psalms are, he (Pope Pius X) said that with time we have many feasts of holy men ...many feasts...and they became so numerous that we could not say all the psalms in a week. So many bishops and cardinals asked for a diminishing of the feasts of the saints. (St. Pius X.)

"It is hardly remarkable therefore that many bishops in the world referred their wishes in this matter to the Apostolic See; above all at the Vatican Council (Vat.I,1870) when they asked this amongst other things, that as far as possible the old habit of reciting each week the whole psalter should be brought back. In such a way however, that for the clergy working in the vineyard of the Lord, there should not be imposed a heavier burden. With these desires and wishes which predated our own Pontificate, and which from then on was by our venerable brethren and by pious men were put forward, we indeed also thought that it should be granted, carefully however, lest, by the recitation of the entire psalter included all in one week, anything should fall away from the worship of the saints, or lest anything, on the otherside, the burden imposed on the clergy should be wearisome (i.e., the divine office)."

"And so they tried to conserve this rule, i.e., to say all the psalms in the week, and to have some feasts, but not so many that we always have the same psalms from the Common of feasts...and so it is the same rule followed by Pope John XXIII. Perhaps in some details, we can say it should be better, etc.; you know we have no important reason to refuse this reform."

"It is Pope Pius XII's Reform"

"In reality, this reform was done by Pope Pius XII, not Pope John XXIII. When I was Apostolic delegate in Rome, they asked me to have Episcopal Conferences, in Madagaskar, in Camarone (sp?), and the rest of French speaking Africa, and in Central Africa...at 4 Episcopal conferences, to ask the bishops about a reform of the breviary. You know that was during the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII."

"But these young priests say that 7 men who did this reform were the same ones who did the reform of Pope Paul VI. I said to them: 'That is not true'. Perhaps in the commission, it is possible that some of these men were there...perhaps Bugnini was a member of this commission (of Pope Pius XII). You know that during the Pontificate of Pope John XXIII, this pope...removed Msgr. Bugnini from his teaching post at the University of The Lateran. Pope John XXIII was against Bugnini. I knew the president of the commission who did this reform of Pope John XXIII...it was Msgr De Matto..., who was the Abbot of 'St. Paul outside the Walls'...he is still there at 'St. Paul's'...I know him very well and I speak many times with him. He was the president of the commission of reforming the liturgy, under the Pontificate of Pope John XXIII. He is very much a Traditionalist...very Traditional...and after, during the Council of Vatican II (under Pope Paul VI) he was put outside (removed) because he was a Traditionalist, and they replaced him by Msgr. Bugnini...that is true! That is a big change...a big change...it is not the same. It is not true to say that this reform of Pope John XXIII is the beginning of

the reform of Pope Paul VI...it is not true."

"So, I have said concerning this reform (of Pope John XXIII), we must obey the pope, especially since we have no reason to refuse it."

"THE SURPRISE"

"If I tolerated...and sometimes I know that some Fathers (after ordination at Ecône), they return to their countries, they use the old Liturgy of St. Pius X...I know that...and I tolerated it...but I was surprised that they changed (their attitude, towards) the liturgy we have at Ecône...but in the past these Fathers did not say they were against the liturgy of Ecône...they don't say that...and I thought (all along) they accepted the liturgy of St. Pius X and they likewise accept the liturgy of Pope John XXIII...but now, today, with this fact of Fr. Zapp ((his insubordination)), now I know...((said very distressedly)) now I know that they do not accept (the John XXIII liturgy), they refuse it! And they speak against this institution! That is true! I cannot accept that...that is a rupture...a division in the Fraternity."

"THE RUPTURE"

"How is this possible, that they accept what they are against in the Fraternity? And I think that it is very important to obey to the pope...this obedience is important...because, why don't they (for example) take another liturgy, like the Oriental Liturgy?...why don't they take the Coptic Liturgy?...or some other liturgy...why do they pick the liturgy of St. Pius X?...I have no reason (to disobey)." ((Point: It is not a matter of preference or taste, but a matter of obedience to legitimate authority)).

"And so they are now very intolerant. I was tolerant for them...and now they (the young priests) are very intolerant for me, intolerant for Ecône, and for the Fraternity...that is bad...a very sad situation. I said to them: 'I ask you to say...if you accept the liturgy we have at Ecône, and in the Fraternity, the liturgy in the beginning of the Fraternity, the liturgy in the Fraternity for 13 years.' I cannot continue to give you the priesthood...when after being ordained you then say: 'I refuse, I refuse the place you are assigning me to...' If this is the case, then there is no more opportunity in the Fraternity...it spells the end of the Fraternity.' Thus, I say to you (seminarians), if you do not accept this liturgy, I do not oblige you to use it...but by your refusal I cannot give you ordinations...you must ask for ordination in another place..."

TWO EXTREMES

PROGRESSIVISM

SEDE VECANTEISM

"Some people abandon the Fraternity on the Left (i.e., moving towards the left), and some abandon her moving towards the Right. Those who abandon the Fraternity on the Left, they now use the rite of the New Mass...they are Progressivists...they are not against Progressivism any more. Those who abandon us to the Right, for them, there is no more any relations with Rome, no more relation with the Church, and they look (for a pope elsewhere)...as in the case of Fr. G--, where he went to Spain to see if the famous 'Palmar De Troya', i.e., Clemente...he went there to see if Clemente is the True Pope! Because such

priests (who defect to the right) they look for authority; (by nature) they cannot remain without authority...because they have none...they have none."

ROME IS OCCUPIED BY MODERNISM

"We do not follow the pope, but he is the pope...he is the pope...but we do not follow him when we know he poses a danger to the Faith...that is the principle. When the pope poses no danger to our Faith, we have no problem...but we must admit that Rome is occupied by the Modernists; that is true, e.g., Casarolli, Bacio, the Secretary of the Congregation of the Faith, etc., all of them, they are modernists...and also the pope, he, during his life, he was influenced by the Modernists...he is Modernist, more or less, so he is not a strong pope. Perhaps, if it is possible that he cannot accept that we continue with the old-rite, with the old Mass, etc.

FR. SANBORN "...has taught you against the Fraternity"

"The Director has taught you...against the Fraternity. Now you can see that the situation here in America, in the seminary, in this district in the Northeast, is very confused...very confused. I never thought that we would arrive at this situation. If I knew this was going to happen, I would have done some prohibitions before, because now, the director of this seminary, along with some professors here have taught you against my attitude, against the attitude of Ecône, against the Fraternity...and thus there is no more authority..there is no more Fraternity...because that is what was this seminary' (mentality)...it is my seminary...I nominated Fr. Sanborn to be the Rector, and I did the nomination of these professors...and I gave you into the hands of these professors, and now they speak against me...this is impossible!"

"I am doing everything possible to preserve you, to preserve the Fraternity, to preserve the seminary; to save the seminary, to save your priesthood; But to say: 'I must change', ...we cannot continue, it is impossible...(...I cannot change...). They refuse to be confirmed in my attitude, they refuse. I spoke with Fr. Sanborn during 3 hours and he refused. What can I do? It is a very grave pity. So I cannot give you ordinations now, before I can know for sure if you are with the Fraternity, or against the Fraternity. I am going to wait for you to answer my question, 'yes', or 'no', you accept the liturgy of Pope John XXIII. If you say you refuse, well, your place is not here. Even if you refuse and prefer to go outside the Fraternity,...what can we do? I would prefer less people who are obedient...I tried to have unity in the Fraternity, which is our strength against Modernism...to fight against the Modernists, to fight against the Progressivists, to fight against the bad spirit of the whole world. To do this we must be strong. If somebody goes away (goes against the Fraternity), then there is no more unity and strength...we cannot fight...we cannot gain the victory (over the bad spirit in the world)."

"This situation is very sad because I thought that I was helping my priests, (since I gave them) all my prayers, all my spirit, all my heart. I gave all this to these priests...and they did good work. But it is a pity now...what will happen to the Faithful?...the poor Faithful, if they know that 5 or 6 or 7 priests are no more members

of the Fraternity of St. Pius X? What has happened? They will be bewildered to hear that it is true, these priests are not members of the Fraternity any more...((with great distress & heartache)); ...it is very sad, very sad for the faithful. I know these American faithful...they are very good people...and now...what can I do?"

"I don't like to go against my brothers"

"Perhaps it is my fault, because I waited too long...if I took this decision 3 or 4 years ago, perhaps the situation would not be as grave as now. But perhaps I am too lenient, too tolerant, too good to them, because I do not like to go against my brothers, my priests. So I tolerated them...I thought perhaps next year, or some time, things would change...but truly nothing has changed...its not better...in fact things have gotten worse with time."

"Thus, we must pray...we must pray. I hope, slowly, slowly, they can return in the good way, in the good progress of the seminary ...and I hope I can give you ordination. We need priests...but we do not need priests that disobey, no."

"I am very happy that one of these 3 Fathers (ordained in Nov. '82) accepted to help Fr. De LaTour in St. Mary's, i.e., Fr. Hunter. They are doing a very very good work there now...all the people now are very very happy with these 2 Fathers. I hope you take him as an example, i.e., that they would be for you an example."

"So, during these next days, I am waiting for your answer. I think that some of you, have given your answer to Fr. Sanborn. I hope that if you agree with me...I hope sincerely that you agree with me. You know the situation in the Church is so bad, so sad in the Church. If we are not very strong during this time, then what will happen to the Church? We must be united, we must be strong. I think that nobody can say I am ready to abandon the fight...that is not true. Somebody said that Msgr. Lefebvre is ready to do a compromise with Rome. Where is this compromise? Where? I shall read to you some lines of my answer to the pope. I always receive letters from Cardinal Ratzinger who is in charge to be the connection between the pope and the Fraternity. They say to me: 'If you accept the New Mass, we will give you the Old Mass.' That is the first time they say, '...we will give you the Old Mass...', because before they said: 'No, that is impossible to return in time to the Old Mass... no, never this Old Mass, never.'"

"NO COMPROMISE: THE LETTER TO POPE JOHN PAUL II"

April 5, 1983

Holy Father,

It is at the feet of the Crucifix that I am replying to you, Holy Father, united to all the bishops, priests, religious, nuns, and faithful, who have undergone a moral martyrdom by a forced imposing of this liturgical reform. How many tears, how many sorrows, how many premature deaths for which the responsibility lies with those who have wrongly imposed these changes worked in the name of a completely wrong Ecumenism. That is to say that my reply to the paragraph concerning the Novus Ordo Missae is 'negative'. The very authors of this reform have stated that its purpose was

Ecumenical, i.e., to say that it intended to suppress, without touching doctrine, what displeases our separated brothers...Now it is quite clear that what displeases our separated brethren is the doctrine of the Catholic Mass. So to satisfy them an equivocal or ambiguous Mass has been brought in, in which the Catholic doctrine has been faded out. How can we think that such a diminution of the expression of Faith has been inspired by the Holy Spirit? The definition of the Mass given in article #7 in the introduction to the Novus Ordo Missae, even when corrected shows quite clearly this diminution and even falsification of Catholic doctrine. Using this ecumenical Mass makes people acquire, and gives people a 'protestant' and 'indifferentist' mentality, placing all religions on a footing of equality, just as does the declaration on 'Religious Liberty', upon the doctrinal basis of the 'rights of man' and 'human dignity' wrongly understood, and condemned by St. Pius X in his letter on the 'Sillon'. The consequences of this state of mind or spirit spread within the Church, inside the Church, are deplorable, and are ruining and sapping the spiritual vitality of the Church.

In Conscience all we can do is turn priests and faithful away from using the Novus Ordo Missae if we wish that the complete and whole Catholic Faith remains still living. As for the first paragraph concerning the Council (Vat.II), I gladly accept to sign it in the sense that Tradition be the criterion in the interpretation of the documents, which is moreover, the meaning of the note of the Council on the subject of interpreting its texts. Because, it is evident that Tradition is not compatible with the declaration of 'Religious Liberty', according to the experts themselves, like Fathers Congar and John Courtney Muri(sp?).

Hence we see no other solution to this problem than as follows:

FIRSTLY - Freedom to celebrate according to the old rite in accordance with the edition of the Liturgical books promulgated by Pope John XXIII.

SECONDLY - A reform of the 'Novus Ordo Missae' to give it back the clear expression of Catholic dogma, the reality of the act of Sacrifice, and of the Real Presence, by an adoration more marked out...(and a clear distinction must be made) between the priesthood of the priest and the priesthood of the faithful, and to express clearly the propitiatory reality of the Sacrifice.

THIRDLY - We see no other solution than a reform of the statements or expressions of the Council which are contrary to the Official Magisterium of the Church, especially the declaration on 'Religious Liberty', and the declaration on 'The Church and The world,' on the declaration on 'Non-Christian religions,' etc.

It is vital to the Church to affirm by the Sacrifice of the Mass that there is no salvation except through the Sacrifice of Our Lord, Our only Savior, Our only Priest, Our only King. The Catholic religion is the only true religion. The other religions are false and carry souls into error and into sin. Only the Catholic religion was

founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ, and so we can be saved only by it. Hence the necessity for all souls to have a valid and fruitful Baptism, which makes them members of the Mystical Body of Our Lord.

Hence the urgency of the Social Kingship of Our Lord, inscribed in the constitutions in certain states to protect Catholic souls against the dangers of vice, and in order to favor the conversion of the people of those states for the salvation of their souls.

Now all of these Truths are henceforth implicitly denied or contradicted ever since the Vatican II Council, to the great delight of the enemies of The Church. It is urgent, most Holy Father, to bring these Truths back into honor. They are the very substance and reason for the being of the Church, the reason for the existence of the priesthood, the episcopacy, and of the papacy.

Most Holy Father, I have only one desire which has animated my whole life, 'to work for the salvation of souls in the most perfect submission to the successor of Peter, in accordance with the Catholic Faith that was taught me in my childhood, and at Rome in the eternal city.' Hence it is impossible for me to sign anything which attacks this Faith as is the case with this 'false ecumenism' and with this 'false religious liberty.' I wish to live and to die in the Catholic Faith, pledge of eternal beatitude. May your holiness be so kind as to believe in my respectful and filial sentiments,

In Jesus & Mary

+Marcel Lefebvre.

"So, no compromise. That is one of many many letters...but no results for the moment. Nothing. But, we try to do something... to see one day a return to Tradition in Rome, but...only God knows when. Now we must pray and ask God to continue...to continue our vocation, to continue the Church, to continue to save souls, to continue the True Tradition of the Catholic Church. That is the principle thing, and I hope that you have understood what all I have just said to you. I thank you for your attention."