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ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE

April 26, 1983 - Conference with the seminarians of

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SEMINARY (Reproduced from a Tape Recording):

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"QUESTION AND ANSWER"

Q. "What is to become of those priests who have refused to do the Pope John XXIII liturgy, and of those who say, 'we do not have a pope'?"

A. "Well, I asked them to accept the post I assign them to, (i.e., to accept the use of this liturgy)...and they have two months to think it over and decide...I am waiting for their decision." (NB: They gave it only 24 hours later! cf. Conf.#4)

"I cannot accept a young priest (whom I assign to a post) saying to me, 'I cannot accept going to this place where they do not say the Pope Pius X liturgy.' That is impossible! All young priests must be ready (disposed) to go into the mission, to the priorate, to the seminary, etc., where the Superior General sends us. We must be disposed to (the will of) the Superior General. This attitude: 'I cannot go here because they do not celebrate the liturgy of Pius X', this attitude I cannot accept. If they refuse, well, we no longer have them as members of the Fraternity. It is a pity. That is the reason why I ask you before (your) ordination if you are ready to accept the liturgy of Pope John XXIII."

IT IS TRULY POPE PIUS XII's REFORM

"It is not really the Liturgy of Pope John XXIII? If the name: 'John XXIII' is sickening to you...((laughter))...then... don't say that name...((more laughter))...don't say 'Pope John XXIII', but call it: 'Pope Pius XII', because really this liturgy is not of Pope John XXIII, but it is of Pope Pius XII. I know that because, as I told you before, I worked (took part) in this reform... Pope Pius XII sent me to distribute questions to four episcopal conferences in Africa, to ask the bishops what is their thinking about a reform of the Missal and Breviary. We discussed this in these episcopal conferences. With 64 bishops I discussed this, in order to give an answer to the pope (i.e., Pope Pius XII). This reform is not the reform of Pope John, but it is the reform of Pope Pius XII. Pope John XXIII signed (into effect) this reform because Pope Pius XII died, but it was ready."

Q. The next question is about the priests of the Northeast District...

A. "For the moment we hope (or stand) principally by the seminary which is the principle in our mind at this time:

THE SEMINARY

"Well, we now organize this seminary in the same way, in the same attitude, the same thinking as all other seminaries in the Fraternity. We cannot accept that one seminary has another manner of prayer...it is impossible. We have one Fraternity with the same principles, the same manner to educate and give the true formation, the True Traditional Formation to all seminarians. That is very im-

portant, so that all seminarians, young priests, will be ready to go anywhere in the world."

"I ordain 17 priests for the Fraternity on 29 June. In these 17 priests, I do not regard (necessarily) what country they are from, e.g., if this priest is from France, from Germany, from England, etc. I need a priest 'here' or 'there' etc. If I can send them in their own country, then I send them there. But if I need some priest for another country, e.g., I may say to you: 'you go to America', etc."

FOR EXAMPLE: FATHER BOURMAUD

"I phoned this afternoon to a young priest who is in Spain now (a French priest), and I asked him: 'Are you sitting down (for this)? ...((laughter))...before I give you the news? You will certainly be surprised...' (And so I simply asked): 'Are you ready to come to the seminary at Ridgefield?' (He immediately responded): 'Oh yes! If you like then I am ready.' "

"Now that is certainly a good priest! (That is normal!) But I never thought that when I phoned him and asked him: 'Are you ready to come to teach at Ridgefield?' (he would respond so quickly) 'Oh yes, if you like then I am ready.' That is a (good) disposition of a priest! No problem. He has been working an Apostolate in Spain, i.e., he (Fr. Bourmaud) has been ministering in Spain for 2 years, and as soon as he realized I needed a priest in America, he said yes! He did not say: 'Well, what is the liturgy there?' ((...a great laughter...)) Why didn't he ask that? He cannot say that (as a true member of the Fraternity)...whereas, the 2 young priest I ordained in November (1982) did respond: 'What is the liturgy? Ah, no, no, no. I cannot accept that...' (for example)..."

TROUBLES EVERYWHERE

"Now tomorrow I will meet with the Fathers of the Northeast District (in Oyster Bay Cove). I hope that we have a good conference...I know that there is certainly some difficulties...but you know there are difficulties everywhere! For us, you can understand that our first worry is the faithful...If we do something, if we take some decision, what is the consequence for the faithful? That is very important. We cannot say: 'Oh the faithful...oh no, no, we cannot be concerned whether they are happy or not with this, or whether they still have the sacraments, etc., ...that it is not important...' No, no, we cannot disregard them. We must ask always, 'What is the consequence of our decision for souls... We are priests for serving the souls (of the faithful). We have had similar difficulties with other priests, e.g., at Ecône, etc. But we must have patience..."

"THE FATHER STARK ISSUE"

"That is another question, another problem. Fr. Stark said himself: 'My ordination is good.' I am sure he is a priest. He has been a priest for eleven years now, I think. He is a very intelligent man. Not just because he is a Jesuit, no, no, no... ((laughingly))...but certainly he is a very intelligent man. He was a professor. He said to me, 'My word, somebody is discussing

about the validity of my ordination.' They discuss: 'No, his ordination is not valid.' Well, that is the reason why I said to you yesterday, or the day before, that we must do an inquisition, (a study of each case) to know what the situation really is -- in this case -- not in all cases in general (i.e., not a blanket judgment) but in this case, to see if his ordination is valid or invalid. And I... I am responsible, and I make the decision. I can say to him: 'You must be re-ordained.' Otherwise, if I think that his ordination is valid, really valid, then I have no right to repeat the sacrament. (NB: It would be a grave sacrilege to knowingly do so). If the sacrament was valid then I have no right to repeat it. The same principle applies to you when you ask of me Confirmation. I hope that you know if your Confirmation was valid or very doubtful? If there is no doubt, then you cannot ask me to repeat it. You know, that is very important. In Rome, they accuse me of performing many conditional sacraments without having investigated to see if there was sufficient doubt to warrant repeating them! They say that! Now that is most important."

"THE QUESTION OF THESE INDIAN PRIESTS"

"I think they are valid priests. Because I received from Fr. Bolduc, the document of their ordinations. ...I investigated the bishop, (who ordained them) in the 'Romanum Pontificio', in this diocese in India...that city and diocese is all very Catholic... and so he was a true Catholic bishop who ordained these Indian priests...some of them were ordained before the Council of Vatican II; Fr. Mathias, Fr. Pinto, before the Council. I cannot say that this ordination is invalid. They are true priests, and there is no reason to say they are not true priests. But there is another question involved concerning them -- these priests, what kind of formation did they receive? Especially Fr. Papas (sp?), who came from India...this man, I think is very very modernist! I don't understand how it is possible that Fr. Bolduc could keep that priest. But that is our responsibility, and when we come now to visit Fr. Bolduc, we must discuss this question with him. I know that Fr. Bolduc has begged me for priests...he said, 'I need priests...I have not enough priests;...please send us priests...', etc. I am aware of the need, but it is very important to send true priests, true Catholic Traditional priests. Its worse to send a priest you are not sure of, i.e., priests who have no Traditional doctrine. I visited Fr. Pinto in Fort Lauderdale. My impression was good concerning this priest, and many people said to me they were very happy with this priest...no problem. But yesterday I received some letters about this priest, saying he is not good, etc. We must be careful with all these letters, because it is very difficult with people (who are stirred up)...with the men, and so true with women, e.g., Mrs. so & so likes him, while another does not, etc. It is very difficult to know if all that they say (in these letters) is true. Its difficult, and I gave this letter to Fr. Bolduc, but my impression of Fr. Pinto when I visited him was good. Fr. Pinto was a friend of Msgr. Marceau, who is not very far from our chapel ...and Msgr. Marceau was very happy to meet with him..."

Q: Msgr., would you like to say something about the Marriage annulments? That is certainly something that is worrying people?

A: "You know that we do not know exactly the situation here in America. We heard, by Cardinal Seper, who said to me that couples in Spain go to America to get an annulment, and then they return to Spain to 're-marry' in the Catholic Church. The situation here, perhaps in many many dioceses is so bad that we can make a presumption against the validity of the annulments. It is possible. But in Europe, and perhaps in some dioceses of America, where the priests in the Chanceries in charge of these annulments, have a Catholic Conscience and perform them as priests would normally do that. We cannot say: 'Everywhere, in all cases, the annulments do not exist (i.e., are invalid).' We must, also in these cases, we must investigate. We must determine where the annulment comes from: from this diocese in Chicago, or in Toronto, Cincinnati, etc. We know that in Chicago, e.g., the Chancery gives 300,000 annulments per year! Well, the presumption is against this Chancery! It is impossible that so many many marriages are invalid...in an annulment, as you know, the Church says, 'there is no marriage.' That is the conclusion of the inquiry. But, when for example in Cincinnati (perhaps it is not true, but for the sake of an example): in this diocese we know that this particular Chancery gives 3 or 4 annulments per year. And if we ask for the documents and find they are very good and its clear it was done with a good (Catholic) Conscience, then we can presume that a man who received such an annulment in Cincinnati, perhaps its valid, i.e., that no marriage really existed. We must do an inquisition (investigation) of each case. We cannot say before studying each case, that all annulments are not true. When somebody wrote to me in Europe, asking me what I thought about the annulment of the married, we said, 'we must do an inquisition, i.e., make an inquest.' But we must ask the Father in the place to perform the inquiry."

Q. (By the Archbishop himself): "Why do we have this problem of the prayers in the Fraternity?"

"You know our schedule: In the morning - Prime; at noon - Sext; in the evening - Rosary; at the end of the day - Compline. --Why do not we also pray in Common the Divine Hours of Lauds, Vespers, and Terce & None...and with Chant???"

A: "You know I have seen other Congregations, St. Sulpice, and many others. They take their program of prayer in the book of their Congregation..."

"I by my experience in missions, I know that if we ask too many prayers, as the Benedictines, as the Contemplative Fathers, it will be so difficult, that (our priests) will be discouraged... I have tried to give you a program of prayers (in Common) in such a way that when you leave the seminary, and you begin your ministry in the priorate, or elsewhere, you will continue the same program (of public prayers in common). You will have no problem for these prayers. You continue to say Prime, followed by Mass, and then Sext at noon, then the Rosary in the evening, etc."

STRENGTH IN PRAYER: THE ROSARY

"Why the Rosary? We can do that privately. It is true, its possible to do privately. (Why not Vespers?) Answer: I think that it is very important...we must pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary...and we must pray together! She is Our Mother, and its possible so when we do that in our chapels, in the priorate, that many people will come and join us! The sisters come. If we have some laymen in our houses, they too come to pray the Rosary with us. And if some of the faithful are nearby the priorate...they come to pray the Rosary. So, it is a family prayer, and its not only for us. I think its important that we continue as we do in the seminary. If we are too demanding, then we will abandon all, with time. Now I can say that in all priorates (of the Society) they do these prayers. When we say the Rosary, we can now say that in all our priorates, all our brothers and friends (in the Society) say the Rosary together at this time of the day...(to do all these prayers together), that is a consolation, an encouragement. Even if we are alone, we know that we pray in union with all our brothers in the Fraternity. Certainly God and the Angels and all the Saints know that all the people of the Fraternity pray regularly together. It is very nice. We know now that in (the Conciliar) convents and houses, they do not pray the same prayer, they don't pray the Rosary. They abandon the prayer, they abandon the rule. So it is very important that we do the prayer."

"When I was in the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers, we had as the prayer in the morning and evening, the prayers of St. Sulpice; not the prayer of the Breviary, but prayers special for Common recitation. But it was a very great pity...the priest said the same prayers as the faithful and after they had to say the Breviary also...and so many times, I know that our Fathers were so busy that, because of the obligation of the Breviary, they did not say the prayer of St. Sulpice. It is better to have the prayer of our Breviary, i.e., Prime, Sext, Compline, said in public. Some member of the Congregation said, 'But in all missions, we have brothers, e.g., 2 Fathers, and perhaps 3 brothers. The brothers do not know the Latin, and yet they must (in the Society) pray the Breviary with the Fathers and they don't understand. Its better that we take the prayers of St. Sulpice, in the vernacular, so that the brother can pray and understand the prayer with the Fathers.' But that is not true...it is not good. All brothers generally like to say the Breviary with the priest. That is an error to say that the poor brother must say the Breviary and be sad. No, not 'poor brothers', they are happy! If we change and say: 'Oh, poor brother, tomorrow we will say prayers in english because you do not understand', I am sure that 90% of the brothers would prefer to say the Breviary in Latin. It is the prayer of the Church. It is the same for the sisters. They say the prayers in Latin (the Breviary). That is very good! It is the prayer of the whole community, i.e. the Fathers, brothers, sisters, laymen, all pray the same prayer. That is very good, the same prayer of the family...good, good! So we can pray this single prayer."

Q: "Why are we (the Society) not Religious?" Perhaps some of you prefer to become religious and to take vows of Obedience, Poverty, Chastity. So why is Our Society not a Religious Society?

A: "The answer is drawn from my experience. You know that it is in the same category as in some kinds of Societies in the Church. If you take the book, 'Pontificio', you have the names of all Societies; first societies of Orders, e.g., Benedictine, Dominican, etc. After these, you next have 'Congregations,' (Religious Congregations). After these you have Societies of Community life, without vows, and in this type of society you have, e.g., St. Sulpice, White Fathers, African missions, etc. Our Society of the Holy Ghost Fathers was a religious society, not a community life without vows."

"I think it was better for us to be a Society of Community life without vows, because, from my own experience, I was a religious. I made perpetual vows in my Congregation. I saw that many Fathers, they don't keep the vow of Poverty very well, because they had many things to do in their mission...e.g., they must build things, they must have a car, etc., many things. And they must return to Europe, to America, to raise money to serve and build up the missions, to buy many things. And so they are always handling money, money. But that is not well conformed with the vow of Poverty. The Vow of Poverty is very demanding. We had to always ask permission from the Superior to transact some expense, (to avoid violating the vow)...all expenses we had to always ask the Superior. So I saw clearly that many members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers, of the missions, etc., did not keep to the Vow of Poverty; they did not ask the Superior, because the Superior is in Africa and they stayed in America or Europe to raise money. Impossible! And so I think that it was better that we are missionary (Society of St. Pius X); we are all missionary, and we must have money, we spend money, we need money. If we must always ask to the Superior, then it's very very difficult for us to operate (efficiently). But, bear in mind that does not signify that we must spend money, waste money, (extravagant) trips or tours, etc. No. But we must keep the Virtue of Poverty, and be careful with money. Thus, I think it was better not to add this obligation of a Vow, thus making the Fathers have to always ask their superior for permission. That poses always a problem of conscience. Because we do not take the Vow of Poverty, we can have property, e.g., if we receive from our parents, some piece of land, or some money, etc., we can keep this and use it for God, for souls, for our missions, etc. But we have this property that Religious cannot have. They must do a testament. And if the Religious receives something from their parents, they must give it to the Congregation; ...they cannot have any property."

"I hope all of you have this desire to practice this Virtue of Poverty, i.e.; to be very careful with expenses. Many times we receive from the faithful who are not very rich, and they give us this money for our Apostolate. We must take care of the expense, especially for our comfort, our pleasure, etc...(we must not be wasteful)."

"Now, for the brother, the Vow is very useful. It's another thing for the brother. For us the brother is a consolation. To be in the hands of their superior, members of the Fraternity."

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"For priests, I think that they have by the Sacrifice of the Mass...they must have the Virtue of Poverty, because they behold in their eyes the Cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ crucified...CRUCIFIED...when we offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. And so we have this example for the priesthood, when we are priests. We have this example of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience. We must take this example of Jesus Christ to acquire these Virtues. But the brother does not offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. For him he is a very good help to souls, and to souls they are an example of Jesus Christ."

+Thankyou.

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"O CRUX AVE SPES UNICA"