



# Society of St Pius X District of Canada

Centre Saint-Joseph, 1395 rue Notre-Dame, Saint-Césaire, Qc., J0L 1T0  
Tel. +1 450 390 1323 - www.fsspx.ca

---

## LETTER TO FRIENDS AND BENFACTORS

### The *Correctio Filialis* and Archbishop Lefebvre

November 1, 2017

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Saint John of the Cross, which we celebrate on November 24, encourages us to reach the summit of the life of union with God because a soul that gets there not only enjoys a special divine intimacy but also becomes useful to the whole Church: “An instant of pure love is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul, and more profitable to the Church, than all other good works together” (Spiritual Canticle). Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, for example, proved that. She who was an obscure Carmelite nun during her life became the patroness of all the missionaries afterwards (largely thanks to our missionaries from the Great North)!

A day will come when the Church will judge the virtues of Archbishop Lefebvre to tell us whether he has practiced them to a heroic degree, and thus whether he has attained these summits of holiness. What we can nevertheless say without fear today is that already during his lifetime he has had, and still has, an extraordinary impact on the whole Church. And it's far from being over. The last proof of this is the letter delivered to Pope Francis on August 11, entitled *Correctio Filialis*, which became public on September 24, and has so far been signed by 245 theologians, philosophers, laypeople and clergy from all continents, including our Superior General. This letter denounces seven heretical propositions drawn from the various teachings of the reigning pontiff.

Let's look at the logical link between this letter and the impact of Archbishop Lefebvre on the universal Church.

### ***Saint Pius X***

Let's start with our Patron, Saint Pius X, and his encyclical *Pascendi* of 1907 which gives the key to understand the issue of the current fight. Here are some passages that summarize the entire encyclical and which give the principle from which the holy pope will deduce a litany of deadly consequences for the faith and morals:

“It is thus that they make conscience and revelation synonymous. From this they derive the law laid down as the universal standard, according to which religious conscience is to be put on an equal footing with revelation, and that to it all must submit, even the supreme authority of the Church, whether in the capacity of teacher, or in that of legislator in the province of sacred liturgy or discipline” (n. 8)

“What, then, is the Church? It is the product of the collective conscience, that is to say, of the association of individual consciences. (...) Authority, therefore, like the Church, has its origin in the religious conscience, and, that being so, is subject to it”(No. 27).<sup>i</sup>

«Conscience» here is faith replaced by a vague religious feeling, which is called “vital immanence”, which is nothing other than a living subjective feeling, which changes constantly. Saint Pius X had seen clearly. This «conscience» is simply man taking the place of God.

## ***The 1960s***

At the Council, Archbishop Lefebvre was at the head of the group of conservative Fathers, named *Coetus*. Their most difficult struggle was undoubtedly the one against the freedom of conscience, the so-called religious liberty which attacks the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ and which uncrowns Him, even in His own Church. Read the book «*I Accuse the Council*», especially his last interventions to defend this dogma of our faith. Here is what he says in his tenth intervention, at the beginning of the 4th Session, on September 9, 1965:

“In various places, certain affirmations (*of Gaudium et Spes*) contradict the doctrine of the Church. For example: the Church has always taught and continues to teach, the obligation for all men to obey God and the authorities established by God, in order that they may return to the fundamental order of their calling and thus recover their dignity.

“The schema, on the contrary, says: ‘Man’s dignity is in his freedom of conscience, in his personal actions guided and moved from within himself, that is, of his own volition and not under the compulsion of some external cause or by constraint.’ This false notion of liberty and of man’s docility leads to the very worst consequences - in particular it leads to the destruction of authority, especially that of the father of the family. It destroys the value of religious life.”<sup>ii</sup>

## ***The 1970s***

In the 1970s, this same fight became the fight for the traditional Mass and the priesthood, privileged means to make Our Lord reign. Here it was sometimes even violent, both against Archbishop Lefebvre who was called by all the names able to shake anyone in the Church - «rebel» «against the Pope» «disobedient» «out of the Church» «causing a schism», etc. – as well as against priests and faithful who sought to keep the faith of their fathers at all costs and who in return were expelled from their churches, refused communion, which even happened to children, denounced publicly from the pulpit and in the newspapers. Here in Canada, a name personifies this period, that of our dear Father Yves Normandin, whose book «*A Pastor Out in the Cold*» recounts these heroic events and to which most of our Canadian mass centers, *a mari usque ad mare*, owe their origin.

In his consistorial allocution of May 24, 1976, Pope Paul VI clearly recognized that Archbishop Lefebvre was the leading figure in the movement resisting the liturgical reforms. It was also very surprising to read the Pope saying that “It is in the name of Tradition that We ask all Our sons and daughters, all the Catholic communities, to celebrate with dignity and fervor the renewed liturgy”.<sup>iii</sup>

Archbishop Lefebvre, for his part, relied of course on Tradition to continue his work:

“If in all objectivity we seek the true motive animating those who ask us not to perform these ordinations, if we look for the hidden motive, it is because we are ordaining these priests that they may say the Mass of all time. It is because they know that these priests will be faithful to the Mass of the Church, to the Mass of Tradition, to the Mass of all time, that they urge us not to ordain them” (June 29, 1976).<sup>iv</sup>

Tradition versus Tradition? In fact, it is Tradition in the subjective sense, those who are seated “in the chair of Moses” against Tradition in the objective sense, the content of the Faith transmitted unchanged for twenty centuries. This is one more example of the importance of properly defining words according to the scholastic method.

## ***The 1980s***

While religious liberty and the New Mass attack Social Kingship in its principle and its liturgical application, the ecumenism of the 1980s placed Jesus and Barabbas on the same balcony. It was the exaltation of Luther’s birth in 1983, the Pope’s visit to the synagogue in April 1986 and, summit of impiety, the interreligious meeting of Assisi in October 1986. Who dared to raise his voice against these abominations? Archbishop Lefebvre. Here is his alarm call to eight cardinals before the Assisi meeting:

“The very first Article of the Credo and the first of the Ten Commandments are being outraged in public by the occupant of the See of Peter. Incalculable scandal is being given to Catholic souls. The Church is being shaken to her very foundations. If faith in the Church as the one and only Ark of Salvation disappears the Church herself disappears. All her supernatural strength and activity are based upon this Article of our faith.”<sup>v</sup>

This letter to eight cardinals of August 27, 1986 remained unanswered.

### ***The Consecration of Bishops, June 30, 1988***

Even before the end of that historical mass, the excommunication of the six bishops was announced on the radio. The reason why this act was called schismatic? “At the root of this schismatic act, we find an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition.”<sup>vi</sup> (*Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, July 2, 1988) That is a notion of Tradition that did not adapt to contemporary changes, a Tradition that was not alive (hence “incomplete”), and which had no right to compare the teaching of today’s Church authorities with that of yesterday (hence “contradictory”). But did Our Lord not say, “Go and teach all nations ... teaching them to observe all whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Archbishop Lefebvre was only passing on what he himself had received. As for the question of the Mass, the foundation of this condemnation was the very notion of Tradition, now falsified.

Taken in fear, a small part of his priests and some faithful abandoned him. But by departing from Archbishop Lefebvre because of the consecration of bishops, considered a schismatic act, these priests who formed the different groups *Ecclesia Dei* (FSSP, IBP, Campos ...), in order to have an approved apostolate, had then to logically accept the “root” of this condemnation, that is to say, this new conception of the “living Tradition”, which ultimately attacked the immutability of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus and his One Church. Such are the logical consequences of wanting to be approved!

### ***Pope Francis***

And now Francis enters the scene. He faithfully applies the principles of the Council: “Everyone has his own conception of good and evil, and everyone must choose and follow the good and fight evil according to the idea he has”<sup>vii</sup> (2013). He will then publish this document “*Amoris Laetitia*”, which will go down in the history of papacy as a shameful stain. With its official applications and interpretations (such as that of the bishops of Argentina), and with many other principles borrowed from Luther himself, it is causing a healthy reaction from generous souls, because here we touch the very notion of marriage, natural law, grace, and sin. It’s going too far!

But in the name of what are we going to react against these scandals, which are only a continuation of the novelty of Vatican II? In nothing other than in the name of Tradition - the real one this time - and not the so-called “living Tradition” which is in fact the real cause of these new heretical propositions denounced by the *Correctio Filialis* in September 2017. The signatories of the letter abundantly quote the *Denzinger* (DH) which has been the reference of theologians for almost two centuries, being the collection of the teachings of the Magisterium since the beginning of the Church, it is the book of Tradition. Now, last September 10, in Colombia, the Pope sarcastically dismissed this magisterial reference in favor of a living, even prayerful, conscience:

«A man who does not pray, a woman who does not pray cannot be a theologian. Whether one becomes a walking *Denzinger*, whether one knows all the doctrine that exists or is possible, it will not be theology. It will be a compendium, a textbook where everything is written. But *today* the question is how do you express God ... »<sup>viii</sup> (<http://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articolo/la-grazia-non-e-una-ideologia> )

And here is 2000 years of Tradition set aside for this tragic “today”, this modern consciousness which takes the place of God - «how do *you* express God»!

## ***Let's be logical***

If it is in the name of the true Tradition that we must defend the natural law - marriage and the points of morality attacked today - we must not forget that it was in the name of the same Tradition, but considered «incomplete and contradictory», that Archbishop Lefebvre was sentenced in 1988. It was by relying on the teaching of the whole Tradition that Archbishop Lefebvre condemned ecumenism, collegiality, freedom of conscience, religious freedom, the new mass destructive of the reign of Our Lord...

Bishop Fellay explained why he had agreed, at the request of the signatories, to sign this important subsidiary correction.

“We must hope it will bring about a clearer realization of the gravity of the situation in the Church, both among the clergy and among the faithful. Indeed, as Benedict XVI admitted, “Peter’s bark is taking water on all sides”. This is no poetic image; it is a tragic reality. In this battle, faith and morals must be defended!

“We also hope that others among those who have souls in their care will show their support. In exposing the objectively unorthodox propositions, the signatories of the *Correctio Filialis* have simply said loudly and clearly what many know in their heart. Is it not time for these pastors to say so, loud and clear?”<sup>ix</sup>

Let us pray that all these signatories understand this logic and have the grace to embrace it to the end.

May Our Lady of the Rosary, strong as an army arrayed in battle, increase her army and grant us to see the triumph of her Immaculate Heart as soon as possible!

Yours truly, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Heart of Mary,



Fr. Daniel Couture  
District Superior

- 
- i. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/fr/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-x\\_enc\\_19070908\\_pascendi-dominici-gregis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/fr/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis.html)
  - ii. [https://laportelatine.org/bibliotheque/oeuvres\\_mgr\\_lefebvre/accuse\\_concile/JAC\\_5.pdf](https://laportelatine.org/bibliotheque/oeuvres_mgr_lefebvre/accuse_concile/JAC_5.pdf)
  - iii. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1976/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19760524\\_concistoro.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1976/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19760524_concistoro.html) :  
« È nel nome della Tradizione che noi domandiamo a tutti i nostri figli, a tutte le comunità cattoliche, di celebrare, in dignità e fervore la Liturgia rinnovata. »
  - iv. <http://archives.fsspx.org/fr/sermon-des-ordinations-sacerdotales-ecne-le-29-juin-1976>
  - v. <http://fsspx.news/fr/content/27739>
  - vi. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/fr/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_motu-proprio\\_02071988\\_ecclesia-dei.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/fr/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_02071988_ecclesia-dei.html)  
« 4. Huius autem schismatici actus radix dignosci potest in ipsa aliqua imperfecta et pugnanti sibi notione Traditionis »
  - vii. [http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope\\_s\\_conversation\\_with\\_scafari\\_english-67643118/](http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_conversation_with_scafari_english-67643118/)
  - viii. « Un uomo che non prega, una donna che non prega, non può essere teologo o teologa. Sarà il volume del Denzinger fatto persona, saprà tutte le dottrine esistenti o possibili, ma non farà teologia. Sarà un compendio, un manuale dove c'è tutto. Ma oggi la questione è come esprimi Dio tu... »
  - ix. <http://fsspx.news/fr/news-events/news/mgr-fellay-pourquoi-j%E2%80%99ai-sign%C3%A9-la-correctio-filialis-32239>