

OPEN LETTER TO BISHOP FELLAY

***By Thirty-Seven Priests of the SSPX District of France
released on February 28th, 2013***



Translated by an anonymous priest of the Society of Saint Pius X

Your Excellency,

As you recently wrote: "The links which unite us are essentially supernatural". However, you took care to rightly remind us that the requirements of nature must nevertheless not be forgotten. "Grace does not destroy nature." Among these requirements, there is truthfulness. Yet, we are obliged to note that a part of the problems, with which we were confronted throughout these recent months, comes from a grave negligence to this virtue (of truthfulness).

Ten years ago, you used to speak like Bishop Tissier de Mallerais:

"Never will I agree to say: 'in the Council, if we interpret it well, yes, perhaps nevertheless, we could make it correspond with Tradition, we could find an acceptable sense.' Never shall I agree to say that! That would be a lie; it is not allowed to tell a lie, even if it was a question of saving the Church!" (Bishop Tissier de Mallerais, Gastines, September 16th, 2012).

But since then, you have changed:

"The whole Tradition of the Catholic faith has to be the criterion and the guide to understand the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, which, in its turn, enlightens certain aspects of the life and doctrine of the Church, implicitly present in her, but not yet formulated. The affirmations [teachings] of the Second Vatican Council and of the subsequent Papal Magisterium, relative to the relation between the Roman Catholic Church and the non-Catholic and Christian confessions, must be understood in the light of the whole Tradition." (Bishop Fellay, St. Joseph-des-Carmes, June 5th, 2012).

At Brignoles, in May of 2012, you spoke about this document which "suited Rome" but that "will need to be explained to us, because there are statements which are so borderline, that, if you are ill-disposed, you could see one way or another—depending on whether you are looking at it through black or pink colored spectacles." Since then, you justified your position in the following way:

"If we can accept to be "condemned" for our rejection of modernism (which is true), we cannot accept being so [condemned] if we were to adhere to the sedevacantist theses (which is false); it is that which led me to draft a "minimalist" text, which took into account only one of both statements and which, therefore, could leave misunderstanding in the SSPX." (*Corn Unum*, No. 102)

"Obviously, when I wrote this text, I thought it was sufficiently clear, that I had sufficiently succeeded in avoiding — how can I put it? — the ambiguities. But the facts are there; I am well obliged to see that this text had become a text which divided us, us in the Society. Obviously, I withdraw this text." (Ecône, September 7th, 2012).

You are, thus, a misunderstood person who, by condescension, withdraws a very finely-worded text which narrow-minded people were incapable of understanding. This version of the facts is cunning, but is it correct? Withdrawing a document and retracting a doctrinal error, are not formally the same things. Furthermore, to invoke the sedevacantist "theses" to justify this "minimalist" document—which "suited Rome"—seems strongly out of place, when, at the same time, and for more than thirteen years, you authorized a priest to no longer mention the name of the pope in the Canon [of the Mass], confiding to him that you

understand his decision, in view of the scandalous signing of a document of common agreement between Catholics and Protestants [by Rome].

Bishop Tissier de Mallerais confided to a colleague that this "Letter of April 14th" [of Bishop Fellay to the other three SSPX bishops] should never have been published, because, according to him, you {Bishop Fellay} would be *"discredited once and for all, and probably forced to resign."* Which confirms Bishop Williamson's charitable warning: *"for the glory of God, for the salvation of souls, for the peace of mind of the Society members and for your eternal salvation, you would do better resigning as Superior General, rather than excluding me."* (London, October 19th, 2012). Nevertheless, you took it as an open and public provocation.

But when Bishop de Galarreta declared, on October 13th, 2012, [in his sermon] at Villepreux, the following unbelievable sentence, which we can only listen to, but cannot read, because *La Porte Latine* [the French SSPX website] deleted it [the sentence] and did not include it on their on-line transcription: *"It is almost impossible that the majority of the Superiors of the Society — after frank discussion, and a complete analysis of all the aspects, of all the 'ins and outs' — it is unthinkable that this majority would make a mistake in a prudential matter. And if, by chance, it happens—well just too bad—we are going to do what the majority thinks,"*— in Menzingen, the General Secretary, Fr. Thouvenot, wrote [concerning Bishop de Galarreta's sermon] that he *"explained the events, of June 2012, in a detached and elevated way."*

How could have the Society fallen so low? Archbishop Lefebvre himself wrote: *"On the day of the judgment, God will ask us if we were faithful and not if we obeyed unfaithful authorities. Obedience is a virtue related to the Truth and to God. It is no longer a virtue, but a vice, if it submits itself to error and evil."* (Archbishop Lefebvre, Letter of August 9th, 1986), and Fr. Berto [the theological expert assisting the Archbishop at Vatican II] wrote in 1963: *"We have to 'see beyond the end of our nose', and not imagine that we have a right to call on Holy Ghost by command, just like that, the moment we enter the Council."*

During the conference of November 9th, 2012, in Paris, an [SSPX] prior asked you: *"At the end of the priestly retreat, two colleagues accused me*

of being in revolt against your authority, because I showed satisfaction with the text of Fr. de Cacqueray [the SSPX French District Superior] against Assisi III. What do you think?" Your answer was: *"I wasn't aware of such things happening within the Society! It was I who asked for this declaration [of Fr. De Cacqueray]. Moreover, it was published with my permission! I completely agree with Fr. de Cacqueray!"* Yet, during the [SSPX] Sisters' retreat at Ruffec [France], you confided to six priests [SSPX] that you did not agree with the text of Fr. de Cacqueray! Moreover, for 20 minutes, you complained to him about the criticism you had received, from Cardinal Levada, about that subject. If you gave him the permission to publish it, then it was, you explained, so as not to appear biased, but, personally, you disapproved of the contents which you judged to be excessive. Your Excellency, who therefore is using *"fundamentally subversive"* means? Who is it that is revolutionary? Who is it that does harm to the common good of our Society [of St. Pius X]?

On November 9th, 2012, in Paris, we heard a colleague ask you: *"I am one of those who lost confidence! How many lines of conduct are there in the Society now?"* You answered: *"It is a serious wound! We underwent serious trials! It will take time!"* In face of this elusive answer, another [SSPX] prior then asked you: *"Do you dispute your answer to the three bishops?"* Your answer was still vague: *"Yes, when I read it again, it seems to me that there are a few little errors. But in fact, to help you to understand, know that this letter is not an answer to their letter, but to the difficulties which I had had with each of them separately. I have a lot of respect for Bishop Williamson, even admiration for him, he has bouts of genius in the combat against Vatican II, it is a big loss for the Society and it is happening at the worst moment."* But who is responsible for his exclusion? In private, you say many things: *"I was at war"...* *"Rome lies"* — but you have never released the slightest official statement to denounce these supposed lies [of Rome]. Recently, concerning the ultimatum of February 22nd, you officially supported the lie of the Vatican.

Your language has become endlessly vague. This ambiguous way of expressing yourself is not praiseworthy, as Father Calmel [a traditional Dominican priest held in high regard by the Archbishop and the SSPX] wrote: *"I always loathed the soft or elusive expressions, which can be*

pulled in all directions, which each person can have it mean what he wants. And those expressions are even a greater horror to me, when they clothe ecclesiastical authorities. Above all, these expressions appear, to me, to be a direct insult to the One Who said: 'I am the Truth ... You are the light of the world. Let your word be yes if it is yes, no if it is no!'"

Your Excellency, you and your Assistants have been capable of saying everything and its opposite, without any fear of ridicule.

Father Nély [the Second Assistant to Bishop Fellay], in April of 2012, in Toulouse, declared to twelve or so of his colleagues [SSPX priests], that *"if the doctrinal relations with Rome failed, it is because our theologians were too closed-up"* but he said to one of these theologians: *"You could have been more incisive."*

On November 9th, 2012, speaking to us, you, yourself, maintained that: *"I am going to make you laugh, but I really think that all four of us bishops, share the same opinions."* Whereas six months before, you had written to them: *"Concerning the crucial question of the possibility of surviving, under the conditions of a recognition of the Society by Rome, we do not arrive at the same conclusion as you."*

In the same retreat conference at Ecône, you declared: *"I confess to you that I don't think that I went against the [General] Chapter of 2006 by doing what I did."* A short moment after this statement, on the subject of the [General] Chapter of 2012, you said: *"If the [General] Chapter treats of something, then it becomes a law which remains in place until the next [General] Chapter."* When we know that, in March of 2012, without waiting for the next [General] Chapter, you destroyed the law [of the General Chapter] of 2006 (which was *"no practical agreement without doctrinal solution"*). So we wonder about the sincerity of the statement.

In Villepreux, one of your brothers in the episcopate, invited us: *"Not to be dramatic. The tragedy would be to give up the Faith. One should not demand a perfection which is not possible in this world. You should not quibble over these questions. It is necessary to see if the essentials are there or not."*

It is true—you have not become a Mohammedan (1st commandment); you have not taken a wife (6th commandment); you simply manipulated reality (8th commandment). But are the essentials always there, when the ambiguities concern the combat of the faith? Nobody asks you for a perfection which is not of this world. We can well conceive that we make mistakes when faced with the mystery of iniquity, because even God's Elect could be deceived—but nobody can accept a double language. Certainly, the Great Apostasy, as foretold by Holy Scripture, can only disturb us. Who can claim to be unharmed by the traps of the devil?

why have you deceived us? To every sin, mercy, of course! But where are the acts which show that there is a conscience, a regret and a reparation of the errors?

You said in front of the [SSPX] priors of France: *"I am tired of arguments over words."* Maybe there lies the problem. What stops you from going to take a break at Montgardin and enjoy the joys of a hidden life there? Rome has always used a clear language. Archbishop Lefebvre too. You too—in the past. But today, you maintain a confusion, by wrongfully identifying *"the Roman Catholic Church, the eternal Rome"* and *"the official Church, Modernist and Conciliar Rome."* Yet, on no account, can you change the nature of our combat! If you do not want to fulfill this mission anymore, you have the duty, as well as your assistants, to give up the office and responsibility that the Society entrusted to you.

Effectually, Fr. Pfluger [the First Assistant to Bishop Fellay] says he personally suffers from the canonical irregularity of the Society. He confided to a colleague, in June of 2012, *"to have been shaken by the doctrinal discussions."* At the end of his conference at Saint Joseph des Carmes, he said, in a contemptuous way, to whoever wanted to hear him: *"To think that there are still some people who do not understand it is necessary to sign! [an agreement with Rome]."* On April 29th, 2012, in Hattersheim, after admitting that *"the past events proved that the differences concerning the doctrinal questions cannot be resolved,"* he said that he feared *"new excommunications."* But how can we be afraid of the excommunication of modernists who are already excommunicated by the Church?

At Suresnes [the French SSPX HQ], Fr. Nély [the Second Assistant to Bishop Fellay], on the occasion of a meal for benefactors, announced that *“the Pope has put an end to the relations with the Society by asking for the recognition of the [New] Mass and the Second Vatican Council”* he also added that *“Bishop Fellay was on his own ‘little cloud’, and it was impossible to make him come down from it again.”* But didn’t Fr. Nély also sign the monstrous letter to three bishops? Was he not *“on his own ‘little cloud’”* too, when, in Fanjeaux, he declared to the Mother Superior, who was worried about an ultimatum from Rome: *“No, rest assured, everything is going well with Rome, their canonists are helping us to prepare the statutes for the prelature.”*

Can you say, in conscience, that you and your assistants have taken on your responsibilities? After so many contradictory and harmful comments, how can you still pretend to rule? Who harmed the authority of the General Superior, if it wasn’t yourself and your Assistants? How can you claim to speak about justice, after having wronged it? *“What truth can come from the mouth of the liar?”* (Ecclesiasticus 34:4—*“What truth can come from that which is false?”*). Who was it that sowed the cockle? Who has been subversive by lying? Who has scandalized the priests and the faithful? Who has mutilated the Society by diminishing its episcopal strength? What can charity be without honor and justice?

We know that we shall be blamed for not respecting protocol by writing you so publicly. Our answer will then be the one of Father de Foucauld to General Laperrine: *“I believed, in entering the religious life, that I would have to above all recommend sweetness and humility; with time, I believe that what is mostly lacking most often, is dignity and [a wholesome] pride.”* (Letter of December 6th, 1915). And what’s the use of writing to you in private, when we know that a brave and lucid priest had to wait four years before getting a reply from you, and then it was not to read your responses, but your insults. When a District Superior is still waiting for the acknowledgement of receipt of his letter of seventeen pages, sent to the General House, it seems that Menzingen no longer has any other argument than voluntarism: *“sic volo, sic iubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas”*—*“That’s what I want, that’s how it will be, that’s reason enough!”*

Your Excellency, what we are going through at the moment is obnoxious. Evangelical uprightness has been lost—the “Yes! Yes! No! No!” The [General] Chapter of 2012 has clarified nothing at all of the situation. Father Faure, a [General] Chapter member, recently publicly warned us against “*letters and statements of current superiors of the Society these last months.*” Another Capitulant [General Chapter member] said to a colleague: “*It is necessary to recognize that the [General] Chapter failed. Today it is okay to have a liberated Society [of St. Pius X] inside the Conciliar Church. I was devastated by the level of reflection of some [General] Chapter members.*”

Your interventions and those of your Assistants are troublesome and let us believe that [currently] you have simply taken what is only a strategic retreat.

At the end of 2011, one of your two Assistants, together with a priest who is in favor of the agreement [with Rome] had tried to estimate the number of priests, in France, who would refuse an agreement with Rome. Their result: seven. Menzingen was reassured. In March of 2012, you said that Mr. Guenois, of *Le Figaro* {French newspaper}, was a very well informed journalist and that his vision of things was correct. Yet, Mr. Guenois wrote: “*Whether we want it or not, the pope and Bishop Fellay don’t want a doctrinal, but ecclesial [practical] agreement .*” In May of 2012, you told the Superiors of the Benedictines, Dominicans and Capuchins: “*We know that there will be a division, but we will continue till the end.*” In June, the ecclesial agreement [with Rome] was impossible. Nevertheless, in October of 2012, in the priory of Brussels, diocesan priests who were invited by Father Wailliez [SSPX prior of Brussels], manifested to you their desire to see an agreement between Rome and the Society. You reassured them by these words: “*Yes, yes, that will happen soon!*” That was three months after the [General] Chapter of July [2012].

Your Excellency, you have the duty in justice to tell the truth, to repair the lies and to retract the errors. Do it, and everything will be back to normal again. You know how André Avellan, in the 16th century, became a great saint after becoming ashamed of a lie, which he had committed out of weakness. We simply want that you become a great saint.

Your Excellency, we do not want History to remember you as the man that deformed and mutilated the Priestly Society of Saint Pius the X.

Be assured, Your Excellency, of our total loyalty to Archbishop Lefebvre's work,

February 28th, 2013

Thirty-seven priests of the SSPX District of France

TRANSLATED BY AN ANONYMOUS PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X