

SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH**DECREE*****concerning certain unlawful priestly and episcopal ordinations***

His Excellency Most Rev. Pierre Martin Ngô-dinh-Thuc, titular Archbishop of Bulla Regia, at midnight of 31 December 1975, in the village of Palmar de Troya, ordained priests contrary to the express prohibition of His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Seville, and without regard to the law contained in can. 955. Moreover, on 11 January 1976, contrary to the norm of can. 953, without Pontifical mandate arid, what is more serious, without canonical provision, he ordained five bishops. Finally, the bishops who had been ordained in this manner, in their turn carried out further priestly and episcopal ordinations, even in other places.

Having considered the gravity of the crimes, this Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, by special mandate of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, has decreed that the following be declared concerning the aforesaid ordinations:

- 1) The bishops who ordained other bishops, and the bishops themselves, who were ordained, besides incurring the penalties mentioned in canons 2370 and 2373, 1 and 3, of the Code of Canon Law, have also incurred *ipso facto* the excommunication reserved *specialissimo modo* to the Apostolic See mentioned in the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office of 9 April 1951 (*ASS XLIII*, 1951, p. 217 f.). The penalty, however, mentioned in can. 2370 is applied to the assistant priests, if there were any such.
- 2) The priests who have been ordained in this unlawful manner are, according to canon 2374, suspended from the order received, and should they exercise any act of that order, they are also irregular (can. 985,7).
- 3) Finally, as regards those who have been ordained in this unlawful manner, or who may in the future be ordained by them, whatever about the validity of their orders, the Church does not recognize their ordination nor shall it do so, and she considers them, as regards all legal effects, in the state which each one had beforehand and subject to the above-mentioned penal sanctions until they repent. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given at Rome from the Office of the S. Congregation, 17 September 1976.

FRANJO Card. ŠEPER
Prefect

JÉRÔME HAMER
Titular Archbishop of Lorium
Secretary

* *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, N. 40, September 30, 1976, Page 1.