

The SSPX's New Doctrine - A Problem which won't go away!

“The greatest misery, for a century or for a country, is to abandon or to diminish the truth. We can get over everything else; we never get over the sacrifice of principles. Characters may give in at given times and public morality receive some breach from vice or bad examples, but nothing is lost as long as the true doctrines remain standing in their integrity. With them everything is remade sooner or later, men and institutions, because we are always able to come back to the good when we have not left truth. To give up the principles, outside which nothing can be built that is strong and lasting would take away even the very hope of salvation. So the greatest service a man can render to his kinsmen, in the times when everything is failing and growing dim, is to assert the truth without fear even though no one listens to him; because it is a furrow of light which he opens through the intellects, and if his voice cannot manage to dominate the noises of the time, at least it will be received as the messenger of salvation in the future.”

- Mgr. Charles-Emile Freppel (1827-1891), Bishop of Angers

“The imperative duty and the noble custom of holy Church is to pay homage especially to the truth when it is ignored, to profess it when it is threatened. There is a mediocre merit to claim to be its apostle and its supporter when all acknowledge and adhere to it. To make so much of the human state of the truth and to love it so little for itself that we deny it as soon as it is no longer popular, as soon as it does not have number, authority, preponderance, success : would that not be a new way of doing our duty, and of understanding honour ? Let it be known: the good remains good, and must continue to be called as such, even when “nobody does it” (Ps. XIII, 3). Furthermore, a small number of persons putting forth claims is sufficient to save the integrity of the doctrines. And the integrity of the doctrine is the only chance for the restoration of order in the world.”

- Cardinal Pie, Bishop of Poitiers

Introduction

In February 2015, Bishop Fellay visited the SSPX seminary in the United States, St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona, Minnesota. Although, as it happens, Bishop Athanasius Schneider happened to be visiting around that same time, nominally Bishop Fellay was there to confer tonsures on the seminarians. One of the faithful present at the ceremonies had the opportunity to speak to Bishop Fellay face to face. The following brief account was recounted first-hand by the gentleman himself, a close personal acquaintance of this author and a man of unimpeachable integrity whose word is above suspicion and beyond question.

Given the crowds, the short time available, and the very likely possibility of interruption, he asked the Superior General what he considered to be the one question that matters most: your Excellency, do you stand by the contents of your Doctrinal Declaration of April 2012, or do you consider that it contains anything wrong, anything which might need correcting?

The question was simple and clear, the immediate answer equally so: There is nothing wrong with my Doctrinal Declaration; I stand by what it says.

As noted above, this story cannot be kicked into touch with the usual accusations of “hearsay,” “rumour” and the like. Furthermore it comes as no great surprise anyway, being already confirmed by several different things heard from the mouth of Bishop Fellay across the globe over the past two years. It is therefore beyond serious dispute that Bishop Fellay stands by the content and substance of his Doctrinal Declaration. He regards it as wholly orthodox and free from any error, heterodoxy or diminution of the truth in any form - in short, an accurate reflection of his own doctrinal position and that of those with him.

It need hardly be said that this is a very serious matter indeed concerning as it does Catholic doctrine and teaching, a matter which is of profound and lasting consequence to every priest of the SSPX and the faithful with them, whether they realise it or not. To understand why, it suffices to consider the reality of which Bishop Freppel reminds us in the quote above. Even a fairly cursory glance through Catholic history will suffice to show that the Church can and has weathered storms of scandals involving bad morals even amongst the highest ranks of the clergy: from concubinage to simony, from clerical sodomy to lay investiture. One need only mention the name Borgia to immediately conjure up an image of what he means. And yet, as Bishop Freppel notes, such problems, however gravely scandalous, however much harm they do to the apostolate and to souls in their own time, are nevertheless of secondary importance in the long run because the Church can and will always overcome them, “as long as the true doctrines remain standing in their integrity.” On the other hand, the one thing which deals a mortal death blow is any tampering with true doctrine, be it ever so slight. We would do well to note that Bishop Freppel does not content himself with talking about straightforward “denial” of Catholic teaching, rather he makes a point of saying that the worst calamity is to “abandon or diminish the truth.” And, as Cardinal Pie notes in the second quote, it is whenever the truth is attacked or diminished or threatened that it becomes especially important to kick up a fuss in defence of that same truth. Even “a small number of persons” who refuse any compromise when it comes to doctrine is sufficient “to save the integrity of the doctrines” - but refuse they must! It must also be appreciated that from Catholic doctrine flows Catholic liturgy, Catholic piety and spirituality, Catholic education, Catholic law and justice, Catholic culture, in short everything which might be identified as “Catholic.” Without true doctrine, the Church, and consequently all of human society, is as nothing; therefore, “the integrity of doctrine is the only chance for the restoration of order in the world.” Nothing is more important.

Many people have heard of Bishop Fellay’s Doctrinal Declaration, but not all of them have read it and of those who have, they may not have read it for quite a while, or they may have become lost in some of the document’s vaguer or wordier passages. For this reason we feel it a good use of time to go back and look at it again, and study it closely to discern what it means and what it says, and what the implications of that are for us. The document was signed and presented in an official capacity, not as a private letter of Bishop Fellay, but (as its title suggests) as something which officially represents the SSPX. Aside some verbal equivocation on the part of Bishop Fellay on a personal level, there has been no official document signed and handed over to Rome in the name of the SSPX with the intent of correcting and repealing its offending passages. Therefore the document itself, and more importantly the doctrine that it represents, still stands, and remains the official doctrinal position of the SSPX to this day. This is not to say that there

are not some within the SSPX who seek to play down the significance of the Doctrinal Declaration - we can benefit a great deal from trying to understand why that might be.

Background

In March 2012, Bishop Fellay wrote to all the priests of the SSPX in the Society's internal newsletter 'Cor Unum' suggesting that perhaps the time had now come for an agreement with Rome. Following this, the other three bishops of the SSPX wrote to him expressing their alarm and begging him not to go ahead with it. Bishop Fellay replied in a letter co-signed by Frs. Pfluger and Nely (his First Assistant and Second Assistant). In that reply, Bishop Fellay did not tell the other three bishops that they had got the wrong idea, that it had all been a misunderstanding, that he had no intention of making any agreement with Rome. His reply shows beyond doubt that the worst fears of the other three SSPX bishops were confirmed. The reply accused them of an "absolute hardening," which, "will in the future end up in a true schism." Bishop Fellay's letter of reply to the three bishops is dated 14th April, 2012. His Doctrinal Declaration was signed and handed over to Rome the following day, 15th April, 2012.

For a while, little enough was known about the Doctrinal Declaration or its contents. After a short while it became known that Bishop Fellay had sent some sort of doctrinal formula to Rome as a sort of 'credo' or statement of belief, representing a summary of where the SSPX stood in relation to the Council and the conciliar 'reforms', the idea being that, if both the SSPX and the Romans could agree upon it, it could serve as the official basis of the agreement that was being planned. A few weeks later, in May 2012, Bishop Fellay told a meeting of Dominicans and laity in Brignoles, France that he thought the Doctrinal Declaration would be accepted by the Romans. He also hinted ominously that, once its contents became clear, it would require a certain amount of effort in presenting it to the faithful, implying that it might be thought that the SSPX had changed its position:

"Amongst ourselves, I think it will have to be explained properly because there are in this document expressions or declarations which are so very much on a tight rope that if you are ill disposed or whether you are wearing black or pink tinted glasses, you will see it as this or as that. So we shall have to properly explain that this letter changes absolutely nothing of our position."

As to its contents, the following month Fr. Pfluger revealed one paragraph which, it was reported, stated something to the effect that the Council must be viewed in the light of Tradition, which in turn must be viewed in the light of the Council. There were those who refused to believe such a thing could be possible and put it down to hearsay.

By February 2013 the one year anniversary of the Doctrinal Declaration was fast approaching and still the priests and faithful were none the wiser as to what it contained. At that point a letter was sent by Fr. Thouvenot, the SSPX Secretary General in Menzingen, to all SSPX priests stating that some wicked priests were planning to leak the Doctrinal Declaration, and hence Menzingen (in an attempt to take the wind out of their sails, and because they could no longer prevent it from becoming public anyway) had decided to publish it in the next Cor Unum, for the benefit of SSPX priests. The following month, March 2013, the Doctrinal Declaration was indeed published in Cor

Unum by Menzingen, but only after it had already appeared on various resistance websites. Its contents made clear why it had been kept secret for as long as possible. We might well wonder how long it would have remained secret had it not been leaked.

Contents

We will deal with the paragraphs in the order in which they appear.

Paragraph I

“We promise to be always faithful to the Catholic Church and to the Roman Pontiff, the Supreme Pastor, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Peter, and head of the body of bishops.”

It might be objected that the SSPX has always been faithful to the Catholic Church and Roman Pontiff, and that to promise to do something in the future might imply that we were not doing so all along already. Furthermore, the distinction between conciliar church and Catholic Church (or “Eternal Rome” and “neo-modernist Rome” of Archbishop Lefebvre’s 1974 declaration) is conspicuous by its absence, leaving the phrase “Catholic Church” open to dangerous ambiguity, given that each side is known to understand it to mean something different. That said, in itself there is nothing actually erroneous or doctrinally unsound in this statement, even if it ought arguably to have been made in a clearer, less ambiguous language.

Paragraph II

“We declare that we accept the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church in the substance of Faith and Morals, adhering to each doctrinal affirmation in the required degree, according to the doctrine contained in No.25 of the dogmatic constitution Lumen Gentium of the Second Vatican Council.(1)”

Footnote (1) - Cf. the new formula for the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity for assuming a charge exercised in the name of the Church, 1989; cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 749,750, §2; 752; CCEO canon 597; 598, 1 & 2; 599.

As noted above with the phrase “Catholic Church,” there is likewise a dangerous ambiguity present in the phrase “Magisterium of the Church”, since we know that the writings and judgements of the modern Popes (John Paul II’s opposition to the death penalty, for example, or the new Code of Canon law’s permission for non Catholics to receive the sacraments) are understood to be “the Magisterium of the Church” by the modern conciliar churchmen.

But far worse than mere ambiguity, dangerous though that is, is this paragraph's acceptance of *Lumen Gentium* 25 by Bishop Fellay on behalf of the SSPX. It is the first breach in the wall, so to speak, because one cannot reject *Lumen Gentium* if one accepts one of its paragraphs and makes it the basis for one's own declaration of doctrine. Likewise, one cannot maintain an uncompromising rejection of Vatican II if one has accepted one of Vatican II's documents and claimed it as a source for one's own doctrine. This is not the only part of *Lumen Gentium* (or indeed of Vatican II) which the Doctrinal Declaration explicitly accepts, as we shall see, but even if it were, then this paragraph alone would still suffice to destroy any stance of rejecting Vatican II outright.

Amongst other things, *Lumen Gentium* is the document which states that the "*Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church*", that the Muslims "*together with us adore the one and merciful God*", that the Holy Ghost gives his gifts to, and is operative among, those in non-Catholic sects outside the Church (Protestants and others), that those same sects are joined to us "*in some real way*" in the Holy Ghost; and that "*many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside*" the Catholic Church.

Lumen Gentium 25 in particular seems to suggest an equivalence between papal infallibility and the authority of a local bishop (it is phrased in a way that tends to be more suggestive than explicit). It states that the faithful are to submit to the teaching of a local bishop with "religious submission of mind and will". (Just think for a moment what the implications of that would be!)

The footnote attached to this part of the Doctrinal Declaration signifies the SSPX's acceptance of the new Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, composed by Cardinal Ratzinger in 1989, and was published with an introduction (available on the Vatican website in Italian, though not, interestingly enough, in English!) which states explicitly that its purpose was to take previous oaths and bring them into line with the Council.

As soon as it appeared, this very same Oath of Fidelity was condemned in the very strongest terms by Archbishop Lefebvre:

"What it means in practice is lining up on what the bishops of the world today think. In the preamble, besides, it is clearly indicated that this third section has been added because of the spirit of the Council. It refers to the Council and the so-called Magisterium of today, which, of course, is the Magisterium of the followers of the Council.

...

As it stands this formula is dangerous. It demonstrates clearly the spirit of these people with whom it is impossible to come to an agreement. It is absolutely ridiculous and false, as certain people have done, to present this Oath of Fidelity as a renewal of the Anti-Modernist Oath suppressed in the wake of the Council. All the poison is in this third section which seems to have been made expressly in order to oblige those who have rallied to Rome to sign this profession of Faith and to state their full agreement with the bishops.

...

No, I am not exaggerating. It is clearly expressed in the introduction. It is sheer trickery. One may ask oneself if in Rome they didn't mean in this way to correct the text of the [1988] protocol. Although that protocol is not satisfactory to us, it still seems too much in our favour in Article III, because it does not sufficiently express the need to submit to the Council.

...

And so, I think now they are regaining lost ground. They are no doubt going to have these texts signed by the seminarians of the Fraternity of St. Peter before their ordination and by the priests of the Fraternity, who will then find themselves in the obligation of making an official act of joining the Conciliar Church.”

(“One Year After The Consecrations”, *Fideliter*, 1989; See also: [\[url\]www.therecusant.com/sheer-trickery](http://www.therecusant.com/sheer-trickery))

Finally, we note that the footnote also cites various canons from the new code of canon law, and is thus the first signal of the SSPX's acceptance of that New Code (1983) over the old (1917) code.

Paragraph III, 1.

“We declare that we accept the doctrine regarding the Roman Pontiff and regarding the college of bishops, with the Pope as its head, which is taught by the dogmatic constitution Pastor Aeternus of Vatican I and by the Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium of Vatican II, chapter 3 (de constitutione hierarchica Ecclesiae et in specie de episcopatu), explained and interpreted by the nota explicativa praevia in this same chapter.”

The two sources cited here as being “acceptable” to the SSPX (“we”) are in fact rather different from one another. *Pastor Aeternus* from the First Vatican Council would have done fine on its own, but since Bishop Fellay says that “we” also accept *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 3, it is as well acquaint ourselves a little better with what that text says. *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 3 comprises Paragraphs 18 – 29 and is infamous for being more contradictory to *Pastor Aeternus* than supportive of it. It is where the modern conciliar phenomenon of so-called “collegiality” first raised its ugly head (paragraph 22). Whereas Archbishop Lefebvre and the SSPX of the past opposed collegiality, in this paragraph Bishop Fellay says explicitly that “we” accept it. Notice that even the paragraph's first sentence begins by talking about: “the doctrine...regarding the college of bishops.”

So quasi-heretical was this part of *Lumen Gentium* that Paul VI himself had to have an explanatory note inserted into the final draft to the effect that the authority of the “college” of bishops is not equal to that of the Pope and cannot be used against him. This is the “*nota explicativa*” to which Bishop Fellay refers. That such a thing should have been thought necessary by even Paul VI ought to give us some sort of an idea as to the (un)orthodoxy of the rest of the document!

As it happens, *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 3 also calls for priests to act as quasi social workers in helping to bring in the New World Order:

“Because the human race today is joining more and more into a civic, economic and social unity, it is that much the more necessary that priests ... wipe out every kind of separateness.”

Note, priests are to spend their time not just eradicating doctrinal “separateness” (as in, converting souls to the true doctrine of Christ’s Church) but every kind of difference, especially those which occur in the pursuit of “civic, economic and social unity.”

Paragraph III, 2.

“We recognise the authority of the Magisterium to which alone is given the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, in written form or handed down (2) in fidelity to Tradition, recalling that ‘the Holy Ghost was not promised to the successors of Peter in order for them to make known, through revelation, a new doctrine, but so that with His assistance they may keep in a holy and expressly faithful manner the revelation transmitted by the Apostles, that is to say, the Faith.’(3)”

Footnote (2) - Cf. Pius XII, *Humani Generis* encyclical.

Footnote (3) - Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution, *Pastor Aeternus*, Dz. 3070.

Bishop Fellay would later claim that this paragraph, with its quote from *Pastor Aeternus* about not making known a new doctrine, is what saves the rest of the document from error or compromise. Quite apart from the implicit admission (that other parts of the document are unsound) entailed by such a claim, the claim itself is simply untrue. Firstly, it is the number of lies told, not the number of truths told, which determines a man’s (or a document’s) truthfulness. Secondly, stating that the Holy Ghost was promised to the successors of Peter so that they could pass on Tradition faithfully, while true, in no way automatically saves one from acceptance of novelty. Many modern Catholics, for example, who accept some forms of modernism might easily agree with the above quote from *Pastor Aeternus* and see no contradiction in their so doing. They would claim that they too accept only what is in line with Tradition - they just happen to regard *Lumen Gentium*, the new Code of Canon Law, the New Mass (or whatever else) as being in line with Tradition.

Paragraph III, 3.

“Tradition is the living transmission of revelation “usque ad nos”(4) and the Church in its doctrine, in its life and in its liturgy perpetuates and transmits to all generations what this is and what She believes. Tradition progresses in the Church

with the assistance of the Holy Ghost(5), not as a contrary novelty(6), but through a better understanding of the Deposit of the Faith(7)."

Footnote (4) - Council of Trent, Dz. 1501: *"All saving truth and rules of conduct (Matt. 16:15) are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves,[3] the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand."*

Footnote (5) - Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 8 & 9, Denz. 4209-4210.

Footnote (6) - Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, Dz. 3020: *"Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding "Therefore [...] let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding." [Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, 23, 3]."*

Footnote (7) - Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, Dz. 3011; Anti-modernist Oath, no. 4; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis*, Dz 3886; Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10, Dz. 4213.

Of the four footnotes cited in this section, numbers 4 and 6 are unobjectionable - the other two are not! The second footnote indicates that the statement: *"Tradition progresses within the Church"* is a quote or paraphrase from another Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*. It sounds harmless enough at first, but the more one pauses to consider it, the more modernist and heterodox it sounds. *"Tradition progresses in the Church"*? The original text of *Dei Verbum* 8 makes clear that this *"progression"* involves the laity coming to a better understanding through *"contemplation and study"* and through *"the spiritual realities which they experience"* (whatever that means!)

Finally, it need hardly be said that, once again, *"we"* have given *"our"* assent to another document of Vatican II, one shot-through with errors, heresies or, at best, modernist-sounding ambiguities. And that since we have made part of that document the basis of our profession of doctrine, we can hardly then go on to totally reject that same document.

Paragraph III, 4.

"The entire tradition of Catholic Faith must be the criterion and guide in understanding the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which, in turn, enlightens - in other words deepens and subsequently makes explicit - certain aspects of the life and doctrine of the Church implicitly present within itself or not yet conceptually formulated(8)."

Footnote (8) For example, like the teaching on the sacraments and the episcopacy in *Lumen Gentium*, no. 21.

This is the infamous paragraph which Fr. Pfluger let slip in 2012, a few months after the signing of this document. The idea that *"the Second Vatican Council... enlightens"* anything at all is, to put it charitably, highly problematic. This

one sentence destroys any and all opposition to the Council, and thus it destroys the very purpose of existence for the SSPX and justification for its apostolate. Fr. Pfluger appears not to see that, however. Nor does Bishop Fellay, who signed his name to it in his official capacity as Superior General of the SSPX, on behalf of the SSPX, making this the official position of the SSPX.

Paragraph III, 5.

“The affirmations of the Second Vatican Council and of the later Pontifical Magisterium relating to the relationship between the Church and the non-Catholic Christian confessions, as well as the social duty of religion and the right to religious liberty, whose formulation is with difficulty reconcilable with prior doctrinal affirmations from the Magisterium, must be understood in the light of the whole, uninterrupted Tradition, in a manner coherent with the truths previously taught by the Magisterium of the Church, without accepting any interpretation of these affirmations whatsoever that would expose Catholic doctrine to opposition or rupture with Tradition and with this Magisterium.”

This paragraph, at one fell swoop, accepts explicitly the “social gospel”/“liberation theology” nonsense, religious liberty and ecumenism as being reconcilable with Catholic teaching. It talks about “the truths previously taught by the Magisterium of the Church” instead of simply saying “Catholic teaching” (why?) and – perhaps most importantly – it says that there cannot be any “rupture” between Catholic Tradition and the modern conciliar teachings, which it refers to either as “Catholic doctrine” or “this Magisterium” (see if you can work out which it is!). This is classic Benedict XVI/Cardinal Ratzinger theology, the idea being that what came before the council and what came after have to be understood as being part of one, uninterrupted Tradition. If it turned out that the council contradicted Catholic teaching, you see, then a lot of important people would have some serious problems of conscience to face. So we resolve things by claiming, through a sophism and a suspension of reason, that the contradiction between pre- and post-conciliar is only apparent and not real. This is precisely what is meant by the “hermeneutic of continuity” - a dishonest rhetoric designed to mask a contradiction and to pretend that there is continuity when in fact there is none. Needless to say, this involves the mixing of truth and error (the result of which can only ever be new error!), and the jettisoning of objective truth, not least the principle of non-contradiction.

Finally, by talking about Catholic teaching in terms of what “interpretation” one might make or accept, the paragraph does tend to relativise and trivialise Catholic teaching by implying, whether consciously or otherwise, that it is all a matter of interpretation anyway.

Paragraph III, 6.

“That is why it is legitimate to promote through legitimate discussion the study and theological explanations of the expressions and formulations of Vatican II and of the Magisterium which followed it, in the case where they don't appear reconcilable with the previous Magisterium of the Church(9).”

Footnote (9) - There is a parallel in history in the *Decree for the Armenians* of the Council of Florence, where the porrection of the instruments was indicated as the matter of the sacrament of Order. Nevertheless theologians legitimately discussed, even after this decree, the accuracy of such an assertion. Pope Pius XII finally resolved the issue in another way.

Following on from the previous talk of not allowing an appearance of rupture between post- and pre-conciliar, this paragraph posits the solution. We just need to “dialogue” more. The purpose of “theological discussions” is to explain how Vatican II is really traditional after all. Notice also that the phrase: “in the case where they don’t appear reconcilable” implies that any contradiction is a matter of appearances.

Paragraph III, 7.

“We declare that we recognise the validity of the sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments celebrated with the intention to do what the Church does according to the rites indicated in the typical editions of the Roman Missal and the Sacramentary Rituals legitimately promulgated by Popes Paul VI and John-Paul II.”

With this paragraph Bishop Fellay declares that the SSPX accepts the legitimacy of the New Mass and other New Sacraments. Some, notably Fr. Daniel Themann, have tried to claim that it means only that the Pope has authority to promulgate, that the authority promulgating the New Mass is what is legitimate, and not the new Mass itself. But the text clearly says that the New Mass was “*legitimately promulgated*.” If I say that I am “legitimately married” it means that my marriage is legitimate and not merely that I have the authority or power to get married should I so choose.

The 1988 protocol given to Archbishop Lefebvre to sign shortly before the consecrations, contains a paragraph which says exactly the same, word for word, no more or less, with one difference: the word “*legitimately*” is missing. Why bother to add that one word, and given that it was deliberately added, how can anyone claim afterwards that that one word does not really signify? It is an exercise in obfuscation. At Lille in 1976, Archbishop Lefebvre condemned the New Mass as a “*rite bâtard*” (“*bastard rite*” or “*illegitimate rite*”). If on the other hand the new Mass was legitimately promulgated then its promulgation was legitimate, making it a legitimate rite of the Church. This would mean that we cannot refuse to attend it on principle.

Paragraph III, 8.

“In following the guidelines laid out above (III,5), as well as Canon 21 of the Code of Canon Law, we promise to respect the common discipline of the Church and the ecclesiastical laws, especially those which are contained in the Code of Canon Law promulgated by John-Paul II (1983) and in the Code of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches promulgated by the same pontiff (1990), without prejudice to the discipline of the Society of Saint Pius X, by a special law.”

Not only do we accept the New Code of Canon Law, we promise to respect it, which in context must mean to abide by it. This would include, presumably, respecting the law which allows the giving of the sacraments to non-Catholics,

and the law which reverses the ends of marriage. And even if we make sure that we in the SSPX are “*special*”, at the very least this would still mean that we are happy to watch the rest of the Church live by this new conciliar Code of Canon law, since we have our little side altar in the cathedral of pluralism. This will, of course, all be done “*following the guidelines laid out*” in paragraph III,5 - in other words, it will be done according to the idea that there can by definition be no contradiction between old and new, Catholic and modernist, and that wherever a contradiction presents itself, we side with the new, with the modernist, and tell ourselves that it is not modernist but Catholic after all.

Summary

Bishop Fellay, in the name of the SSPX, formally and officially, first in secret and then in public, accepts the documents of Vatican II, Collegiality, Ecumenism, Religious Liberty, the legitimacy of the New Mass and the New Code of Canon Law. He accepts that those things can be reconciled to Tradition, and that where they do not appear to be reconcilable, the solution is “discussions and study” to show that they are after all reconcilable.

Conclusion

The title of this document tells us a lot. “Doctrinal Declaration”. Its purpose is to declare doctrine. This is the doctrine which it declares. Bishop Fellay himself, through his actions (which speak louder than words!) has shown that he knew from the start that this would be unacceptable to a great many priests and faithful in 2012. That is why he kept it a secret for as long as possible (does it make any sense to have a “secret doctrine”? Has anyone but the Secret Societies ever taught a doctrine in secret?)

God blessed the SSPX only due to its fidelity to Tradition and its refusal to compromise with Vatican II. If we see now a loss of unity, of purpose, of holiness and of fruitfulness in the apostolates of the SSPX, this must surely be because that fidelity to Tradition is gone, and therefore God’s blessing is gone too. If God is Truth, then a denial of Catholic truth means separating ourselves from Almighty God. This is why the Holy Ghost is no longer making use of the Society which denied Him by denying His truth. Bishop Freppel’s words have come home to roost in the SSPX – it survived incompetence, immorality, bad priests, bad examples and bad decisions. It cannot and will not recover from its abandonment and diminution of the truth.

Practical Consequences

Catholics wishing to support Tradition need to realise that Tradition and the Council are simply incompatible. Vatican II is toxic: everything it touches, within a short time, withers and dies on the vine. It reduced the church of the 1950s and 1960s to her present state in little more than a generation. If we support Vatican II or give our approval to it in any way, then we cannot claim to be supporting Tradition, since the two are incompatible. If we are to totally and not just partially or symbolically support Tradition, then we must totally and not just partially or symbolically reject Vatican II.

This, far above any considerations of “validity”, “novus ordo hosts in the tabernacle” or “dubious sermons” is the real reason why Traditional Catholics knew that they ought to avoid the “approved” Masses of such groups as the Society of St. Peter, which accept Vatican II and which offer a “pre-conciliar taste” within a conciliar framework. For that very same reason, we ought to avoid the Society of St. Pius X. We want nothing to do with the council, therefore we will have nothing to do with the Society of St. Pius X which has accepted it. The sacrament of confession is something more personal, but the Mass is a public act of worship on behalf of the Church, and we cannot assist at the public act of worship offered by priests who officially accept the Council.

A public departure from, diminution of or undermining of the Faith requires a public response. Every priest of the Society of St. Pius X has a duty to make public where he stands in relation to this grave insult to Our Lord. It was written and handed over in his name: it is up to him to tell the world that this is not the case, to confess Our Lord “before men”. We are well aware that there are many priests remaining in the SSPX who privately disagree with the Doctrinal Declaration, but our confession of the Faith has to be public, not private, especially (as Cardinal Pie says) when the truth is attacked.

Archbishop Lefebvre gave the faithful Catholic Tradition, and the faithful were justified in more or less assuming that the priests united with him taught the same. Bishop Fellay’s Doctrinal Declaration is another doctrine than that which we received from him. To those who say that we err, that we go too far, we reply that we prefer to err on the side of being too zealous on behalf of Tradition, of opposing Vatican II and its novel doctrine too strongly, than the alternative. Our Lord warns us against being lukewarm, and experience teaches us to beware above all a slow, subtle danger to our faith.

In the meantime, whilst we await the ministrations of the far smaller number of priests who have declared themselves against this new doctrine, Almighty God will surely reward our sacrifices which are made out of love for Him and fidelity to Catholic Tradition.

St. Pius X, pray for us!

[url=<http://redirect.viglink.com?key=71fe2139a887ad501313cd8cce3053c5&subId=6872759&u=http%3A//www.therecasant.com/sspx-new-doctrine>]

