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# How should Catholics respond to the present crisis in the Church?

By Fr. Peter Scott

Originally featured in the April 2003 issue of *The Angelus* magazine

Related article: **[Is it possible to say that the post-conciliar Church is a new religion, and if so, how can it be considered as Catholic?](#)**

## I. The problem

It is now nearly 40 years since traditional Catholics, overwhelmed by the continual degradation of the state of the Church, have been troubled in conscience as to what they ought to do. Ought I to conform exteriorly, while of course refusing to accept the heresies? This is the position of those who elect to stay in their *Novus Ordo* parishes or attend the Indult Mass. Then there is the other excess, the position of the sedevacantists, who maintain that they are the only Catholics left and send everybody else, laymen, priests, bishops, pope into hell. Another position is that of those who give up out of discouragement, on account of the apparent hopelessness of the situation. They will stay at home, recite their rosary, attend Mass if and when they can easily do so. They want to keep their Faith, and save their souls, but in a private way. They refuse to get involved in the conflicts brought about by this terrible crisis. They will not, as they call it, take sides. They consider that they are not responsible for this terrible crisis in the Church, and that consequently there is nothing that they can do to fix it.

There is, however, a fourth possible attitude to embrace, a more profound approach to the crisis, one based upon the Catechism. It can, however, only be understood inasmuch as one grasps the real and essential nature of the crisis. We must consequently identify, amongst the myriad of different manifestations of modernism in the post-conciliar Church, the fundamental, driving, doctrinal error, most opposed to the catechism. It is not Communion in the hand, the refusal of the propitiatory sacrifice in the New Mass, or the abuses that we are so familiar with. It is not even dialogue with Protestants, the refusal to stand up for Catholic truth, or to take a firm position for marriage and against contraception and abortion. It is not New Age, feminism, or the replacement of Christ's teaching with the social justice gospel of a better world—liberation theology as it is called. There is a more profound error that constitutes the underlying theology that penetrates all of these deviations and many more, a modernist perversion of Catholicism which has inspired the entire post-conciliar revolution. It is a new

theology of the Church, or the new "Ecclesiology," according to the word that has been coined to identify it.

It was, in fact, Pope John Paul II who recognized the centrality of the new theology of the Church in all the changes that have come about in the past 40 years. He states it very explicitly in the apostolic constitution that he wrote to introduce the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, on January 25, 1983. He there states that "*the new Code can be conceived as a great effort to transfer into canonical language this doctrine itself [i.e., proposed by Vatican II], namely conciliar Ecclesiology.*" He goes on to state that "*the fundamental reason for the novelty which...is found in the Second Vatican Council, especially with respect to its ecclesiological teachings, is also the reason for the novelty contained in the new Code*" (Ib). It must be remembered that the laws contained in the Code of Canon Law are the practical guide for Catholics in living their Faith, and that any "novelty" contained therein must be of the greatest importance for them. Consequently, we will only understand the crisis in the Church, and what we ought to do about it, if we first understand how this new theology differs from the traditional understanding of the Church.

## **II. The traditional notion of the Church**

We have all learnt the definition of the Church contained in our catechisms:

The Catholic Church is the congregation of the faithful who have received the sacrament of baptism and who share the same Faith, the same sacraments, the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and submission to the Sovereign Pontiff.

The conditions for belonging to the Church are explicitly laid out, so that it is clear that if a person lacks one of them, then he is not a member of the visible body of the Church, and that if it is knowningly and willingly that he refuses one of these aspects of the Church, that is with pertinacity, then it is impossible for him to save his soul. This is the case for a heretic who refuses to accept a doctrine of Faith, or a schismatic who refuses to accept the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. Either one is automatically cut off from the body of the Church; he is separated from the Communion of the Church, and is excommunicated.

However, the traditional teaching concerning the Church is not limited to an empty, visible shell. The Church, as the mystical body of Christ, is much more than this. For having the Holy Ghost as its soul, the infusion of supernatural grace as its purpose, the sanctification of souls through the Mass and the sacraments as its means, it is very much alive with an interior life, communicated to the members from its invisible head, Our Divine Savior Himself.

This divine life is of course inseparable from the visible, hierarchical structure, through which it is given, and yet it infinitely surpasses it. Pope Leo XIII explained this in his encyclical on the Unity of the Church, *Satis Cognitum*, when he stated:

For the end for which the Church exists is as much higher than the end of other societies as divine grace is above nature, as immortal blessings are above the transitory things of the earth. Therefore the

Church is a society divine in its origin, supernatural in its end and in the means proximately adapted to the attainment of that end; but it is a human community inasmuch as it is composed of men.

Here lies the mystery of how the Church, all too human in the visible members that make up its hierarchy, up to and including its visible head, Christ's Vicar, nevertheless continues to communicate grace from the invisible head, Our Divine Savior Himself. It is for this reason, as Pope Pius XII explains in his encyclical on the Church, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, of 1943, that it is not just called a body, but the "*mystical*" body of Christ. For it

is not made up of merely moral and juridical elements and principles.... Although the juridical principles, on which the Church rests and is established, derive from the divine constitution given to it by Christ and contribute to the attaining of its supernatural end, nevertheless that which lifts the society of Christians far above the whole natural order is the spirit of our Redeemer who penetrates and fills every part of the Church's being and is active within it until the end of time as the source of every grace and every gift and every miraculous power. (§63)

To understand the mystery of the Church, we must consequently accept firstly its visible hierarchical structure, along with the infallibility, indefectibility, and authority that are necessary to the working of this divinely constituted structure, and secondly the supernatural life of Faith, Hope, and Charity which is the whole reason for this visible structure. The first is the intermediary, through the Magisterium, by which Christ teaches the truth, and through the sacraments, by which He infuses His grace.

### **III. The *modernist* notion of the Church**

The modernist crisis has managed to dissolve into an amorphous amalgam both the prerogatives of the exterior, visible hierarchy and its supernatural purpose. It does so by exploding the essential and necessary link that exists between the outward structure and the divine life. The post-conciliar novelty by which this link is broken is the error of collegiality, which is the foundation of the new ecclesiology, as John Paul II himself states in the above-mentioned apostolic constitution. He states, in effect, that it was the mark of collegiality that eminently distinguished the origin of the new Code, and that this mark is full in agreement with the Magisterium and nature of the Second Vatican Council, bearing its spirit. In order to establish this point the pope lists the chief novel teachings of Vatican II contained in the Code, namely that "*the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, is shown to be the People of God and its hierarchical constitution to be founded on the College of Bishops together with its head*" (*Ib*). This is effectively the definition of collegiality.

#### **Collegiality**

What, then, is collegiality? It is the application to the Church of the principles of liberal democracy, of the freemasonic principles of the French Revolution; namely, liberty, fraternity, and equality, and especially that of equality. It is the

overturning of the divinely established order by which God governs the Church and directs souls to heaven from the top down, namely from Christ Himself to the pope, bishops, and priests, each taking personal responsibility for passing on to others the deposit of the Faith received from the Church. This is henceforth replaced by the people, all of whom are equal and free in the exercise of their brotherhood. These principles are truly revolutionary, for they place mankind, humanity, the group, the mass of the people in the place of God. This is the divinization of man, humanism, according to which the spirit of God is henceforth supposedly manifested by the feelings, desires, sentiments of the majority.

This collegiality destroys all authority within the Church, and is directly responsible for the present disorder. The parish priest can no longer govern his parish, for he has to respect the wishes of the people, manifested through the parish council. Likewise the bishop can no longer govern his diocese, for he must accept the wishes of the priests, as expressed in his presbyteral council. He is likewise limited from above, since the episcopal conference has the moral authority of the majority to force individual bishops to comply. Likewise, Roman congregations can no longer act authoritatively, on account of the overwhelming moral weight of the episcopal conferences in the modernist scheme of things. It is in this way that Rome has still not succeeded in forcing the German bishops and priests to stop administering Holy Communion to persons who have been divorced and remarried, and to stop issuing the letters of consultation that are required by law for abortions to be carried out. Many other examples could be given.

### **Two supreme authorities**

However, the greatest and most perverse evil of collegiality is the paralysis in the pope's exercise of his own supreme authority that is contained in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*. It teaches, in fact, the silly contradiction that there are two supreme authorities in the Church, one being the pope himself, and the other being the college of bishops. It is true that it is mentioned that the college of bishops contains the pope as its head. However, the very fact that it is a different subject of authority gives it autonomy.

The order of bishops is the successor to the college of the apostles in their role as teachers and pastors, and in it the apostolic college is perpetuated...they have supreme and full authority over the universal Church....This college ... is the expression of the multifariousness and universality of the People of God (*LG* §22)

This is in direct contradiction to the constant teaching of the Church on papal primacy, according to which the pope alone has supreme authority over the entire Church, and is directly condemned by the following text from Leo XIII's encyclical *Satis Cognitum*:

It is opposed to the truth, and in evident contradiction with the divine constitution of the Church, to hold that while each bishop is individually bound to obey the authority of the Roman Pontiffs, taken collectively the bishops are not so bound.

The great tragedy of the present crisis is that the present pope holds to this

theory more than anyone else, inseparable as it is from his evolutionary concept of the Church as the People of God.

## **Consequences**

In the above-mentioned apostolic constitution the pope mentioned five elements of this new ecclesiology, that is, the new Collegiality, that he considers most essential, and which "*express the true and proper image of the Church.*" They express the five ways in which modernism is consistently attacking and destroying the Catholic Church from within, and which it is our duty to respond to. Let us consider each one of these in turn.

### **1) The teaching that the Church is to be considered as the People of God**

This vague, all-inclusive term has replaced the traditional concept of the Mystical Body of Christ, for it excludes no-one, emphasizes the democratic basis of all its activities, and is perfectly consistent with the new definition of the Church as a "*sacrament —a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men*" (LG §1) given by Vatican II. It is clearly much more extensive than simply the Roman Catholic Church, and expresses the belief that non-Catholics can be counted as God's people, as members of the Church understood as people of God, although they are not members of the Roman Catholic Church. This is explicitly stated in *Lumen Gentium* §8: "*This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church....Many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its visible confines*" and yet "*these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ.*"

The consequences of this theory are absolutely frightening, and they deny not only the visibility of the Catholic Church as a real society of men, but also its supernatural mission. What are these "*gifts*" that belong to the Church of Christ, but which are outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church? They are also the religious theories of every false religion, from Protestantism to Islam, and from Buddhism to Paganism. They are effectively placed on the same level as the Catholic Church's supernatural mission to teach the truth through its Magisterium, and to sanctify souls through the sacraments. Its truth is henceforth considered one amongst many, and its sacraments some amongst the many religious rites that exist.

As Fr. Calmel, O.P., pointed out in 1972 (*Les mystères du royaume de la grâce*, I, 122-123), there is a diabolical cunning in the underhanded attack on the Catholic Church's three-fold unique title to be the citadel of grace. This is the attack that is perpetrated by the title "*Populus Dei*," which undermines each of the Church's three titles to be a citadel of grace:

- That through its hierarchy it alone maintains divine Revelation intact and confers sacraments, configuring the faithful to Christ in His Passion;
- That through the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist it alone maintains the presence of Christ Himself, author and dispenser of all grace;
- That through the sacraments, it alone pours forth sanctifying grace into souls, becoming the dwelling place and temple of the Holy Ghost, for "*the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been*

*given to us" (Rm. 5:5).*

It is consequently the entire supernatural life of the Church, flowing forth from the sacrificial and hierarchical priesthood, which is practically (but not explicitly, of course) denied by this new concept of the people of God.

## **2) The proposal of hierarchical authority as a service**

Under the appearance of humility, this new conception overturns all order and authority, for the servant is not above his master. If authority can rightly be understood as a service to the common good, it is most assuredly not a servant to the individual members. To consider the hierarchy, its teachings, its discipline, and its authority as a servant of the people is to maintain that it is not obligatory, and that each one of us can choose to use this servant, or not to use it. Authority is henceforth considered as something human and terrestrial, whereas the whole function of the Church's hierarchy is to communicate that which is divine and supernatural, the life of grace through the sacraments, Mass and life of the Church.

The consequences in the modern Church are overwhelming. Everything that comes from the hierarchy, such as the rites of Mass and the sacraments, the laws of the Church, and everything that belongs to ecclesiastical law is treated as if it is not sacred, that it is changing, and that it has no permanent value. All Catholic customs, prayers, rites, and all sense of the sacred is in one fell swoop thrown out the window, since they are all the product of a hierarchy which is a service, and the strange paradox is that this has been done by the hierarchy itself, in the name of its new function of a service. It was by this means that the Mass was destroyed in the name of Vatican II, along with this definition of the Second Council of Nicea (787):

Those, therefore, who dare to...spurn according to wretched heresies the ecclesiastical traditions and to invent anything novel, or to reject anything from these things which have been consecrated by the Church...we order...to be excommunicated (Dz 304).

Consequently, all those bishops who refuse to allow the right for all priests to celebrate the traditional Mass, and who consequently spurn it, are thereby excommunicated as are also all those priests who refuse to allow their faithful to assist at it! They are the true schismatics.

## **3) The Church is proposed as a Communion**

A Communion is a sharing between two who are bound together. John Paul II points out that this sharing is to take place between the particular and the universal church, and between collegiality and primacy. Communion is between equals, and it is, consequently, manifestly obvious that this idea of Communion is a denial of authority.

Completely different is the Catholic concept of the Communion of the Saints, for all are joined through sanctifying grace in their common submission to the Head of the Mystical Body, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Different also is the traditional necessity of being in communion with the Catholic Church, that is, of sharing the

same Faith, sacraments, Mass and submission to the Sovereign Pontiff. For, traditionally, the refusal of any one of these results in the break of communion or excommunication, and a Catholic is either fully in communion or not in communion. There can be no degrees.

Not so in the modern Church, that officially admits varying degrees of communion, or partial communion, which exists in those "separated churches" that "have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation," that are "means of salvation" and whose members are "in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church" (Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §2). The consequence of this is that the Catholic Church is considered as an inner circle in the wider concept of "church" in which it subsists. The further one goes from the center of unity, via a series of widening concentric circles, the less is the "communion," but nevertheless all these religious groupings are in some way "related" to the Catholic Church, in some way a part of the whole idea of church. Such a perspective is certainly a practical denial of the doctrine "*Outside the Church, no salvation.*"

#### **4) All the members of the Church share in their own way in Christ's three fold function as priest, prophet, and king**

There is a certain truth in this statement, inasmuch as every Catholic in virtue of his baptism, is one with Christ, offering the Mass from the pew, accepting divine truth and contributing to His kingship. Nevertheless, it is radically false to obscure in such a manner the real distinction that exists between the function of the hierarchical priesthood and the laity. This is but a renewal of the Protestant theory, that denied that Christ really established through His Apostles a priesthood which was to act in his own place (*in persona Christi*) to continue His own mission of sacrifice, by the unbloody renewal of the mystery of the Cross, of teaching and of governing in the Mystical Body. Ultimately this ends up in the denial of the role of the visible priesthood, which is reduced to the role of a pure presidency, as in the New Mass.

#### **5) The obligation of practicing ecumenism**

Although the most obvious and most perverse consequence of the new ecclesiology, as seen in the meetings of religions in Assisi presided over by the Pope in 1985 and 2001, it is not the principle, but the last consequence of this new theology of the Church. Religions cannot share experiences on an equal basis, nor can they pray together or even side by side, unless they have an equal title to the Truth. This is the most profound denial of the unicity of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Pope John Paul II attempts to make this perversion obligatory. He commands that "*zeal be had for ecumenism.*" It does not take a great deal of insight to see that it is not in function of his Papal primacy to teach Faith and Morals and to direct souls to heaven that he gives such an order, but in virtue of his own personal, false, liberal philosophy, and that such an order can hold no obligation whatsoever.

### **IV. Our response**

It is after this brief summary of the new ecclesiology that the faithful Catholic can form a clear idea of his duties in the present crisis in the Church. Clearly his first duty, and one that is the basis of all his other duties, is to love the Church, to appreciate, defend, and cherish the supernatural mystery of the Church, as contained in divine revelation. For if it is the Church who alone can engender us by divine grace, how great must be our filial debt of gratitude towards her.

### **Spirit of the Church**

Archbishop Lefebvre understood this in a special way, and it is to his appreciation of the true mystery of the Church that we owe the Society of St. Pius X as he founded it. In the February 1981 issue of *Cor Unum* he pointed out that we have to deal with *"the unjust and wild struggle undertaken by those who try to corrupt the source of sanctification of the Church,"* and that consequently *"our society is implanted on the stem of the Church and draws its vigor and sanctification in the authentic tradition of the Church and in the living and pure sources of its holiness."*

In the month of June of that same year the Archbishop pointed out that

...the spirit of the Society being above all the spirit of the Church...we will discover what has governed the Church for twenty centuries, and we will understand the importance that she gives to the Sacrifice of Our Lord and consequently to the priesthood.

The love of the Church, animated by the Holy Ghost, and of its supernatural work of sanctification through the Mass and sacraments, must consequently be our first and fundamental response to the present crisis. It would be very easy to become disgusted, discouraged, and overwhelmed by a feeling of betrayal, all of which lead to the bitter zeal and spirit of contention condemned by St. James (3:14). Such is neither from God nor is it the truth. It is not the Church that has let us down, for she is *"holy and without blemish...not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"* (Eph. 5:27).

To the contrary it is the Church which is our only support, comfort and strength in these desolate times. It is consequently our love of the Church that will lead us to defend the mystery of the Cross, the interior life of grace, and the sacraments by which it is bestowed on and increased in our souls. Let us consequently avoid the temptation to become garrulous, hypercritical, bitter, condemnatory of everybody and everything. There is nothing supernatural about such an attitude, so characteristic of sedevacantists. It has neither the meekness of Christ nor the spirit of the Church.

### **Sanctity**

Furthermore, this love of the Church obliges us to seek our own personal sanctification and holiness, by which we live the life of the Church, and by which our Faith blossoms forth. Instead of resenting having to live in such a time of crisis and confusion in the Church, we ought to thank God for this very special grace, which is an additional and powerful motive to inspire us to sanctify ourselves, for we can see that in the modern world there is no intermediary, and otherwise we will lose everything. There can be no substitute for an

extraordinarily generous fidelity to our spiritual duties, our daily meditation and spiritual reading, and to attending additional traditional Masses and devotions whenever we can. All of these spiritual duties are contained in the rule of the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X.

Archbishop Lefebvre (*Cor Unum*, June 1982) also points out two virtues that are absolutely essential to us in this time of crisis, virtues that Our Divine Savior practiced perfectly on the Cross, and which are consequently inseparable from the life of the Church: complete abandonment to Divine Providence and humility. Our defense of the Church and our sanctification depend entirely on our practice of these virtues, flowing forth from our interior life. As the Archbishop concludes: "*Contemplation, obedience, and humility are all the elements of the same reality —the imitation of Jesus Christ and participation in His infinite love.*"

In this regard, there can be no substitute for the work of retreats, and especially the retreats of St. Ignatius. Nothing inspires us so powerfully to purify our souls, to put aside all our inordinate attachments, to reform our lives, to strive after holiness, to live the supernatural life of the Church in the world. It is through them that Our Lord's prayer is accomplished: "*I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth*" (Jn. 17:15-17). Go on retreat yourselves, go again, and bring and send others, even those who may not yet be traditional or even Catholic.

## **5 answers to the 5 errors of collegiality**

It is manifestly obvious that we cannot sanctify ourselves, without taking into account the real world in which we live, and the crisis of the new ecclesiology in which we find ourselves. We must consequently and necessarily make a positive response to each of the aspects of this collegial rethinking of the Church with which the modernists are presently challenging us. To be silent would be to approve, would be to eventually declare a truce with the diabolic destruction of the Church. This we cannot do, if we truly love the Church and desire to live her life entirely directed to heaven. We cannot, therefore, simply find a semi-private Indult Mass, and content ourselves with such a compromise, that necessarily involves the recognition of the legitimacy of the New Mass and of the post-conciliar revolution.

### **1) To the concept of the Church as the "People of God."**

In opposition to the naturalist concept of the Church as "*the people of God*," we must profess our faith in the supernatural mystery of the Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation. It is our duty to stand up against the indifference that is everywhere endemic, and to do all that we can to make converts. For this we must be well instructed in the discipline of apologetics, the explanation of why the Catholic Faith is the only true Faith. In this regard, there is no better tool than the study of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, full of supernatural motives and explanations as it is, and the study of which Archbishop Lefebvre made a part of the rule of the Third Order of the Society.

To the objection that it is hard to make converts to the Faith in these confusing

times, it must be responded that it has always been difficult, for it is a supernatural work. Grace can now work as it always has done, and a person who is inspired by grace to seek supernatural truth can see through the naturalism of the modernist Church as clearly as ever. We must not be apologetic for being traditional and Catholic, but have confidence in the truth. We cannot be faithful to the Church unless we are continually striving to convert our friends and acquaintances, and to communicate to them "*the unfathomable riches of Christ.*" If we give up trying to make converts, whether it be from modernism or Protestantism or even paganism, we will likewise become indifferent.

We must likewise continue to yearn to express our love for our divinely revealed Faith, for Our Lord truly present in the Blessed Eucharist, and for the Mass and the sacraments. A regular visit to the Blessed Sacrament, a communion offered up in reparation or for the conversion of a friend or relative, will consequently all be a part of our response. We will likewise continue to study our traditional catechism in detail that we might be able to give intelligent responses in defense of supernatural truth, and to uncover modernist heresies.

## **2) To the concept of the Magisterium as a service**

Our respect for the Church's Magisterium will be our response to the deformation of the hierarchy as a mere "service." In fact, the clarity of the Magisterium in condemning all the liberal and freemasonic errors over the past three centuries is the only sure basis for our combat. The love of authority, of docility and of submission must be in our hearts, and it must inspire us to study and become familiar with all the encyclicals of the pre-Vatican II popes, especially those that have since been contradicted, and especially those of the great anti-modernist patron that God has given us, St. Pius X. The prophetic nature of his writings (foreshadowing today's errors) is no less remarkable than his supernatural insight and his sense of the Church, which is why Archbishop Lefebvre included the reading of his works as a part of the rule of the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X.

This great respect for the Church's teaching authority does not just include the infallible Extraordinary and Ordinary Magisterium. It includes all the ecclesiastical laws, traditions, customs, rites and approved pious devotions and disciplinary laws that make up the life of the Church. This ought to include such things as Ember days, frequent reception of the sacrament of penance, observing the Church's laws to accept all the children God sends, to have large families and to give children the profoundly Catholic education that they have a right to through their baptism. These things are likewise in the Third Order rule of the Society of St. Pius X. We will not just attend the traditional Mass and sacraments, but defend them as the only ones that are really Catholic, the only ones that truly reflect the Church's authority, bound up as it is with the interior life that is the purpose of that authority.

Likewise we will clearly see through the typically liberal, authoritarian abuse of authority, separated from its true end, and we will avoid the myopic legalism of those who cannot see beyond the dead letter of laws that have been perverted to deprive so many souls of the supernatural life of grace. This refers not just to the New Mass and to the innovations in the administration of the sacraments (such as

ordinary "extraordinary" ministers of Holy Communion), but to such things as the shameless practice of Ecumenism and sacramental sharing with non-Catholics, permitted in the entirely invalid Canon 844 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. This is not to despise or put down the Church's authority, but, on the contrary, to understand its greatness. Let our discussions consequently be with respect to the principles of the crisis and its refutation. This is what will really tell us if our actions are permissible or not, and not whether some modernist bishop, or even the modernists in Rome, permit them or not.

### **3) To the concept of the Church as "Communion."**

To the modern concept of "Communion" we must oppose the traditional doctrine of the Communion of the Saints. It is with them that we must be united and their ideals that we must share, and not those of the world, with all its vain desires, false ideas and idolatrous religions: "*Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (I Jn. 2:15). St. James was even more explicit: "*Whoever wishes to be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God*" (4:4), as always was St. Paul: "*What fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what part has the believer with the unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?*" (II Cor. 6:14-16). We cannot be good friends with those who belong to the world, and who do not share our traditional convictions. Without a doubt, we must always be compassionate, understanding, patient, kind, and charitable towards people of the world, who do not share our Faith, that we might imitate Christ and win their souls. However, we cannot be good friends with those who do not have the Faith, for we cannot share with them the deep thoughts, feelings, and desires of our hearts. Any attempt to make friends of the world will inevitably end in indifference.

We must, however, love to read the lives of saints canonized because of the miracle of their heroic virtues, the New Testament and the *Imitation of Christ* that nourished their souls, and to keep away from the spirit of the world by abstaining from television (and unnecessary Internet use), unclean reading, and unseemly, expensive, worldly vacations and leisure activities. This is the simplicity of a God-centered life, and all of these recommendations are likewise contained in the Rule of the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X.

The importance of public support by the faithful of the traditional congregations united with the Society of St. Pius X, that are truly fighting for the true spirit of the Church, cannot be overestimated. An elite of laity, committed to fighting according to the same principles as ourselves, is indispensable. They have the opportunity of sharing in the merits of our congregation, participating in its special grace of fighting for the priesthood and the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and contributing greatly to our common unified effort. These are the advantages of joining the Society as a Third Order member.

### **4) To the concept that all the faithful are priests, prophets, and kings.**

In response to the confusion between the priesthood and the laity, according to which all alike would share Christ's threefold priestly function, we must demonstrate the true spirit of the hierarchical liturgy, each member of the mystical body taking his legitimate place. Archbishop Lefebvre pointed out that

this spirit of the liturgy is that of the Society of St. Pius X:

This great mystery (the Mass) is transmitted to us by the Church in the Liturgy, where, as a Mother, she strives to unveil the infinite riches of this mystery in the actions, words, chant and liturgical vestments, which are used according to the admirable liturgical cycle. The Society of St. Pius X, anxious to live this mystery, clings with zeal to the knowledge of the Liturgy and strives to realize it in all its beauty and splendor....The spirit of the Society is a liturgical spirit (*Cor Unum*, February 1982).

The response of the laity is not to try to be priests, but to be true laity and to play their own essential role in the life of the Church. It is to respect the great dignity of the priesthood, the priest being truly "*another Christ*." It is to no longer see a man in him, in his words, advice, sermons and recommendations, but Christ Himself. It is to pray for the sanctification and perseverance of priests, and for vocations, and to encourage and support young men desirous of giving themselves to God. It is also to love the ceremonies of Holy Mass, and to have the desire to play our part in them to the best of our ability. This can be by serving on the altar, or by singing the Gregorian chant, or by cleaning the church, or by sewing the vestments, or by building the church as glorious as we can, or simply by our prayerful and active assistance at the ceremonies, understanding their meaning and reflecting on their symbolism. There is something for each of us to do to promote the magnificence of the liturgy and the glory of Holy Mother Church through her public prayer.

Furthermore, all Catholics ought to do all that they can to promote and participate in the solemn ceremonies of the Church, such as High Masses and Vespers every Sunday if possible, processions of the Blessed Sacrament for Corpus Christi, Christ the King and other great feasts, processions in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, pilgrimages to holy places, 40 hours devotions and the like. They will also love and appreciate assisting at those parts of the Divine Office, the Church's official prayer, which are accessible to people living in the world. For the Society's Third Order members the rule points out that it is Prime and Compline that they are to assist at or recite if they can. All of the above has a profound impact on souls, and is necessary for a missionary society like ours. Archbishop Lefebvre included this liturgical spirit in the rule of the Third Order of the Society, which states that "*Liturgical life should be paramount on Sundays and feast days.*"

## **5) To the concept of ecumenism.**

In response to the perversion of Ecumenism, we must become ardent promoters of the public rights of Christ our Divine Savior, by devotion to the Sacred Heart, and in particular by the practice of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart as King of Love in Catholic families and homes, and even in those who are not as Catholic as they should be. It will bring an abundance of graces and conversions, when combined with the daily prayer and Rosary in family that is the chief obligation of this holy practice. We will also do all in our power to promote and defend the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, denied by secularism, the "*apostasy of society from God*," as it was accurately described by St. Pius X in his first

encyclical (*E Supremi*). All of this is also contained in the rule of the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X. The study of the Church's social teachings and of how to implement them in our chapels and communities, especially by the application of the principles of distributism will be the consequence. For many this is the most apparent and obvious form of Catholic Action. However, in point of fact it is but one of the many things that we can "do" and it necessarily presumes the preceding more spiritual activities.

In conclusion, the whole question of what lay people are to do in the present crisis in the Church was resolved by Archbishop Lefebvre back in 1980 when he founded the Third Order. The rule contains an answer for every aspect of the modernist revolution in the Church, and especially to every aspect of the new ecclesiology. It is the profoundly supernatural answer that flows from a true understanding of the mystery of the Church. If many generous Catholics would make the sacrifice to join the Third Order of the Society, they would not only have the means necessary for their sanctification, they would also contribute greatly to the work of the Society for the Church, according to the mind of the Church, to restore all things in Christ. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, raise up such an elite force of shock troops to support the Society's priests.

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