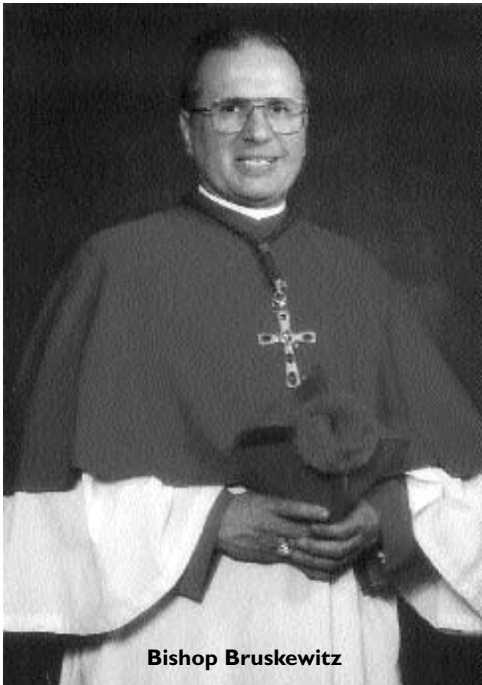


NEBRASKA

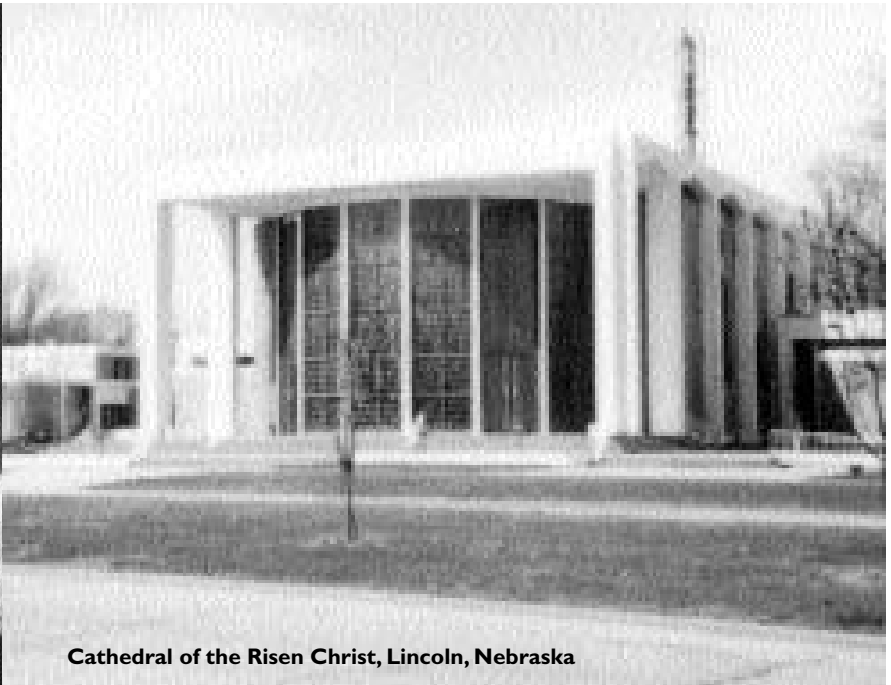
# RATZINGER DECREE DEFIED

*Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz warns of “excommunicating” traditional Catholics in the diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska.*

## Nebraska, are you listening to Hawaii?



Bishop Bruskewitz



Cathedral of the Risen Christ, Lincoln, Nebraska

Last month's announcement of Bishop Bruskewitz's threat to excommunicate members of certain groups has sent ripples through the Catholic media. The liberals are horrified that a bishop would dare condemn Freemasonic groups and those that refuse the Church's teachings on such important issues as the ordination of women, priestly celibacy, birth control and abortion. The bishop is right, the members of such groups are already heretics and apostates, and consequently automatically excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

However, the inclusion of those Catholics who are most fiercely orthodox, namely those who assist at the

Masses celebrated by the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X, has caused much consternation. What could possibly be the motivation for such a grave injustice? Attached is the text of Bishop Bruskewitz's threat, and the responses of the Society of Saint Pius X and of two of the faithful who assist at Mass at St. Michael the Archangel Chapel. The reader can judge for himself whether there is any objective basis for the inclusion of the faithful who assist at the Society's Masses. Over one month has passed, and no response has been forthcoming from Bishop Bruskewitz. Is this an admission of error, or that his malicious attack against the Society is indefensible?

# The Warning

## Extra Synodal Legislation

All Catholics in and of the Diocese of Lincoln are forbidden to be members of the organizations and groups listed below. Membership in these organizations or groups is always perilous to the Catholic Faith and most often is totally incompatible with the Catholic Faith.

**Planned Parenthood**  
**Society of Saint Pius X**  
**(Lefebvre Group)**  
**Hemlock Society**  
**Call to Action**  
**Call to Action Nebraska**  
**Saint Michael the Archangel**  
**Chapel**  
**Freemasons**  
**Job's Daughters**  
**DeMolay**  
**Eastern Star**  
**Rainbow Girls**  
**Catholics for a Free Choice**  
Any Catholics in and of the

Diocese of Lincoln who attain or retain membership in any of the above listed organizations or groups after April 15, 1996, are by that very fact (*ipso facto latae sententiae*) under interdict and are absolutely forbidden to receive Holy Communion. Contumacious persistence in such membership for one month following the interdict on part of any such Catholics will by that very fact (*ipso facto latae sententiae*) cause them to be excommunicated. Absolution from these ecclesial censures is "reserved to the Bishop." This notice, when published in the Southern Nebraska Register, is a formal canonical warning.

By mandate of the Most Reverend Bishop of Lincoln  
Reverend Monsignor Timothy Thorburn Chancellor  
March 19, 1996

**Southern Nebraska**  
**Register**

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ANGELUS  
May 1996



NEBRASKA

# The Response

## Society of Saint Pius X District of the United States of America REGINA COELI HOUSE

**Father Peter R. Scott**  
District Superior

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Kansas City, MO 64109  
(816) 753-0073  
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His Excellency Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz  
Diocese of Lincoln  
P.O. Box 80328  
Lincoln, NE 68501-0328

J.M.J.  
March 27, 1996

### **Your Excellency,**

I would first of all like to commend you for the formal canonical warning of interdict and excommunication against members of Planned Parenthood, Hemlock Society, Call to Action, Freemasons, and associated groups you mandated be published in the *Southern Nebraska Register* of March 22, 1996. I only wish that other US Bishops were so firm in their stand against such groups of apostates which are perilous to and incompatible with the Catholic Faith, as you correctly point out.

It is, however, with the greatest dismay and shock that the faithful also read on the same list the Society of Saint Pius X and Saint Michael the Archangel Chapel. Since I cannot imagine that you are ignorant of the mission of the Society of Saint Pius X and its chapel in Lincoln, St. Michael's, this can only be interpreted as a slander gravely offensive to the good name of the Society and of St. Michael's.

It is a secret to none that the Society and its chapel are entirely committed to the defense of Catholic orthodoxy, that is to the integrity of the Catholic Faith, and are entirely opposed to the liberal, modernist and protestant errors with which this Faith is presently being attacked within the very bosom of Holy Mother Church. In particular, it is public knowledge that we have consistently opposed the protestantized conception of the Mass vehiculed by the *Novus Ordo Missae*, the new ecumenism, religious liberty, collegiality, and adaptation to the spirit of the world that have sprung forth from Vatican II, and that instead we have taught the traditional doctrine of the Social Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is also public knowledge that in doing so we have always based ourselves upon the categorical and infallible statements of the preconciliar Popes, teaching unchanging defined Truth. I ask and demand of you to explain how this can be "*always perilous to the Catholic Faith and most often totally incompatible with the Catholic Faith*". To make such an assertion without any explanation is a grave injustice. If you cannot explain, you owe the Society a public apology in the *Southern Nebraska Register*, and the faithful of St. Michael's fully expect it.

Furthermore, I challenge you to go ahead with your threat and declare under interdict or excommunicated, either myself or the priests of the Society who celebrate Mass in Lincoln, or the faithful who attend our Masses. However, I suggest that you first seek legal advice, for such a mockery of justice will not be accepted. I recommend the following considerations.

1) Archbishop Lefebvre, supposedly declared excommunicated for schism in 1988, was never in fact excommunicated, for he never committed a schismatic act. This is the opinion of the majority of reputable canonists, notably Cardinal Lara (*La Repubblica* of October 7, 1988), Fr. Valdini, J.C.D. (*L'homme Nouveau*, Feb. 17, 1988), Count Neri Capponi, J.C.D. (*Latin Mass*, May-June 1993) and most recently Fr. Gerald Murray, who was awarded a doctorate by the Gregorian University for arguing this conclusion (*Latin Mass*, Fall 1995).

2) Even if Archbishop Lefebvre and the Bishops he consecrated had been excommunicated, it would not at all follow that the Society of Saint Pius X and its priests were excommunicated. What was our crime? In what way did we refuse the true teaching authority of the Church? In what way are we schismatic? If we have refused anything, it is the false freemasonic concept of the rights of man which is at the basis of modernistic religious liberty and ecumenism.

In a letter of July 6, 1988 all the priests of the Society who were superiors challenged Cardinal Gantin to include them also in the excommunication, arguing thus: *"To be publicly associated with this sanction which is inflicted upon the six Catholic Bishops, Defenders of the Faith in its integrity and wholeness, would be for us a mark of honor and a sign of orthodoxy before the faithful. They have indeed a strict right to know that the priests who serve them are not in communion with a counterfeit church, promoting evolution, pentecostalism and syncretism..."* Rome dared neither to respond nor to sanction them. I challenge you to issue and justify such a sanction. I challenge you to find any grounds for a valid excommunication of the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X. I challenge you to find in any of our statements or publications the denial of any defined doctrine of Catholic Faith or any evidence of refusal of submission to the legitimate authority of the Sovereign Pontiff in matters of Faith and morals.

3) Even if the priests who are members of the Society of Saint Pius X were in fact excommunicated, it is an entirely false assertion to affirm that the Catholic people who assist at the traditional Latin Mass that they celebrate are also excommunicated. This matter has already been decided by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger. I cannot believe that you pretend to overturn his ruling. You must not be unaware that on May 1, 1991 Bishop Ferrario attempted to excommunicate six faithful Catholics who attended the Masses of the Society of Saint Pius X in Hawaii, and that on June 28, 1993 Cardinal Ratzinger declared that *"the Decree of May 1, 1991, lacks foundation and hence validity"*, giving as his explanation that the assistance at the Masses of Society priests are not *"formally schismatic acts in the strict sense"*.

I challenge you to declare under interdict and excommunicated the faithful who assist at the Mass at St. Michael's Chapel in Lincoln. I remind you that the lay people are in no way members of the Society of Saint Pius X, which is a society of priests of common life without vows. Neither do St. Michael's or any of our churches have any formal members. All Catholics who are in good standing are welcome to receive the sacraments there. Moreover, it is not a small anomaly that in your formal canonical warning you cite no laws that they might have infringed. I can only presume that you are referring to Canon 1364, 1, affirming that by their association with the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X they have become in some way apostates, heretics or schismatics, and that they thereby incur a *latae sententiae* excommunication. I challenge you to prove this entirely gratuitous assertion or to make a public apology. What doctrine of the Faith have they denied? In what way have they refused legitimate submission to the Sovereign Pontiff or Communion with Catholics who are submissive to him (Canon 751)?

Nevertheless, I am certain that if you would attempt to excommunicate the priest members of the Society, the faithful who support us would not hesitate to ask you to include them in such a manifestly unjust and invalid censure, repeating with the priests of the Society: *"We have never wished to belong to this system which calls itself the conciliar church and defines itself with the Novus Ordo Missae, an ecumenism which leads to indifferentism and the laicization of all society. Yes, we have no part with the pantheon of the religions of Assisi; our own excommunication by a decree of Your (Excellency)...would only be the irrefutable proof of this. We ask for nothing better than to be declared out of communion with this adulterous spirit which has been blowing in the Church for the last twenty-five years..."* (taken from letter of July 6, 1988).

It is with the greatest respect for your episcopal office and for your duty to feed your flock with the one unadulterated divinely revealed Catholic Truth that I present this challenge to you. I must ask for a public apology, or for an excommunication and full explanation.

Yours faithfully in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

*Peter R. Scott*

**NO REPLY**

Father Peter R. Scott

CC: Apostolic Nuncio  
Cardinal Ratzinger

## The Precedent

**1. From the annulment of the 1988 Decree, concluded on the basis of the Law of the Church, it did not result that the facts referred to in the above-mentioned Decree are formal schismatic acts in the strict sense, as they do not constitute the offense of schism; and therefore the Congregation holds that the Decree of May 1, 1991 lacks foundation and hence validity.**

This is the excerpt from the June 28, 1993 letter written by US Apostolic Pro-Nuncio Msgr. Cacciavillan on behalf of Joseph Card. Ratzinger quoted by Fr. Peter Scott to Bishop Bruskewitz. It is an official declaration from Rome that those who follow and support the Society of Saint Pius X are neither schismatic nor excommunicated. It is a precedent invalidating the inclusion of the Society of Saint Pius X and St. Michael the Archangel Chapel in Bishop Bruskewitz's threat.

[A reprint of the correspondence from the "Hawaii 6" case, including the Ratzinger Decree, is available from Angelus Press for \$1.00 plus shipping and handling. Call for bulk order rates.]



# ne Challenge

His Excellency Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz  
Diocese of Lincoln  
P.O. Box 80328  
Lincoln, NE 68501-0328

Your Excellency,

I am a supporter of the Society of Saint Pius X and I live within the diocese of Lincoln. Although I highly commend you for your threat to excommunicate several apostate and heretical groups which are operating within the diocese, I must confess that I am very gravely offended by your inclusion of the Society of Saint Pius X within this list.

I am neither a member of the Society of Saint Pius X nor of any particular church. I am a Roman Catholic. That is why I take offense at your slanderous attack on the Society of Saint Pius X and its supporters. There are none who are more faithful in defending the integrity of the Faith against the modern errors and you pretend to affirm that the Society of Saint Pius X is "*perilous to the Catholic Faith*" and "*totally incompatible with the Catholic Faith*". These are entirely gratuitous assertions without any basis in fact. I challenge you to show one thing that they teach which is perilous or incompatible with the Catholic Faith.

I challenge you to find any canonical grounds whatsoever to declare me under interdict or excommunicated, because of my public support for the Society of Saint Pius X. There are none, for these faithful Catholic priests are neither in schism nor heresy, but have manifested a great zeal in attacking all the modern heresies. The scandal is that you have not invited them into the diocese, nor have you given them your formal seal of approval as Bishop. In this you have failed in your duty to use this opportunity to protect the Faith of your flock.

I remind you that this matter has already been decided by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger. I cannot believe that you pretend to overturn his ruling. You must not be unaware that on May 1, 1991 Bishop Ferrario attempted to excommunicate six faithful Catholics who attended the Masses of the Society of Saint Pius X in Hawaii, and that on June 28, 1993 Cardinal Ratzinger declared that "*the Decree of May 1, 1991, lacks foundation and hence validity*", giving as his explanation that the assistance at the Masses of Society priests are not "*formally schismatic acts in the strict sense*".

I urgently request you not to leave this matter in abeyance. Go ahead and excommunicate the priest members of the Society of Saint Pius X on legitimate canonical grounds and justify yourself, or make the public apology in the Southern Nebraska Register that you owe them. Moreover, I challenge you to declare me under interdict or excommunicated on account of my public support of the Society of Saint Pius X.

I want to be publicly associated with any sanction that you might attempt to level against the members of the Society of Saint Pius X. I want to thereby show my solidarity with these valiant defenders of the Catholic Faith. Go ahead and excommunicate me for being in entire agreement and communion with the Popes and Bishops before the Second Vatican Council, for assisting only at the traditional rite of Mass at which my ancestors in the Faith assisted, for learning and teaching the catechism that they taught, for standing up against the modern liberal errors which the Popes until Pius XII so consistently condemned. If you dare attempt such an invalid and unCatholic act, it will show on whose side the rupture really is.

Finally, let me emphasize that as a faithful Catholic of the Lincoln diocese, that I entirely support your legitimate exercise of authority to excommunicate the members of the other organizations listed, and that I will pray for your correct exercise of your episcopal authority.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**NO REPLY**

[Signed and sent by *Matthew Johnson* and *Vern Sima*, Catholics of the Lincoln, NE diocese.]