



Office of the Bishop

HIS EXCELLENCY RESPONDS

July 19, 1996

Reverend Peter R. Scott
District Superior
Society of Saint Pius X
Regina Coeli House
2918 Tracy Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64109

Reverend and dear Father:

This is a reply to your communication to me of May 15, 1996. Might I say how very happy I am to have learned that your non Catholic cult has ceased its operations in the Diocese of Lincoln. It is my prayer, of course, that this cessation will be permanent. This is particularly important because your sect had previously operated here under the fraudulent and dishonest advertisement of being "in full union with Rome". Fortunately, almost no Catholics were deceived by this dishonest tactic.

Among the many thousands of letters that I have received in recent months have been a significant number from former members of your non Catholic religion who have indicated their immense satisfaction at leaving the sect called the Society of St. Pius X, and becoming Catholics. They also frequently indicate the discord, internal division, and corruption that seems to mark your cult.

As you perhaps know, there is an aphorism in Catholic theology which says that all innovation begins under the pretext of the reaction. Your cult is an excellent example of this progression. In the name of what you call "tradition", you have evidently appointed yourself to determine that there is something called a "state of emergency" in the Catholic Church. This self-appointed designation then, entitles you to defy whichever laws of the Catholic Church it suits you to defy. In order to rationalize and justify this new doctrine of "state of emergency" it is necessary for you to spend a great deal of time pointing out errors and aberrations (both real and imagined) in the Catholic Church.

The diocesan legislation which was enacted in the Diocese of Lincoln was meant to deter Catholics in this Diocese from associating themselves with your non Catholic religion as well as with its local now defunct branch. There is no attempt in this legislation to "impose canonical sanctions" upon those who are non Catholics, including the members of your sect. The legislation is meant for Catholics who may have been deceived thinking membership in the Catholic Church is compatible with association with the Society of St. Pius X.

Your letter lists five incidents which you falsely claim have "caused grave scandal to the Catholics of the Lincoln Diocese". This manifestly absurd, false claim illustrates vividly to all the Catholics of Lincoln, your ignorance about this Diocese and its Catholics. Furthermore, the incidents, as you relate them in your letter, are serious misrepresentations of what really occurred. But then it appears your cult is given to "fabrications and deceptions" to use the words of Father Gerald Murray whom you have "intentionally misquoted" in one of your sect's pamphlets.

Since you not only do not have any authority over me, but are not even a member of the Catholic Church, I find it amusing that you should establish yourself as a judge, and determine that I have violated the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church. In appointing yourself as my judge, you, of course, are in violation of the very laws you pretend to uphold at the same time that you are in serious violation of the explicit teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Since you are not a Catholic nor a Catholic organization, it is obvious that I cannot prevent you from coming into the territory of the Diocese of Lincoln to preach what you mistakenly call the "truth", since there are a large variety of non Catholic denominations, sects, and cults like yours that are going about preaching various things in this Diocese. I am quite satisfied that the Catholics of this Diocese, including those you call "traditional Catholics" not only obey me, but have no regard for your sect and your cult, and pay no attention to it. It may be interesting for you to know, however, that my "ecumenical activity" has extended itself to some members of your non Catholic cult, and I have actually prayed with them, but I do not believe I was very contaminated by these prayers with the followers of your sect.

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concluded on p.5

I noticed that recently the Bishop of Rome had concelebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Ukrainian Rite. Does your new and peculiar doctrine of "state of emergency" extend to the other Rites of the Catholic Church, or is it confined to the Latin Rite? Also, how do you understand the sect called "Old Catholics" which has a "doctrine of the state of emergency" following the First Vatican Council? Why is your "state of emergency" a valid doctrine while theirs is not? The remnants and descendants of that sect also roam about the world proclaiming what they fancy to be "the truth". Why is their "truth" inferior to your "truth"?

In closing let me say how glad I am to learn that you see your need for a conversion. May it happen soon.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,



The Most Reverend Fabian W. Bruskewitz
Bishop of Lincoln

THE ADMISSION

Bishop Bruskewitz
concedes that real
"errors and aberrations"
exist in the Catholic Church

The dialogue continues between Bishop Bruskewitz of the Diocese of Lincoln (NE) and Fr. Peter Scott, US District Superior of the Society of Saint Pius X. Note that in the bishop's response (§3), His Excellency admits to real "errors and aberrations" in today's Catholic Church. Following this admission, however, he does not deny his five "ecumenical dealings" brought to his attention in Fr. Scott's last letter to him (May 15, 1996, reprinted in *The Angelus*, June 1996). In themselves, they are certainly scandalous when measured against the Magisterium, yet His Excellency only responds that they had not "caused grave scandal" in his diocese. Is there a crisis in the Church or not?

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

Father Peter R. Scott
District Superior

His Excellency Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz
Diocese of Lincoln
P.O. Box 80328
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Your Excellency,

I thank you for your letter of July 19 and for your willingness to continue our discussion concerning the status of the Society of Saint Pius X in your diocese. I would prefer it, however, if our dialogue could refrain from name-calling and mud-slinging and stick to the doctrinal and canonical issues at stake.

**FR. SCOTT
REPLIES**

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J.M.J.
August 16, 1996

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FR. SCOTT REPLIES

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Let me first remind you that you seem to be totally out of line with your brother bishops. If they were in agreement with your assertion that the faithful who assist at the Masses of the Society of Saint Pius X are “members of your non-Catholic religion” (as you say), which you also call a “cult” and a “sect”, they would surely not all embrace the same policy of allowing them to go to the sacraments at their “Indult” Masses, or provide them with marriages and funerals. To any logical person it would seem that the fact that none of our supporters has ever been asked to make a profession of Faith, or abjuration either of error or of attachment to a “sect” or “cult”, means that your brother bishops do not consider them as heretics, schismatics or cult members. It would follow that if these good faithful, who are in no way members of the Society of Saint Pius X, but who accept wholeheartedly our position with respect to the errors of the new Mass and Vatican II, are not schismatic or excommunicated, then neither are the priests of the Society.

At this stage, I would like to bring to your attention the independent assessment of one who cannot be accused of being a biased supporter of the Society of Saint Pius X. Michael Davies had this to say in *The Remnant* of July 31, 1996: *“Unfortunately he [Bishop Bruskewitz] included the Society of St. Pius X in his list, because, one must presume, he knows nothing of its canonical status. This has been pointed out to him, but, unfortunately, he is digging in his heels and refuses to admit that he has made a mistake. He is, if anything, becoming more and more adamant that he is correct, and is now going to the extent of denouncing Archbishop Lefebvre as ‘evil’. I hardly think that the Papal Nuncio to Switzerland and the Bishop of Sion would have gone to Ecône to pray beside the body of an evil man. Having met Archbishop Lefebvre on many occasions and having had long private conversations with him, lasting sometimes for hours, I can testify that he was the most saintly man that I have ever met, but this, of course, is a purely subjective impression and is not relevant to the question of whether Bishop Bruskewitz acted canonically in excommunicating the priests and lay supporters of the SSPX in his diocese. The answer is that he most certainly did not. Readers of The Latin Mass magazine will have read the feature article on Father Gerald Murray’s thesis submitted to the Gregorian University of Rome for his licentiate in Canon Law. This thesis was awarded the highest possible honor, summa cum laude.”*

“Its conclusion was that no priest or lay supporter of the SSPX can be considered schismatic simply for belonging to the SSPX or assisting at its chapels, and that the excommunication of the six bishops was probably not valid. I sent a series of detailed questions to an eminent English Canon Lawyer on the same subject, on the recommendation of the Apostolic Delegate to Britain, to whom I had originally addressed my questions. He stated that, as no penalty had been declared against any priest of the Society except the six bishops, they could not be considered to have incurred any penalty and were entitled to their good name. The faithful who assist at SSPX chapels and contribute to them financially do not incur any penalty, unless they do so with a schismatic intent. By a schismatic intent, he meant by believing that the only true Catholics are those who worship in Society chapels and that those who assist at the New Mass in their parish churches are outside the Church...”

“It is of the very greatest significance that the 1988 protocol intended to reconcile the Society with the Holy See treated all its priests as straightforward Catholics. There was no question of any renunciation of schism or error on their part. This is still true today of priests from the Society who decide to move to the Fraternity of St. Peter. Bishop Bruskewitz is now stating that the SSPX is a non-Catholic sect. This is quite ridiculous in view of his threat of excommunication. He is only in a position to excommunicate members of the Catholic Church and so, if they are a non-Catholic sect, these threats are meaningless. If the SSPX constituted a schismatic sect, then priests leaving it would need to be received into the Catholic Church, which they most certainly are not, nor are they absolved of any penalties for schism, since they have incurred none....But to state that those celebrating or assisting at Masses of the SSPX incur latae sententiae excommunication is completely untenable.”

Please excuse the long citation, but it seemed the easiest way to help you to understand that the accusations of being schismatic, a sect and a cult, are entirely unfounded. How can there be a cult which has no leader (the Society’s Superior General changes regularly), which has no doctrine (the Society does nothing but teach the traditional catechism), which has no members (for all Catholics are welcome to assist at its Masses, nor is anyone who assists at our Masses obliged to make any kind of commitment to the Society, being simply Catholics who desire the Mass and sacraments from a truly traditional priest)? How can we be schismatic if we accept the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and are in communion with all Catholics who profess the entire Catholic Faith? Are you trying to say that we are schismatic simply because we do not go along with the new liberal wave of ideas, but prefer to hold fast to the solemn definitions of the pre-Vatican II Popes? If that be the case, then you have entirely redefined the term schism, which has nothing more to do with the definition given in Canon Law (Canon 751 of the 1983 Code).

You state that I have appointed myself to determine a so-called "state of emergency" so as to defy whichever laws of the Catholic Church it suits me to defy. But the strangest thing is that you admit at the very same time that there are real errors and aberrations in the Catholic Church, and that they are not only in my imagination. Does not it bother you that the Immaculate Spouse of Christ would be infected, stained, defiled, corrupted by real errors and aberrations? Do you not admit by this very fact that there are objective reasons to use the laws which apply only in a state of necessity? Do you not see in the taking of refuge in the unchanging infallible Magisterium of the Church an effort not to defy, but in fact to obey, the true laws of the Church, of which "*the greatest law, which must always be held before the eyes, is the salvation of souls*" (Canon 1752 of the 1983 Code)? If you knew traditional Catholics you would know that nothing is closer to our hearts than the mind of the Church, which is reflected in all the traditional laws of the Church. You would also know that if we refuse a law it is not out of defiance, but because it is manifestly and obviously unjust, that it is destructive of the Church and that consequently it does not bind in conscience; e.g. altar girls, communion in the hand, eucharistic sharing with non-Catholics (as permitted by the scandalous Canon 844 of the 1983 Code), or even the Novus Ordo Mass itself.

You dispute that the incidents in which I described that you practiced ecumenism were indeed a scandal. You did not, however, dispute that they happened. Although I do not pretend to know or judge what happens in your diocese, it does seem that you have embraced the modernist thesis that ecumenism is not a scandal. It is very tragic that you do not see how many are turned away from the Catholic Faith by Catholics' loss of identity, and indifference to the fact that our religion is the only true religion. I suggest that you read *Mortalium animos* (On Ecumenism) by Pope Pius XI and *Satis cognitum* (On the unity of the Church) by Pope Leo XIII. You would then understand how radically contrary is your practice, as well as that of the present Pope, to the universal Tradition of the Church.

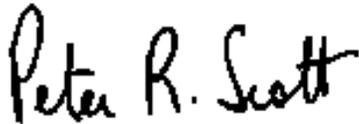
Your comparison with the Old Catholics is an interesting one. For if they became a schismatic sect it was because they refused an infallible, defined dogma of Faith (Papal infallibility) and that consequently they refused to submit to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. They clearly denied the Faith and rejected the Catholic Church. There lies the difference from Catholics who hold fast to Tradition. The latter do so precisely to hold fast to the defined dogmas of Faith.

This question is summarized by Charles P. Nemeth in his book on the subject (*The Case of Archbishop Lefebvre*, Angelus Press, 1994): "*No matter what historical cases are reviewed, whether it be the Old Dutch Catholics, the Russian Orthodox, the National Church of China, the Sedevacantists of Saint Pius V, the Polish National Catholic Church, or the New Age Woman Church, they all exhibit a rejection of not just ideas, but also of those empowered to lead and authorize. In unison, the Papacy, the Primacy of Rome and the Faith and moral teachings that emanate therefrom are rejected.... To equate these conducts with Marcel Lefebvre is faulty reasoning. To formalize disobedience, right or wrong, into a demonstrable conclusion or first principle about schism is to reject the very notion of what a schism is. Cardinal Rosalio Lara, President of the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of Canon Law, recognizes this distinction.*" (p.137)

In standing up against modernist errors and ecumenism, what dogma of Faith have we refused? Clearly we are doing so to maintain all of them. In insisting on our right to stand up against the aberrations and errors that you admit are real, but which the Pope is too weak to see or to act upon, how can we be accused of refusing to submit to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff? How can you accuse us of innovation when we simply do and say and believe what Catholics have always done and said and believed?

I am looking forward to your reply, that through our exchange of ideas, the truth might become more clearly apparent. Please be assured of my prayers for this intention.

Yours faithfully in Christ Our Lord,



Father Peter R. Scott