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## **SUPERIOR GENERAL'S LETTER TO FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS #71**

*Dear Friends and Benefactors,*

The traditional Mass was never abrogated. What joy, dear faithful, filled our hearts at the announcement of Pope Benedict XVI's *motu proprio* of July 7th. We see in it an answer from Heaven to our Rosary Crusade, not only because of its promulgation, but especially because of the extent of its overture towards the traditional liturgy. Indeed, it is not only the missal that is declared to be Church law, but also other liturgical books.

It must be said that if the Mass was never abrogated, it has kept all its rights. In reality, the *motu proprio* grants nothing new to the Mass of All Time; it merely states that the Mass of St. Pius V, called "*of John XXIII*" for the occasion, is still in force despite its absence and an interdiction against its celebration lasting nearly forty years. The Tridentine Mass is still the Catholic Mass. The subtle and awkward distinction made between ordinary and extraordinary form of the same rite in speaking of the new and the old Mass will not fool anyone. In this domain, facts speak for themselves. What must be retained is the assertion of the Mass's perpetual status as a universal law of the Catholic Church. The very word "*law of the Church*" excludes indults, permissions, or conditions. The bishops are trying to neutralize the salutary effect of the *motu proprio* by imposing binding and odious restrictions on its implementation. They are certainly not following the Sovereign Pontiff's will. It will be most interesting to watch the progress of this more or less open rebellion, which is largely hidden from public view. The history of the Church for the next several decades will be determined by this confrontation. Let us pray that the pope may have the strength to uphold and to impose what he has just restored to the Church.

It goes much further than the simple celebration of the Mass. The *motu proprio* leaves the door ajar to the former liturgical spirit in the sense that it enables it to develop. The liturgy comprises several elements, of which, obviously, the most important is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but this treasure is set amongst an ensemble of liturgical books. Most of them, or at least the most well-known, are going to acquire a new life: the ritual that contains the rites used by the priest to confer the sacraments and blessings; at least part of the pontifical that contains the sacrament of confirmation; and the breviary. These liturgical books form a whole that will undoubtedly allow the traditional liturgical spirit to resume its place in the life of the Church.

The initial effects of the *motu proprio* are interesting, even if they are almost insignificant when one considers the Church at large. Still, some bishops are actively supporting the movement; and despite the difficulties imposed by other Ordinaries, priests are learning and beginning to celebrate the Holy Mass. More than 5,000 priests worldwide have requested the training videos on the ceremonies of the Mass produced by the Society. That shows that priests evidence a certain interest in the Mass of All Time!

What is noteworthy is the unanimous feedback we hear from priests who are discovering the Tridentine Mass. The following testimonies are not exceptional: "*It's two different worlds!*" "*Celebrating facing the altar or the people is altogether different!*" "*By celebrating this Mass, I've discovered what a priest is!*"

These testimonials speak volumes, and are worth more than all the argumentations.

There is no point in asking them what they think about the holiness of the new rite... It is obvious that if the genuine freedom to celebrate were guaranteed not only in writing but in practice, the number of Tridentine Masses would immediately increase tenfold.

Whoever is aware of the titanic struggle that has been raging in our Catholic Church for at least two centuries,

understands that a large part of the crisis in the Church revolves around the Mass. Two Masses, two theologies, two spirits: A new spirit was inoculated into the veins of the Mystical Body by means of the New Mass, “*the spirit of Vatican II.*” The traditional Mass, on the contrary, radiates the Catholic Spirit. The rite of St. Pius V entails an incomparable coherence of faith and morals. To the eyes of anyone who attends it seriously, it quickly becomes manifest that this Mass is demanded by the faith and provides substantial nourishment for it. Soon the logic of the faith becomes clear to the faithful soul: the just man lives by faith. We must live by our beliefs. The whole of Christian morality, with all its demands of self-denial, sacrifice, and detachment from the world, flows from it. God is holy, and whoever desires to approach Him must live a life of purity, for His holiness requires that the faithful soul put on the spotless garment of grace. The Mass not only opens the eyes of the faithful to this reality, the sublimity of the Christian vocation, but above all it gives them the means to live it. What an abundance of grace is poured out upon the faithful of “good will” at Mass, and even more upon the priest who celebrates it!

The radiant grace of the Mass calls for another sanctification: that of the Christian family, and ultimately all of society. If society was Christian for centuries, for more than a millennium in fact, this must be attributed above all to the Mass, this holy rite that was completed in its essential parts by the end of Antiquity. We are able to celebrate the so-called “Tridentine Mass”, or the “Mass of St. Pius V”, without difficulty using manuscripts of the tenth or eleventh centuries.

One cannot but be struck by the fact that the decadence, indeed the disappearance, of Christian society noticeably accelerated once the new rite was introduced. Who would only like to see in that mere chance or coincidence?

We are still engaged in the titanic struggle for the salvation of souls which runs throughout the history of the human race. Let us hope that the advances made by the *motu proprio* do not cause us to lose sight of this much deeper view of things. The new situation is cause for hope, but also for redoubled courage to carry on the combat along the route traced by Archbishop Lefebvre.

The success gained by our rosary crusade, the zeal that we saw deployed, inspires us to renew our confidence in our heavenly Mother, not by a crusade a month or two long, but by a perpetual rosary crusade. Yes, may this prayer never cease to ascend heavenward for the good of the Church and the salvation of souls! We are convinced that Our Lady will not remain unmoved by such an onslaught of *Ave Marias*, and will hasten the Church’s recovery. In keeping with the fine sentiment of the Swiss General, General Guisan, who on seeing a soldier praying his rosary said: “*How I should like to see Switzerland encircled by this chain!*” we should like to encircle the entire Church with a chain of rosaries, to encircle her with an immense and continual string of *Ave Marias* for her defense and protection.

Thus, we are now launching a perpetual Rosary Crusade to obtain from Heaven not only that the decree of excommunication be withdrawn, but especially that Catholic Tradition be fully re-established in its due place—a crusade that will continue until the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

May all the saints come unto our aid, and may Our Lady bless you.

The Feast of All Saints  
November 1, 2007  
+ *Bernard Fellay*