

Intervention of Cardinal Darío Castrillón in Aparecida, Brazil
President of the Pontifical Commission <Ecclesia Dei>
V General Episcopal Conference of the Latin America.
Wednesday May 16, 2007

Dear and Venerated Brothers:

I allow myself to present a brief report about the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei and the state of the pastoral reality that the Holy Father has placed under its competence.

This commission was instituted by the Servant of God John Paul II in 1988, when a noted group of priests, religious and faithful that manifested their discontent with the Council's liturgical reform and congregated under the leadership of French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, had separated themselves from him because they were in disagreement with the schismatic action of the ordination of Bishops without the required pontifical mandate. They, then, preferred to maintain the full union with the Church. The Holy Father, through Motu Proprio <Ecclesia Dei Adflicta>, trusted the pastoral care of these Traditionalist faithful to this Commission.

Today the activity of the Commission is not limited to the service of the faithful who wished in that opportunity, to maintain themselves in full communion with the Church, and neither only to the efforts oriented towards setting an end to the painful schismatic situation and to achieve the return of those brothers from Pius X Fraternity into full communion. By will of the Holy Father, this Dicastery extends, besides, its service to satisfy the just aspirations of those who by a particular sensibility, without ever having bonds to the aforementioned groups, wish to maintain alive the previous Latin liturgy in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the other sacraments.

Without any doubt, the most important engagement that concerns the whole Church is to look for an end to the schismatic action and to, reconstruct without ambiguities, the full communion. The Holy Father, who was member of that Commission during some years, wants that it becomes an organism of the Holy See with the proper and distinct end of preserving and maintaining the value of traditional Latin liturgy. But it needs to be affirmed with all clarity, that it is not about a coming back, nor a return, to previous times before the reform of 1970. Instead, it is about a generous offer of the Vicar of Christ that, as expression of his pastoral will, wishes to make available to the Church all the treasures of Latin liturgy that have nurtured during centuries, the spiritual life of many generations of Catholic faithful. The Holy Father wishes to preserve the immense spiritual, cultural and esthetic treasures linked to ancient liturgy. The recovery of this richness unites itself to the no less precious current liturgy of the Church.

For these reasons the Holy Father has the intention to extend to the whole Latin Church the possibility to celebrate the Holy Mass and the sacraments according to the liturgical books promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962. By this liturgy, that *was never abolished*, an that, as we have said, is considered a treasure, today exists a new and renewed interest and, also for this reason, the Holy Father thinks that the time has come to facilitate, as the first Cardinal Commission wished in 1986, the access to this liturgy making from it an *extraordinary form* of the only Roman rite.

There are very good experiences of communities of religious or apostolic life, recently erected by the Holy See, that celebrate in peace and serenity this liturgy. Assemblies of faithful, congregate around them that assist to these celebrations with joy and gratitude. The most recent erections are the Institute of Saint Philip Neri in Berlin that functions as an oratorium and has been made present also, with good acceptance, in the Diocese of Treveris; the Institute of the Good Shepherd of Bordeaux gathers priests, seminarians, and faithful, some departed from the Pious X Fraternity. Proceedings are very advanced for the recognition of a contemplative community, the Oasis of Jesus Priest, of Barcelona.

In Latin America, as it is well known, we must thank the Lord for the retuning of a whole Diocese, the one of Campos, previously lefebvrian that, now after five years, presents good fruits. It has been a peaceful return and the faithful that have been registered in the Apostolic Administration, are happy to be able to live in peace in their parochial communities; even more, in fact some Brazilian dioceses have made contacts with the Apostolic Administration of Campos, which has set at their disposal, priests for the pastoral care of faithful Traditionalists in their local churches. The Holy Father's project has been partially tested in Campos, where the peaceful co-habitation of both forms of the only Roman rite in the Church is a beautiful reality. We have the hope that such model will produce good fruits, also in other places of the Church where faithful Catholics with diverse liturgical sensibilities live together. And, moreover, we hope that such way of living together will attract also, those traditionalists which are still far away.

The current members of the Commission are Cardinals Julian Herranz, Jean-Pierre Ricard, William Joseph Levada, Antonio Cañizares, and Franc Rodé. Its consultants are Undersecretaries of some Dicasteries.

Several communities spread throughout the world have been under *Ecclesia Dei* up to now: 300 priests, 79 religious, 300 religious women, 200 seminarians and several hundreds of thousands faithful. Curiously, there is an increase of interest among young people in France, Unites States, Brazil, Italy, Scandinavia, Australia and China. At the moment of its comeback, 50 priests, about 50 seminarians, 100 religious women and 25,000 faithful returned from Campos.

Today, the group of *lefebvrians* has 4 bishops that were ordained by Mons. Lefebvre, 500 priests and 600,000 faithful. Several contemplative monasteries also joined to the group, as well as some male and female religious groups; they have parishes (they call them priories), seminaries and associations. They are present in 26 countries.

Let us pray to the Lord that this project of the Holy Father may soon be accomplished for the unity of the Church.

(This report was published by ZENIT.org on Thursday, May 17, 2007.)

(This is a good will translation by Esther M. Sousa)

(Translator's notes:

1- The report seems to refer to several groups of Latinists:

a) The Traditionalist group under Archbishop Lefebvre and his 4 Bishops, who reclaimed pre-Vatican II Latin Mass and dissented from the Church by his action of Episcopal ordinations without permission of Rome; did not agree with Vatican II Liturgical Reform; were referred by Card. Castrillon as *Lefebvrists*.

b) The Traditionalist group that originally practiced pre-Vatican II Latin Mass and followed Archbishop Lefebvre, but later separated from him when he ordained 4 priests to the Episcopate without the Church's consent.

They agreed with Commission Ecclesia Dei in celebrating Blessed John XXIII's Latin Mass and Sacramental Rites of 1962; and are in communion with the Church. They celebrate with the Rites of 1962, as an "extraordinary form" of the *one* Roman Liturgical Rite, in which the 1970 Rite is the "ordinary form" of the Mass and of the Sacraments.

c) The group that wants to maintain the Latin Mass from Liturgical reform of 1970, of Vatican II Council.

2- The Cardinal indicated that the Liturgy of 1962 of Blessed John XXII, has never been abolished.

3- Card. Dario Castrillon brought up an issue, in particular: *"it needs to be affirmed with all clarity, that it is not about a coming back, nor a return, to previous times before the reform of 1970. Instead, it is about a generous offer of the Vicar of Christ that, as expression of his pastoral will, wishes to make available to the Church all the treasures of Latin liturgy that have nurtured during centuries, the spiritual life of many generations of Catholic faithful."*)