

Today, March 25, 2013, marks the 22nd Anniversary of Archbishop Lefebvre's death. As a tribute to this greatest churchman of the second half of the 20th Century, I repost a summary of the Archbishop's realistic observations on some of Vatican II's most troublesome (see below).

As we enter the new Pontificate, it is good for us to restudy the work and life of this great man, who reminds us of the nature of the Catholic Faith and the true battle in which we are engaged. By all indications, the post-Conciliar crisis will continue, and may even worsen, with the recent election of the 265 successor of Saint Peter.

Pope Francis [already announced](#) his commitment to Vatican II's ecumenism. Miracles can happen, but if Francis stays on his life-long trajectory, the future appears ominous. *Oremus*.

- John Vennari

In 1964, Archbishop Lefebvre correctly warned that the Conciliar schemas "have a spirit of rupture and suicide," and went on to say, "There exists a spirit of non-Catholic or rationalist ecumenism that has become a battering ram for unknown hands to pervert doctrine."

The new ecumenism was a defining element of the Second Vatican Council. Archbishop Lefebvre at the Council, true to form, presented interventions against this new spirit.

- He warned against what he described as a "false irenicism which tampers with the purity of Catholic teaching or obscures its true and certain meaning." In the schema, "the most fundamental truths in this sphere are watered down." [1] The plain truths of Catholicism were being diluted in an attempt to make them more palatable to Protestants.
- The Archbishop had plenty to say against the schema calling the Church a "general help to salvation." *A general help?* He reiterated the traditional doctrine—and quoted the 1951 Letter of the Holy Office—that "Our Lord indeed not only commanded all men to enter the Church" that was "divinely instituted" by Him, but that Our Lord "instituted the Church as *the means* of salvation without which no one can enter the kingdom of Heavenly glory." Thus, said the Archbishop, it is obvious from this traditional teaching that "the Church is not seen merely as a 'general help to salvation'." [2] No, it is necessary for salvation.
- He further warned against the schema's statement: "The Holy Ghost does not refuse to make use of these churches and communities." In response, the Archbishop said: This

statement contains error: a community insofar as it is a separated community, cannot enjoy the assistance of the Holy Ghost. He can only act directly on souls or use such means as, of themselves, bear no sign of separation.[3]

What resulted was Vatican II's new ecumenical approach—a revolution in Catholic attitudes—wherein Catholic prelates and clergy no longer were interested in working towards conversion of non-Catholics, but rather, in convergence with non-Catholics. In the spirit of the “New Theology,” theology, in order to remain alive, had to “move with the times”—and the times were ecumenical.

It is worth noting on this point that Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, a Protestant observer at Vatican II, was quick to praise Vatican II's new approach. Dr. Brown was well aware of the traditional Catholic teaching on Christian unity, and celebrated the drastic change of attitude that Vatican II wrought. He did not see continuity in Vatican II, but rupture with the past, and he rejoiced. In his 1967 book, *The Ecumenical Revolution*, he applauds the Council's Decree on Ecumenism:

“The document makes clear how new is the attitude that has emerged. No more is there talk of “schismatics and heretics” but rather of “separated brethren.” No more is there an imperial demand that the dissidents return in penitence to the Church who has no need of penitence; instead there is recognition that both sides are guilty of the sins of division and must reach out penitentially to one another. No more are Protestants dismissed merely as “sects” or psychological entities alone; instead it is acknowledged that there is a measure of “ecclesial reality” to be found within their corporate life.”[4]

This last point made McAfee Brown is precisely what Archbishop Lefebvre was warning against when he made the intervention against the notion that “a community [that is, for example, a Protestant sect], insofar as it is a separated community, cannot enjoy the assistance of the Holy Ghost.” The Protestant McAfee Brown celebrates that Vatican II confirmed the opposite when the Council claimed that these Protestant groups have a measure of “ecclesial reality.”

Archbishop Lefebvre clearly saw the danger of these new teachings at the time of the Council. In 1964, he said that the Conciliar schemas “have a spirit of rupture and suicide,” and went on to say, “There exists a spirit of non-Catholic or rationalist ecumenism that has become a battering ram for unknown hands to pervert doctrine.”[5]

And while so many other highly-placed churchmen were predicting the great renewal that the Council would bring, Archbishop Lefebvre was far more realistic. He said: “In an inconceivable fashion, the Council promoted the spreading of liberal errors. The Faith,

morality, and ecclesiastical discipline are shaken to their foundations as the Popes have predicted. The destruction of the Church is advancing rapidly.”[6]

Religious Liberty

Of course, Archbishop Lefebvre was most active opposing the new notion of religious liberty that would emerge at Vatican II. This innovation states that all men have the positive right to practice their false religion in public. Archbishop Lefebvre made numerous interventions against this novel tenet. He noted that the new doctrine shifts the focus away from the rights of the objective truth given to us through Divine Revelation to the right of the human person to embrace religious error, which is contrary to the traditional teaching of the Church.

This traditional teaching is summarized by Pope Pius XII in the 1950s, who taught that “what is not in accord with truth and the moral law has objectively no right to exist, to be promoted or to be practiced,” and that “no human authority can give a positive mandate to teach or do things contrary to religious truth.”[7]

Archbishop Lefebvre further noted that the progressive Fr. Yves Congar openly admitted Vatican II's new doctrine of religious liberty is a rupture with the past. Congar said: “What is new in this teaching in relation to the doctrine of Leo XIII and even of Pius XII...is the determination of the basis peculiar to this liberty, which is sought not in the objective truth of moral or religious good, but in the ontological quality of the human person.”[8]

Of special note was Archbishop Lefebvre's predicted consequences of the new doctrine. During the Council, he warned that “religious liberty is the right to cause scandal” because it gives civil rights to spread religious error and its moral consequences. Among these consequences, Archbishop Lefebvre spotlighted the following:

- Immorality: “The liberty of all religious communities in society mentioned in No. 29, cannot be laid down, without at the same time granting moral liberty to these communities: morals and religion are very closely linked, for instance, polygamy and the religion of Islam”;
- The death of the Catholic States: “A civil society endowed with Catholic legislation shall no longer exist”;
- “Doctrinal Relativism and practical indifferentism”;
- “The disappearance in the Church of the missionary spirit for the conversion of souls.”[9]

The consequences that the Archbishop predicted, and worse, have come to pass due to the

Council's new program. Cardinal Ottaviani likewise predicted that the Council's religious liberty would result in South America's being overrun with Protestantism. He too is proven correct. Of course, the most damning indictment of the Council's religious liberty came from the synagogue of Satan itself. Archbishop Lefebvre noted:

"This very year [1965], Yves Marsaudon, the Freemason, has published the book L'oecumenisme vu par un franc-maçon de tradition [Ecumenism as Seen by a Traditional Freemason]. In it the author expresses the hope of Freemasons that our Council will solemnly proclaim religious liberty....What more information do we need?"[10]

Excerpted from: "Archbishop Lefebvre: A Bishop Speaks at the Council":
go to: <http://www.oltyn.org/page8/page44/Lefebvre-VaticanII.html>

Notes:

- 1 *I Accuse the Council*, Archbishop Lefebvre (Angelus Press) p. 17.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18 (emphasis added).
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
4. Robert McAfee Brown, *Ecumenical Revolution*, 2nd ed. (1967; Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 67-8. (emphasis added)
5. *Marcel Lefebvre*, Bishop Tissier de Malarais (Angelus Press) p. 330.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
7. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 310.
8. *I Accuse the Council*, p. 21.
9. *Marcel Lefebvre*, p. 329.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 328. (emphasis added)

Note from John Vennari: It may be timely to take a "refresher course" on the problems with Vatican II. Highly recommended for a comprehensive treatment of Vatican II's "Religious Liberty" as a rupture with Tradition, read *They Have Uncrowned Him* by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. Available from Angelus Press - [click here](#)