The following video was produced by a third party based on this article.

The Society of St. Pius X announced by communique on July 11 the election of Father Davide Pagliarani as the Superior General of the SSPX for the next 12 years. The initial reactions were most interesting. Several websites and forums that host comments aligned with the so called "Resistance" denounced Father Pagliarani as a liberal "company man" who would swiftly move toward a compromise with the Roman authorities. Some went so far to claim that Bishop Fellay would essentially remain in control and drive the move toward a compromised regularization. At the same time, New Church and secular commentators tried to claim Bishop Fellay was "toppled" by a reactionary faction that would end any possible regularization by the Roman authorities. Such is the state of misinformation and rumor buzzing around the SSPX. News outlets as diverse as Catholic News Agency, the Tablet, the Herald, and the Catholic Register reported (with varying degrees of accuracy) the election of Father Pagliarani. How is it that a small institute of priests (637 priests), that the Roman authorities claim out of one side of their mouth is Catholic and out of the other side not really Catholic, can be such an object of fascination and speculation? The simple answer is that the SSPX is a (and arguably *the*) sign of contradiction for the modern Church. Its existence and flourishing is a constant rebuke to the post-Conciliar world order. It is like the rosary hanging on a car's rear-view mirror that pricks the conscience of the man who has fallen into habitual mortal sin. He wants to turn away and just ignore this small reminder of from where he has fallen, but he can't take his eyes away from it.

The diametrically opposed reactions to the election are also quite interesting. How can one man, Father Pagliarani, be both a compromising "company man" and mouthpiece of Bishop Fellay desiring recognition at all costs *and* a radical reactionary that toppled Bishop Fellay (an absurdity born of ignorance, given that Bishop Fellay made clear for months before the Chapter that he did not seek re-election after completing 24 years and two terms in office) and will prevent at all costs a recognition? The answer is that he cannot be both. Rather, his history and experience shows that he follows the path of Archbishop Lefebvre: firm adherence to doctrine with a balanced approach to dealing with the extraordinary and changing circumstances of the crisis in the Church. He is committed to the Archbishop's fidelity to perennial doctrine, but he also makes the distinction between respectfully disobeying the legitimate authorities in the Church (when they act against the Church) and a rebellious rejection of and disrespect for all authority. He is clearly committed to resisting the errors of Vatican II and remaining faithful to the principles of the Faith, and he is very astutely aware of the factual reality in which the SSPX finds itself in our times. An interview

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published in 2011 clearly demonstrates the position of the new Superior General. His balanced attitude reflects clearly the approach of the Archbishop. He understands that doctrine and the defense of the Faith hold the highest priority but that we are obligated to meet with and treat with the Roman authorities by virtue of their legitimate authority (even if exercised illegitimately at many times). He argues the 2009-2011 doctrinal discussions were not a failure simply because they did not "convert" the Romans nor result in canonical recognition. They succeeded because the Society's delegation was able to clearly and thoroughly document Tradition's "case." The delegation remained true to the principles for which the SSPX was founded and presented that case to the Roman authorities. The following quotation from that interview illustrates well Father's balanced understanding of the place of a regularization within the grand scheme of things:

> "If we do not arrive at some canonical regularization, that simply means that the hierarchy is not yet sufficiently convinced of the urgent need for that contribution. In that case we will have to wait a few more years, hoping for an increase in that awareness, which could occur along with and parallel to the acceleration in the process of the Church's self-destruction."

Certainly such a statement disappoints the commentators who long for a canonical regularization at all costs since he shows himself quite content to accept God's will if the time has not yet come. Likewise, the "Resistance" conglomeration who fear a regularization at all costs see his openness to the possibility that the time will come when Tradition will be given its rightful place again as a threat to their position of no regularization under any circumstances.

In the end, Father Pagliarani is neither of the extremes the internet makes him out to appear. He is a priest who has been formed in the spirituality and mission of the SSPX and who has a long record of on the ground service that gives him the broad knowledge of the varying works of the community God has called him to lead. He has served in Europe, Asia, and South America and as district superior and seminary rector. He has seen the work of the SSPX from formation of priests to missionary lands. Based on his first interview released on July 13, his highest priority seems to be the formation of and care for priests. Although relations with Rome will always grab the fascination of the media and internet watchers, the primary mission of the SSPX is the formation of and care for priests. This emphasis in his first interview is a very good sign that he knows the priorities established by the founder. Rather than twisting the man to fit an idiosyncratic, distorted vision of the world that one group may hold, let us commit ourselves to pray that God grants him the grace of state to live up to the high responsibilities of his office and to be open to following

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the will of God in all things.  In such way are all things to be restored in Christ.

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