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Dear Friends of Catholic Tradition,

Fifty years ago on the Feast of All Saints (Nov. 1), Bishop François Charrière of Lausanne, Geneva, and Fribourg legally established the Fraternal Society of St. Pius X (SSPX). Several months earlier, in May 1970, a handful of seminarians from the French Seminary in Rome approached the retired Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre with concerns about their formation. They were being attacked for adhering to pre-Vatican II doctrine and thus asked the retired prelate to help them find a conservative seminary at which to continue their formation.

Eventually, those seminarians asked Lefebvre to prepare them for ordination. Although he felt himself too old for the task, yet always open to God’s will, he decided to ask Bishop Charrière for permission to establish in his diocese a religious society for the formation of priests. If the bishop agreed, Lefebvre would take it as a sign that God wanted him to conclude his brief retirement and embark on this new venture. Bishop Charrière signed the document, some lay people provided the land, and the rest is history.

Regardless of where one attends a Latin Mass in 2020, we must recognize with gratitude the role played by Archbishop Lefebvre in securing the ability to do so, regardless of our position on the subsequent history between Lefebvre and the Vatican. His openness to God’s will and Bishop Charrière’s willingness to let Lefebvre try the “experiment of Tradition” made possible the preservation of the Traditional Mass and sacramental life. I am certain that all those Saints whose feast days were saved from complete elimination by the adoption of the truncated new calendar must be exhibiting their gratitude to the Archbishop for not allowing the old feasts to cease from the face of the earth.

Anniversaries are important times to recollect. Much of the crisis in the Church remains the same today as it did in 1970, but much has also changed (both for the worse and the better). Yet ultimately, by making use of the actions of men, God has not allowed the true Mass and true doctrine to disappear from the face of the earth. In fact, by His providence, its light shines brighter today than it did 50 years ago.

If we had been told even five years ago that two bishops (Viganò and Schneider) would emerge publicly to defend not only the true Mass but also perennial doctrine, we would not likely have believed it. Similarly, if someone had told those struggling to keep the Faith in 1970 that the Traditional Mass would spread all over the world into thousands of dioceses by 2020, or that a pope would proclaim definitively that the Old Mass had never been abrogated, it would have seemed impossible to believe. Yet here we are in 2020. Certainly,

Archbishop Lefebvre is not the only one responsible for these remarkable blessings, but his decision to respond to the requests of the French seminarians is the initial cause of all that subsequently happened.

For the past 26 years, *Catholic Family News* has been there to report on these developments, providing solid commentary and inspiration along the way. We have added new platforms to our apostolate over time (web articles, videos, a monthly e-edition of the paper, podcasts), but the message remains the same: Catholics *can* and *should* be able to live as Catholics have always and everywhere done for centuries. **With your help, we will continue spreading that message ([SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)).**

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Brian M. McCall
Editor-in-Chief