

2013 : The Year of Archbishop Lefebvre

To all the faithful of the District of Asia

Dear Faithful,

A Soldier On The Frontline

As we are entering yet another year since the birth of Our Divine Savior, after having dedicated 2012 to the Family, we have decided to dedicate this new year to the memory of our dear founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, a man who has left his mark — and what a mark! — in the history of the Church of the twentieth century!

It is a sad observation that he is not well known among our people: few of our Asian faithful have read his biography, or carefully studied his books.

A Man of God

By making 2013 the Year of Archbishop Lefebvre, we want to remedy this lack of knowledge which can lead to misunderstandings, and the abandon of the correct fight for the Tradition. This knowledge and wisdom are still so necessary at this moment of crisis in the Church, which is far from being finished.

It is important to see all the aspects of this great man of the Church, who was deeply Catholic in everything he did and taught. Without the complete view of his life and teaching, one can make him say anything and the contrary of anything. If I may dare to make a comparison, it is almost like so many who use and abuse Sacred Scripture to make **it say whatever they want following Luther's principle of Sola Scriptura**, according to which there is no need of the Holy Roman Catholic Church to interpret Scripture. We know the results of such erroneous principle.

Archbishop Lefebvre was truly a man of God, *homo Dei*, as St. Paul wanted Timothy to be. One key to his long and adventurous life is well known: **to follow Providence! "O will of God, thou art my Paradise!" he would have said with the great St. Francis de Sales. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!" He certainly tried to put this into practice from his early age to his death.**

He sought this Divine Will through his superiors, in all the echelons of the Church, for the 14 or 15 various assignments he held in his life. He sought it exclusively when it was time to stand up and be counted for the fight for the honour and rights of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The first skirmishes of this fight were already in the mid-1940s, after his return to France, to Mortain, when, still a simple priest, he noticed and wrote against the false theories of Fr. De Lubac on salvation. He made himself visible again in the fight when, now as an archbishop, he officially approved the book *Pour Qu'Il Règne (That He May Reign)*, on the Social Kingship of Christ, in 1959, a book the French Bishops would not endorse. This was soon followed, in 1963, by another clash with the French hierarchy on the wearing of the cassock: the Archbishop explaining to the members of the Holy Ghost Fathers the need to wear it for various reasons, both as a protection for the priest and a witness to the Church and to Our Lord Jesus Christ; and the French bishops allowing their priests to discard it to be closer to the world.

A Bishop In The Tempest

It was always to defend the truth and the will of God, manifested through centuries of clear papal teaching, that he stood up during the Second Vatican Council, and led, from the Third Session onwards, the 250 members of the Coetus Internationalis Patrum (the International Assembly of Fathers), a true band of Gideon, to protect the Sacred Tradition of the Church. As it is known, they did achieve some little degree of success in stopping or slowing down the flood of modernism (for instance, in changing some dangerous words in key documents, in delaying rushed votes, etc). but unfortunately, without the support of the Pope, already imbued with the liberal ideas, the Coetus could not achieve all it wanted, and the modern errors did enter into official conciliar texts, for the great harm of the subsequent 50 years so far!



Marcel Lefebvre as a seminarian circa 1928.

It was again this mysterious will of God that urged him, after his resignation as Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968 and already aged 63, to do something for a few seminarians in search of a truly Catholic bishop and seminary. Thus the Society of St. Pius X was conceived and born as a proper religious institute of the Roman Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation.

An Example To Follow

If I may dare again, in short I would like throughout this year to apply to the Archbishop what Holy Mother Church asks us of St. Pius X: that we may follow his examples and teachings: *exempla et instituta sectantes* (collect of 3rd Sept.).

Examples: let us know his life, let us read his biography: his large family with five vocations out of eight children, the Eucharistic Crusade which gave him a Eucharistic spirituality in his tender years, the French seminary in Rome where he learned to love the writings of the Popes, his 30 years in the missions, his fight during the Council, and, always following Providence, as another St. Martin who did not refuse the last great work the Good Lord was asking him, in his old age the foundation of the Society of St. Pius X.

His teaching: all his books, his writings, his sermons... **Which of these do you have in your personal library? Which one have you read?**

As I am writing to you, I have been given permission from Fr. De Cacqueray, the SSPX French District Superior, to do an Asian version of the beautiful film/documentary on the Archbishop: *Monseigneur Lefebvre, Un évêque dans la tempête – A Bishop in the Tempest*, which has just been released in French and is being shown now publically in various places in French speaking parts of Europe. I plan to have it dubbed professionally in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Tamil and Vietnamese, and perhaps in Indonesian. Let us organize public viewing in our mass centers and even elsewhere to restore the honor of this heroic man.

Let me finish with two pieces of news: next 19th March, the whole Society of St. Pius X will be consecrate to St. Joseph, in thanksgiving for all his favours over the last 42 years!

And lastly, as of 1st January, New Zealand and its missions are returning to the jurisdiction of the Australian District.

With the assurance of my prayers throughout the New Year, which, let us pray, may bring closer than ever the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Rev. Fr. Daniel Couture
District Superior