

ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE

A man whose greatness in the History of the Church is still hidden.

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre will go down in history as a great man of the Church who saved not only the Traditional Latin Mass but also the Catholic priesthood. The Council of Trent teaches that these are the two elements necessary for the proper celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and for the very survival of the Catholic Church as a whole.

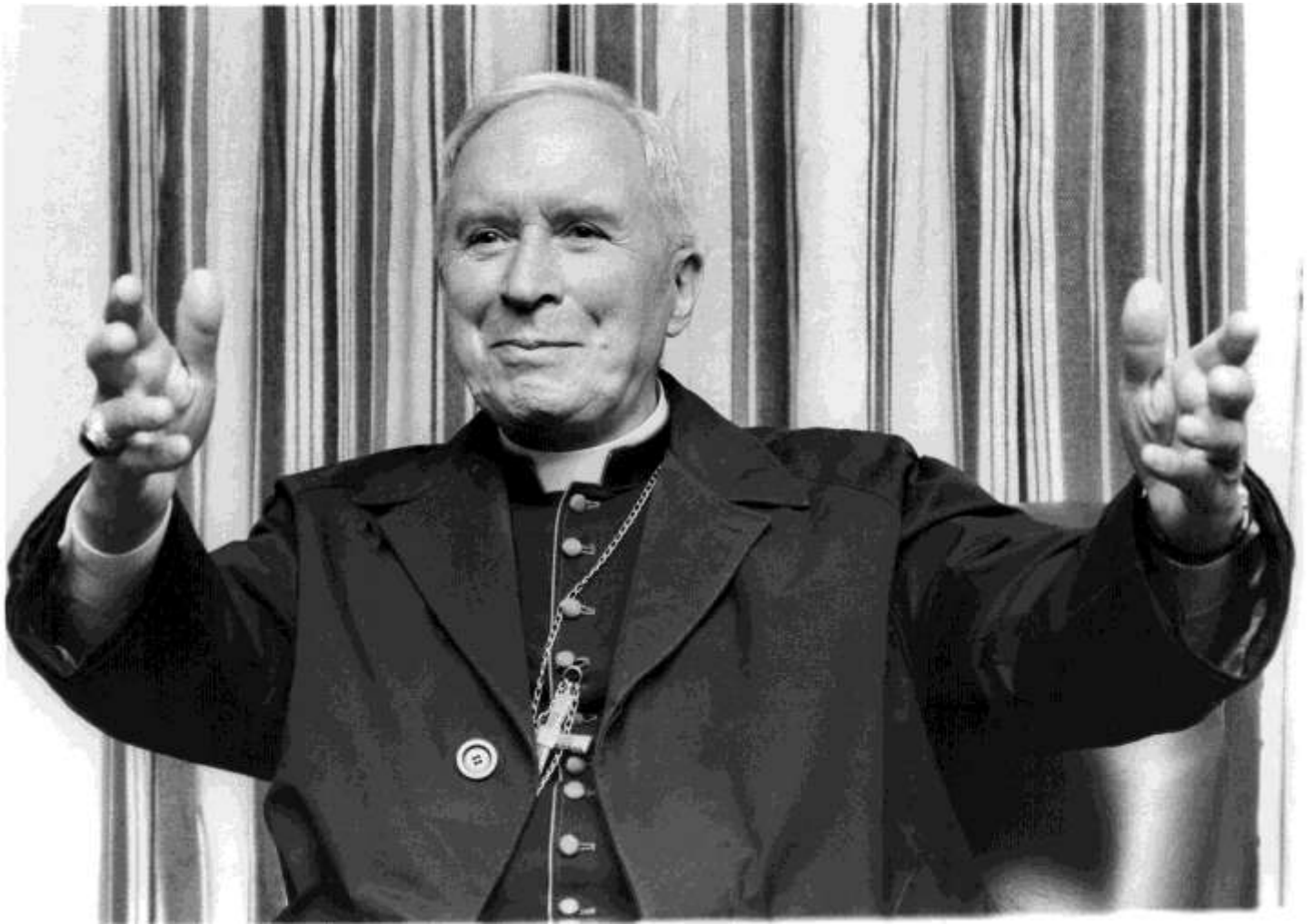
Divine Providence, which “has made all things in wisdom” (Ps. 103:24), prepared him well for this important mission. Trained in Rome with the best masters in the best Roman universities and graduating with two doctorates, he was sent to Gabon, Africa in 1932. His superiors assigned him for six years at the seminary, first as professor, then as rector. After a few more years in the bush, he was again made rector of the seminary of philosophy in Mortain, France (1945-1947), before returning to Africa as Archbishop of Dakar. His first concern in Dakar was the building of a major seminary for the proper training of his seminarians. After 1962, once elected Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, he tried his best to purge the library of French Seminary of Rome (run by

the Holy Ghost Fathers) of the authors which were making revolutionary waves in the Church during the Second Vatican Council (the likes of Teilhard de Chardin, Congar, Rahner, etc.), and he gradually changed the seminary staff who were imbued with modernist ideas. He met so much resistance in trying to save the sinking ship of his Congregation that he resigned as Superior General in 1968.

With this long and providential experience of some 36 years in the training of priests behind him, he was ready to start the priestly Society of St Pius X and pass on to its young members what he himself had received in Rome in his youth, and which he had continued to teach all these years until the late 1960s. He wrote in the introduction to his ‘Spiritual Journey’, his last book, of his innermost desire, a desire of going back to his days in Dakar (already in the 1950s): “faced with the progressive degradation of the priestly ideal, to pass on, in all its doctrinal purity, in all its missionary charity, the Catholic priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, as He had passed it on to His Apostles, and as the Roman Church has passed it on until the middle of the twentieth century”.

In spite of the reforms of the sacrament of Holy Orders which came after the Council, the archbishop continued to ordain seminarians to minor orders and the major order of the subdiaconate (all of which had been suppressed) in his seminaries. He had a particular love for the subdiaconate, knowing it was the first major step towards the priesthood: it laid the foundation for a fruitful priesthood by the vow of chastity and the daily obligation of the recitation of the breviary, two obligations that go perfectly together, as the Holy Ghost teaches: “I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was.” (Wis 8:21).

Such wisdom was lost in the conciliar reforms which both abolished the major order of subdiaconate and lessened the gravity of the obligation of the breviary. Is not this the lack of prayer one of the major causes of the crisis of unchastity among the modern clergy? They have dropped meditation, the rosary and the breviary, and they expect to remain chaste? “*Scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens nisi Deus det*”, as Solomon said above, “I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it”. It is a well-known fact



Saving souls is the greatest joy of a missionary. Here, in this rare photo, Archbishop Lefebvre is rejuvenated upon the arrival of a group of Africans to a conference in South Africa.

of the supernatural world that, without the grace of God obtained through serious prayer, no one can remain chaste. This is true for everyone, but especially for the priest. Is it a surprise then that Our blessed Lady kept asking for the daily recitation of the Rosary, she who showed the three children at Fatima that the sin of impurity leads the greatest number of souls—even priests' souls—into hell?

“O awesome dignity of the priests, in whose hands as in the womb of the Virgin the Son of God becomes Incarnate!” wrote St. John Chrysostom.

Archbishop Lefebvre saved the theology and the spirituality of the priesthood as described by the great doctors of the Church. One day this will be officially acknowledged by Holy Mother Church. It was in fact discreetly acknowledged, back in May-June 2010 when the book “Priestly Holiness”, an anthology of his teaching on the priesthood, was displayed in the window front of the main bookstores in Rome during the last month of the year dedicated to the priest.

“In several years — I do not know how many, only the Good Lord

knows how many years it will take for Tradition to find its rights in Rome —we will be embraced by the Roman authorities, who will thank us for having maintained the Faith in our seminaries, in our families, in civil societies, in our countries, and in our monasteries and our religious houses, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.” (Sermon of 30th June 1988).

God bless,

District Superior