



Centre Saint-Joseph, 1395 rue Notre-Dame, Saint-Césaire,
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LETTER TO FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS

The General Chapter

December 1, 2017

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

At the start of this new liturgical year, allow me to propose a major prayer intention: the General Chapter of the Society of St Pius X which will take place next July 3-21. These General Chapters take place every twelve years in our Society (so this is our fourth one since our foundation in 1970), and it is during these important meetings that we elect (or re-elect) our Superior General and his two assistants. The General Chapter is an examination of conscience, at the level of the whole Society, to see if we live conscientiously according to our Statutes and strive to keep its spirit. “You are not of the world” Our Lord told His disciples. It is not easy to be in the world and to keep “our first charity”, to stay on the straight and narrow path that leads to Heaven and not to absorb any worldliness. In his Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius urges us to examine “if there is anything worldly and vain in us” (n. 63). This must be a constant effort if we want to keep the spirit of the Gospel.

What is the Society of Saint Pius X? The complete answer is found in the book of our Statutes, in which, like the Constitutions of every religious order, are found our ends, the means to reach these ends, and the whole structure of the organization. So, fidelity to the Statutes is the guarantee of the blessing of God on our work.

History tells us that at the origin of every religious legislation we can find God, the Church and the soul of the Founder, often a saint. These are the titles of supernatural nobility of our work, far more divine than human. We must never forget that the first Legislator of all religious order is always God Himself. Whether he is called Benedict, Dominic, Francis, Ignatius, Alphonsus or Marcel, the founder in reality is nothing other than an instrument in the hands of God, who raises a group of zealous souls to answer a particular need of the Church at a particular time in its history. So a religious Rule is holy because it was clearly inspired by God.

It is holy also because it is approved by the Church. When the Church approves a religious institute, whether at the diocesan or at the Roman level, it is a kind of spiritual birth and baptism. The approbation of the Church gives to the Rule a certain intangibility: without a special authorization, no one can change it. In the life of the saintly founders, we see how they were anxious to have the Church approve their work. What jubilation, what thanksgiving in their soul at the news that this was achieved! Our own history is no different. Archbishop Lefebvre recalled with emotion the day when he came back from the local bishop’s house in Fribourg with the official letter approving our Statutes, and showed it to the handful of seminarians he had in these early days of November 1970. Everyone with obvious joy wanted to hold the letter and to examine the fresh signature. Yes, it was

official: the International Priestly Society of Saint Pius X was born! Until his death the Archbishop often reminded us that fidelity to these approved Statutes was the guarantee of God's blessings over our work.

Inspired by the Holy Ghost, approved by Holy Mother Church, many Rules add a third jewel to their nobility, that of having been founded by a saint, already canonized or canonizable. With the Rule, we have the most precious relic of the Founder: the relic of his heart, of his soul. The Rule is usually a mirror of their soul, of the flame burning in their heart, much more precious than the relic of any of their bones. By living according to this Rule, one imitates the founder and his virtues.

So, what are the ends of the Society of St Pius X? There are six, and the order of these six is essential:

1. The recruitment and formation of seminarians
2. The education and assistance of priests outside the Society
3. The formation of religious brothers, sisters, catechists and other auxiliaries
4. The education of children within its own schools
5. Parish ministry and preaching missions and retreats
6. Spiritual and temporal succour to aged, infirm and lapsed priests.

“The Society’s purpose is the priesthood and all that pertains to it and nothing but what concerns it” (Statutes II, 1). In the early days, this was obvious, but now 47 years later, with over 630 priests, dozens of schools, ministering in 65 countries to a few hundred thousand souls, and only six seminaries manned by about only 40 of all these priests, it may not be so clear. But this is what SSPX is: an institute that trains priests.

Looking at it from that angle highlights the importance of the apostolate of the recruitment of vocations in all we do. As Pope Pius XI clearly said, the family is the first greenhouse of vocations, then the Holy Mass – especially if the boys can serve it –, the school, contacts with good priests, lives of the saints. Let us unite all our efforts to foster vocations in the youth, to prepare the ground into which the seed of the Divine Call will fall.

“O Lord, grant us priests, many holy priests, and many holy religious vocations!”

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News from the District:

- Between October 28 and November 5, His Excellency Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais visited many of our priories and mass centers (two of which, Edmonton, AB and Dryden, ON, had not had such a visit in more than 20 years!) and conferred the sacrament of confirmation to 56 candidates. May they all be faithful in the battle for Christ the King!
- Then, between November 6 and 10, we had our Annual Priests’ Meeting in Saint-Césaire where 14 of our priests listened to interesting conferences on spiritual, doctrinal and moral matters. Our guest speaker this year was Fr. Albert, OP, who is now stationed in Vernon, B.C. helping Fr. Rusak with the apostolate of that province.

Fr. Daniel Couture
District Superior