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Caledonia, N.Y. 14423,
February 12, 1979

His Eminence,
John Cardinal Wright
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy
3 Piazza Pio XII
Rome 00193, Italy

Your Eminence:

I have the honor of herewith submitting to Your Eminence a copy of my article No. 75 entitled

THE DOCTRINAL FALSIFICATION IN THE CANON LAW OF 1917
ENABLING APOSTATES FROM THE FAITH TO OCCUPY HIERARCHICAL POSITIONS
IN THE CHURCH WITH THE APPEARANCE OF SACRAMENTAL VALIDITY .

As the title of the article indicates, I detected in the Canon Law of 1917 a doctrinal falsification which obviously had an important influence on recent Church history, because it allowed apostates from the faith to occupy hierarchical positions in the Church with the appearance of sacramental validity.

The falsification is so obvious that I do not harbor the illusion that not many other people, in particular canonical experts, have not also detected the falsification long before me. The reason why they did not speak up can only have been, that they did not dare to do so. By their silence, they have made themselves corresponsable for the catastrophic consequences of their silence.

I detected the falsification in connection with the Marcel Lefebvre case and my investigation of the validity of his Orders. My suspicion was aroused by certain statements Lefebvre made in a lecture he gave in Montréal, Canada, on May 27, 1976. I enclose the passages concerned according to a transcribed tape-recording of Lefebvre's lecture placed at my disposal by a collaborator who attended the lecture. The passages concerned read in the French original:

"Le saint-père a été élevé dans un milieu moderniste... et, par conséquent, il ne faut pas s'étonner que, dans le concile, le pape n'ait pas réagi comme aurait réagi Saint Pie X, comme aurait réagi le pape Pius IX, ou un Léon XIII. Or, voyez-vous, il y a eu ... donc, cette ambiance dans le concile du fait qu'il n'y a pas eu de résistance à cette influence moderniste qui s'est exercée par un groupe de cardinaux, en particulier, qui étaient commandés, qui étaient dirigés, en quelque sorte, par le cardinal Liénart. ---Or, il y a deux mois, à Rome, dans la brochure "Chiesa viva", qui est une brochure traditionaliste, cette brochure a publié ... je l'ai vu de mes yeux à Rome ... a publié au dos de la couverture, la photographie du cardinal Liénart avec toutes ses appartenances maçonniques: le jour de la date de son inscription à la maçonnerie; le degré auquel il appartenait à la Maçonnerie ... à telle date, le degré ... ensuite auquel il est monté: 20^e, puis 30^e degré de la Maçonnerie; Attaché à telle loge ... telle loge ...; tel endroit, à tel endroit. - Et je n'ai pas entendu dire depuis, environ 2 mois ou 3 mois, que cette publication a été faite, qu'il n'y eut aucune réaction, aucune contradiction. Or, malheureusement, je dois vous dire, ce cardinal Liénart, c'est mon évêque, c'est lui qui m'a ordonné, c'est lui qui m'a sacré évêque ... je n'en puis rien ... heureusement que les ordres sont valides ... mais, c'est tout de même, avec beaucoup de peine que j'ai appris cela ... "

The English translation of these passages reads as follows:

"The Holy Father was educated in a Modernist environment ... and, therefore, one cannot be surprised that, in the Council, the Pope did not react as Saint Pius X would have reacted, as Pope Pius IX would have reacted, or a Leo XIII. As a consequence, an atmosphere prevailed at the Council of a kind that there was no resistance against this Modernist influence which exerted itself by a group of cardinals, in particular which was commanded, which was directed in some sort by Cardinal Liénart ... Now, two months ago, in Rome, the traditionalist periodical "Chiesa viva" [= Living Church] published -I have seen it in Rome with my own eyes- on the backside of the cover, the photograph of Cardinal Liénart with all his Masonic paraphernalia, the day of the date of his inscription in Masonry ..., then the date at which he rose to the 20th, then to the 30th degree of Masonry, attached to this lodge, to that lodge, at this place, at that place. - Meanwhile, about two or three months after this publication was made, I heard nothing about any reaction, or any contradiction. Now, unfortunately, I must say to you that this Cardinal Liénart is my bishop, it is he who ordained me a priest, it is he who consecrated me a bishop. I cannot help it ... Fortunately, the orders are valid ... but, in spite of it, it was very painful for me to be informed of it."

As Your Eminence see from these statements of Marcel Lefebvre, complemented by the statements in "Chiesa viva" to which he alludes, that Lefebvre asserts, obviously correctly, that Achille Liénart was, before his consecration in 1928, an apostate Modernist and high-grade Freemason, a condition which made, according to orthodox-Catholic doctrine, Liénart's consecration invalid and, as a consequence, has made the Orders of Marcel Lefebvre, performed by Liénart, invalid. If Lefebvre, nevertheless, asserts that his Orders performed by Liénart are valid, he bases his opinion not on Catholic doctrine, but on the doctrinal falsification in the Canon Law of 1917 treated in my article No. 75.

The same applies to a defense of the validity of Lefebvre's Orders made by Lefebvre's seminarist Douglas Laudenschlager in the February 1978 issue of the Lefebvre magazine "Angelus," the text of which I enclose. The decisive passage reads:

"The Church has solemnly defined, and all Catholics must believe, that for the valid confectio[n] of a Sacrament, neither faith nor the state of grace is required in the minister. Therefore both sinful, and heretical, schismatical, and apostat[ic] priests or bishops can still validly (though sinfully and illicitly) confect the sacraments."

As the quotation proves, Laudenschlager, obviously speaking for Lefebvre, asserts expressis verbis that apostate bishops can perform sacraments validly. He even asserts that his statement is "a solemn definition of the Church which all Catholics must believe." In saying so in defense of the validity of the Orders of his Master, Laudenschlager obviously also alludes in violation of Catholic doctrine to the doctrinal falsifications in the canons 968, par.1 and 985.1. Needless to say that canons of the Canon Law, as far as they deal with Catholic dogmas, are, of course, contrary to Laudenschlager's statement, no solemn definitions of Catholic dogmas.

Since the consecration of Achille Liénart and the Orders of Marcel Lefebvre and his "priests" are not based on the requirements for the validity of Orders demanded by the Catholic faith, but are based on the doctrinal falsifications in the canons 968 and 985.1 in the Canon Law of 1917, they are all invalid.

By believing that, contrary to Catholic doctrine, even apostates from the Catholic faith can validly receive and perform Holy Orders, Marcel Lefebvre has become an apostate from the Catholic faith himself.

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I herewith submit to Your Eminence a photocopy of the article in the March 1976 issue of the Italian magazine "Chiesa viva" mentioned in Marcel Lefebvre's above-quoted lecture in Montréal, Canada, as proof that Liénart was already a 30 degree Freemason before his consecration. As the article shows, it is in reality largely only a reprint of data contained on pages 80 and 81 of the book "L'Infaillibilité Pontificale" written by the Marquis de la Franquerie of which I also enclose photocopies. The Marquis' book is issued in 1973 by

Jean Auguy
Éditeur, Diffusion de la Pensée Française"
Chiré-en-Montreuil - 86190 Vouillé, France.

The Marquis de la Franquerie is a Papal Secret Chamberlain "di Spada e Cappa," mentioned on Page 1267 of the "Annuario Pontificio" for 1960. He is obviously a recognized scholar with special knowledge of the penetration of the French Catholic hierarchy by Freemasonry and is still living.

As the data on page 81 of the Marquis' book prove, Achille Liénart entered a Masonic lodge in Cambrai in 1912 and was a 30 degree Mason already in 1924, i.e., 4 years before his consecration as Bishop of Lille. It must, therefore, be regarded as proven that Liénart was an apostate from the Catholic faith before his consecration and that therefore, his consecration was invalid and that, therefore, also the Orders of Marcel Lefebvre performed by Liénart were invalid.

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With the above in mind, I ask Your Eminence

- 1) to submit my article No. 75 to the competent authorities in order to have the falsified canons in the Canon Law of 1917 corrected,
- 2) to induce the competent authorities to declare the Orders of Marcel Lefebvre and of those ordained and consecrated by Marcel Lefebvre as invalid.

I am convinced that His Eminence, Franjo Cardinal Seper, who recently had talks with Marcel Lefebvre, is also interested in the contents of this letter.

For Your Eminence's convenience, I enclose two photocopies of this letter.

Your Eminence would oblige me by informing me on your reaction to the contents of this letter. Meanwhile, I have the honor to be, Your Eminence,

Yours respectfully,

Hugo Maria Kellner

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Enclosures