

THE SOCIETY OF ST. PIUS X

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5th October 2007

My Dear Brethren,

The most significant event of the last few months in the history of Traditional Catholicism in Australia was surely the death of Father Patrick Fox on 24th July aged 91 years. He had been a priest for nearly 68 years in which time he had never celebrated Mass other than according to the Traditional Latin rite.

From the very beginning he rejected the spurious "reforms" of the Second Vatican Council and particularly the revolution which took place in the liturgy. Thus he was a source of inspiration for Traditional Catholics in Australia, especially in the years of confusion and uncertainty following immediately after the Council and the promulgation of the new Mass. Throughout the intervening years up to the present, he was always a great supporter of Archbishop Lefebvre and our Society. He was a unique character, mentally alert and physically active right up to the end of his life, unfailingly present at all of the major liturgical functions at Sydney and Goulburn. He is sadly missed and will always have a place in our gratitude and affection.

Father Johnson and Brother Eric-Paul are now well established in Perth and Father MacDonald likewise at Oxley. Father Taouk has been appointed to South Africa. We are sorry to lose him and grateful for all of his good work at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Tynong. This loss is however compensated for by the return of Father Brendan Arthur to Australia and we welcome him back most heartily. He has already taken the place of Father Taouk at Tynong.

This year has been particularly significant for me as I celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood on 29th June. Although it is not customary to have a major celebration for this particular anniversary, I was quite overwhelmed by the splendid function arranged by the Sisters at Rockdale to mark the occasion. A special meal was served in a marquee in the School playground. There was an enormous 4-tier cake and I was presented with an antique alb and other presents.

My heartfelt thanks to the Sisters and to all of you for your loyal support and affection in my priestly duties. I have also been touched by the lesser but no less enjoyable celebrations arranged elsewhere as I have travelled about the country. I can never be sufficiently grateful to Almighty God for all of the blessings that He has showered upon me all during my priestly life.

As it happened, my ordination anniversary this year coincided with the Silver Jubilee of our Superior-General Bishop Fellay. Please pray for all of us priests that we may ever remain faithful to our high calling. Although Bishop Fellay already visited us this year for the Solemn Blessing of the church at Tynong in March, I am happy to inform you that he will pay us another visit in December. As well as officiate at the ordinations in Goulburn on 27th December he will celebrate Mass at all of our principal churches. Details will be announced later.

This year has also been one of much travelling for me. At Easter I officiated at the Holy Week ceremonies in Suva, Fiji. As you will know we have had a Mission in this country for many years and as a rule it is served by the priests from Hampton, Melbourne. Father Delsorte or Fr. Becher spend a fortnight there every two months. The fact that a priest is present so rarely means that the congregation has not increased significantly over the years but a maximum of about a hundred were present at Holy Week at the chapel and house which the Society recently received from Jack and Mary Shaw. Let us

pray that there may be a permanent priestly presence in this country which has patiently waited for so long.

From Fiji I proceeded to North America where I visited the Society in Mexico. Several hundred people attend Mass in Mexico City and sixteen priests serve the country as a whole from the Society's five houses. The Faith seems, superficially at least, to have survived better here than in many other countries. I visited many churches and most had people praying in them. The Masses I witnessed were, however, as bad as anywhere else. The highlight of the stay was, of course, a visit to Our Lady of Guadeloupe. Unfortunately, however, the miraculous image is now housed in a new basilica which resembles nothing so much as a monstrous modern concrete concert hall. In the old basilica I witnessed for the first time in my life Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the accompaniment of pop music!

From Mexico City I travelled to the United States where I had been invited to preach a Retreat to the Society priests at Phoenix, Arizona. The Society is very strong in the United States, so thirty six priests took part, just over half of all of the priests in the District! As you can imagine it was very impressive to see such a large gathering of priests for this occasion. Before returning to Australia I visited the Superior, Father Fullerton at the Society's new American headquarters on a fine 40 acre property just outside Kansas City. Father Fullerton will visit Australia in January and preach the annual Retreat to our priests here.

Much excitement has been engendered by the recent Motu Proprio and there is no doubt that this is of major significance and would have been unthinkable not so long ago but it is unreasonable to expect too much too soon. Its implementation remains under the control of the same bishops who have suppressed the Mass for so long; the stipulations regarding its celebration are not dissimilar to those of the recent Indult Masses etc. Although it is now available to all who want it we should not forget that the Traditional Mass has not been part of the experience of the average Catholic for nearly forty years, and there can be no demand for what is unknown.

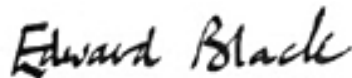
I think that the New Mass would never have become universal if it had been introduced merely as an alternative to the old and this on the ground of its unfamiliarity alone. This is one reason why the full force of the law (as was believed) was used to impose it. Even the evident superiority of the Old Mass is no indication that it will eventually lead to the eclipse of the New. The Pope himself states that he believes this to be unfounded, because "the use of the old Missal presupposes a degree of liturgical formation not found very often." It is rather like expecting the manifest superiority of classical music to eclipse "pop" when it is precisely the opposite which has occurred and appears to be enduring ----- *vide* the congregation in the Basilica of Guadalupe!

Of course the Church cannot be restored by decrees and legislation alone but only by a true conversion of heart – especially the true conversion of our own hearts. Until then things should remain much the same

Enclosed is an envelope in which you should place the names of the deceased whom you wish to be included in Masses celebrated during November, the month of the Holy Souls. Any offerings included will be used for the general work of the Society. They are not Mass stipends.

With every good wish and blessing.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Black". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Father Edward Black
Superior

