

Columnists

Dialogue with a follower of Lefebvre

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

**From a Lefebvre follower:** "The first three queries in your column of April 29 are typical of your editorial technique — sympathize, patronize, and say nothing concrete. You sympathize with recalcitrant nuns, and even pro-abortion Father Charles Curran gets a compliment on his neat dressing. Talk about skirting issues!"

**Comment:** I wonder who these recalcitrant nuns are who consider me sympathetic. That Father Curran's neat hairdo and dress — though I have never been sure whether his neckties match his grey suits — are admired is a gentle comment which hardly signifies applause for his contestation of the Holy Father and the teaching Church.

**L.:** "On the subject of the Tridentine Mass, you are suddenly able to depart from the usual editorial 'don't know,' and even your standard paternal sympathy. You come out with a certain 'No,' and proceed with sympathy which is neither desired, accurate nor worthy of a priest of your years?"

**Comment:** The writer refers to an article which gave the opinion that if the Lefebvre folk insist that only the Tridentine Mass is valid, the local bishop can hardly give his blessing on a conventicle which denounces the Novus Ordo Mass as invalid. I have known personally some of the Lefebvre people who left the Universal Church. They are earnest, devout people who have a hang-up about changes which unsettle a deep-rooted custom. They love the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction, novenas, sacramentals. However, they reject the Holy Father, which is uncatholic and unreasonable.

**L.:** "To obey (the pope) would be to betray God and the Church as it taught throughout the centuries. This we cannot do. The new Mass is not a Catholic Mass, and it does not express the Catholic Faith. Pope St. Pius V ordered the Latin Roman Catholic Mass, Tridentine, 'in perpetuity' in the decree *Quo Primum*. The official teaching of the Church is clear on the subject. 'If anyone omits or changes anything in the form of the Consecration ... and

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in this change of words the words do not mean the same thing, he commits a mortal sin and he does not effect the Sacrament! St. Pius V?"

**Comment:** Who would argue against such a proposition regarding the meaning of words? But the Mass at the Last Supper was in Aramaic, not Latin. The ritual was not that of the third or the 13th or the 16th century during the reign of Pius V. History praises Pius V for the vigor with which he put the decrees of the Council of Trent into effect, though most historians think he was mistaken in declaring Queen Elizabeth I deposed from the throne of England, which brought about an awful persecution of the Catholic Church during her reign. But it is unreasonable to claim that St. Pius V could bind the popes in perpetuity from effecting liturgical changes, if they determined the changes good for the Church.

The final defection of Archbishop Lefebvre should be a signal to his followers to return home to the Church they really love, rather than making themselves another protesting sect. The Lefebvre people have been led through a strong attachment to traditions like Latin, the Tridentine Mass liturgy, which is only 400 years old, and such like. But their attachment to the Catholic Faith must include the essential element: unity with the Bishop of Rome, and acceptance of the magisterium.

Unhappily Archbishop Lefebvre, whose whole life has been one of dedication, chose to cut himself and his followers from the Catholic Church. Happily, some of his followers have returned home where they belong. And longingly we hope that others will follow. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." "Where Peter is, there is the Church."

Jesus teaches his followers to pray

By Cindy Bassett

One day when all of the apostles were together, Matthew asked John, "I have noticed that Jesus often leaves us to go off alone. Where does he go?"

"I asked Jesus about it and he told me that he goes to pray to his Father," John replied. "Jesus explained it this way: 'I must not be so busy doing my Father's work that I do not go to him in prayer.'"

Later on, when Jesus returned, Matthew approached him and said, "Lord, teach us how to pray. We want to be like you."

"When you pray," Jesus began, "you should go before God with faith. Keep on praying and don't give up even if you don't receive an answer right away. You must be like the woman in this story ..."

"The poor widow had been mistreated by someone. So she went before the judge of a certain town to plead for justice for herself in the matter."

"Unfortunately, this judge was not honorable. Because he knew that the woman had no means by which to pay him, he simply ignored her."

"Nevertheless, even though the whole situation seemed hopeless, this woman would not be put off. Again and again, she went back before the judge to restate her complaint and demand justice."

"Finally, the judge decided, 'Even though I care nothing about her case, I am going to make certain that this widow receives her fair share of justice. For otherwise, she is going to wear me out by coming back here!'"

When Jesus finished the story, he turned to his apostles and asked, "If even a dishonorable judge can grant a request, don't you think that God who loves you will listen to your cries to him for help? But, first you must ask him with faith!"

"Be careful, too," Jesus continued, "how you pray to my Father!" And Jesus told his apostles another story ...

"Two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, both went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee had done all that the laws of God required of him. And the tax collector had been dishonest in his dealings and succeeded in making a huge

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profit for himself.

"The Pharisee went to the very front of the temple so that everyone could see him. 'Thank you, Lord,' he prayed, 'that I am not like the others in the world who do evil in your sight — the robbers and the murderers.' He paused, noticing the tax collector who had remained at the back of the temple. 'Or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of everything I own back to you.' The Pharisee was proud of all that he had done with his life."

"Not so with the tax collector who never once raised his eyes as he prayed at the back of the Temple: 'God, have mercy on this sinner.'"

"It was this tax collector and not the Pharisee who was pleasing to God," Jesus told his apostles. "For even though the tax collector had sinned, he humbled himself before God. Those who humble themselves will be exalted by God. And those who exalt themselves will be humbled."

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"

"For if you forgive people when they sin against you, God will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive sins, God will not forgive your sins."

Scripture reference: Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 18:1-14.

Meditation: Lord, help us to pray as you have taught us.

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