

# Aftershocks of schism still reverberate

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — One year after Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre provoked a schism by ordaining bishops against papal orders, the aftershocks are still reverberating through the Vatican and beyond.

The rumblings have centered not so much on the 83-year-old archbishop's act of defiance, seen in retrospect by many Vatican officials as unpreventable. Instead, much of the behind-the-scenes debate is about the Vatican's effort to lure back Archbishop Lefebvre's followers and sympathizers.

On May 16, the presidents of the Swiss, French, British and German bishops' conferences met with Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials to voice strong concern about the way the Vatican's Ecclesia Dei commission is going about that task, according to well-informed sources.

Ecclesia Dei was set up by the pope almost immediately after the illicit ordinations by Archbishop Lefebvre in order to "facilitate full ecclesial communion" among followers who might hesitate to follow him into schism. But since then, some churchmen have questioned whether too many concessions are being given to these "traditionalist" Catholics.

"The bishops want to know where they stand when they are confronted by actions of Ecclesia Dei," said a church source who works with the Swiss bishops' conference.

He said the bishops questioned the commission's practice of granting indulgences of special permission to priests for celebration of the Tridentine Mass, for example. They also wanted to know more about the nature and mandate of Ecclesia Dei and were concerned that it has no rep-



AP Wide World Photo

## Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

resentation from local dioceses, he said. Questions were also raised about the relative independence of some reintegrated groups from local bishops, the source said.

"When the pope created this commission, it was an attempt to help in an intermediate or transition stage — not to create a new rite or a new institution. But some people now think maybe there should be a

new rite. This was not the bishops' understanding," he said.

Within four months of its creation, Ecclesia Dei had "regularized" four small groups of priests, religious and seminarians. Among them was the Priestly Society of St. Peter, an order of about 20 priests and 30 seminarians, mostly drawn from Archbishop Lefebvre's society. In theory, this order could continue to grow, but new membership has slowed to a trickle in recent months.

The commission, meanwhile, has granted more than 100 "celebrates" so that individual priests can say the Tridentine Mass. When this request involves groups, the local bishop must grant his permission, too.

Cardinal Paul Mayer, who heads Ecclesia Dei, recently said some local bishops have not pushed hard enough in implementing the pope's plan to bring back Archbishop Lefebvre's followers. He noted that the pope's letter unveiling Ecclesia Dei asked bishops to make a "wide and generous" application of the option for the Tridentine Mass, for example.

Some "traditionalist" believers find it impossible, or nearly impossible, to benefit from the concessions granted by the pope, Cardinal Mayer said in an interview with the Italian-based magazine *30 Days*. He quoted from a letter the commission had received from one layman who described a "feeling of desperation among traditionalist Catholics" because "bishops want to prevent a generous response from being given."

In dioceses where bishops resist the concessions, the 78-year-old cardinal said, the schismatic movement tends to retain or pick up members.

# Archdiocese of Ottawa divided over traditional worship group

By Mike Mastromatteo  
Catholic News Service

OTTAWA, Canada — Ottawa Archbishop Joseph-Aurele Plourde has drawn fire after stopping efforts to establish a traditional worship community that he sees as dividing the archdiocese.

Father Pat Powers, a spokesman for the archbishop, said that although the prelate had initially supported the project, the four Vancouver priests who sought to establish the community had become "a source of division and controversy." Their community, called the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, had begun to draw Catholics opposed to Second Vatican Council liturgical reforms, he said.

Archbishop Plourde's decision to terminate the project at the end of its "experimental period" raised an outcry among supporters of the community, who ap-

pealed unsuccessfully to the Vatican and picketed the archbishop in protest.

Father William Ashley, administrator of the liturgical community, said the charge of divisiveness "is only a perjorative way of defining our success."

"I think the (arch)diocese was surprised that there are so many people who support this type of thing," he said. The priest added that he hopes whoever succeeds the 74-year-old archbishop would be more sympathetic.

Archbishop Plourde has ordered the fledgling community, which was being organized in St. Brigid's Parish, to leave his archdiocese by Aug. 15.

The oratories are autonomous societies of apostolic life that emphasize greater use of Latin during Mass, the public praying of vespers, Gregorian chants and other traditional practices.



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