

WORLD & NATION

Lefebvre talks concern cardinal, others

By John Norton
Catholic News Service

ROME — Following news reports suggesting an imminent Vatican reconciliation with a group of followers of the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, an influential French cardinal and an Italian Catholic magazine said the Vatican should proceed slowly and cautiously.

Cardinal Pierre Eyt of Bordeaux said the unresolved "doctrinal, liturgical, sacramental (and) institutional" differences with the Priestly Society of St. Pius X appeared too great to overcome "without profound study and sufficient delay."

"For the moment, considering these problems, there are many of us who see more obstacles than openings on this path (of reconciliation)," he said in a statement posted in late March on his archdiocesan Web site.

In a similar vein, the editors of *Jesus*, an Italian monthly magazine published by the Pauline Fathers, said they were "troubled" by reports suggesting that a formal reconciliation might be reached by Easter, April 15.

The magazine noted statements earlier

in the year by the society's leader, Bishop Bernard Fellay, "condemning in no uncertain terms the church renewal introduced by Vatican II."

"Has he really changed his mind in such a short period of time? Or rather is there someone within the ecclesial community who needs to review the 'basics'?" it said in an editorial in its April issue.

The magazine said Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, head of the Vatican commission that dialogues with the St. Pius X society, was thought to be the "most optimistic with regard to the timing of the operation."

Vatican sources have said that while contacts with the society have continued, it is too early to speak of concrete moves toward reconciliation.

La Razon, a Spanish newspaper, reported in mid-March that the Vatican was studying the possibility of re-incorporating the society into the church as a personal prelature, essentially a diocese without territorial boundaries. The only other personal prelature is *Opus Dei*.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, Vatican spokesman, confirmed March 22 that, at Pope John Paul II's request, formal talks

had been opened with the society, but gave no further details.

The St. Pius X society's bishops were excommunicated in 1988 along with Archbishop Lefebvre, a self-styled traditionalist who rejected Vatican II reforms in liturgy, ecumenism and other areas of church life.

In a March newsletter, the Lefebvre society claimed that the church dialogue had been "temporarily compromised" and blamed the Vatican for the talks' suspension, Cardinal Eyt said.

The cardinal, a member of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, added, "I'm pleased that the cause of the said suspension came from the side of Rome."

Indicating the vast difference between the two sides, he said, the theological content of the St. Pius X society's newsletter "does nothing less than radically contradict the doctrine regarding the Eucharist proclaimed by (Popes) Paul VI and John Paul II."

Time and prolonged study will be necessary to overcome theological differences and "oppositions" regarding this and "many other elements of the faith," he said.

Bishops ask Catholics to fill out laity survey

WASHINGTON (GNS) — The U.S. bishops' Committee on the Laity has launched an online survey of lay Catholics in the United States as part of an effort to determine how parishes can help people connect their faith with their daily lives.

The survey, which can only be completed at www.laitysurvey.org, is available in English and Spanish and will be posted until May 15.

The survey focuses on several aspects of church life, including knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer and missionary spirit. The survey will not be used to evaluate individual parishes but to help the bishops' committee gain an understanding of how to best help lay Catholics.

People can answer the survey questions as individuals or as a group, having one person fill in the answers.

After the survey is completed and the data is analyzed, a brief summary of the responses will be posted on the Web site.

Bishop John J. McRaith of Owensboro, Ky., chairman of the bishops' laity committee, said the survey would be the first time the committee will be able to invite direct feedback from lay Catholics throughout the country.

"Thanks to the availability of the Internet, we are able to test this as a way to improve communication between the laity and the bishops," he said. "Our committee is anxious to hear from lay Catholics about how their parishes can best help them live their Christian calling in the world."

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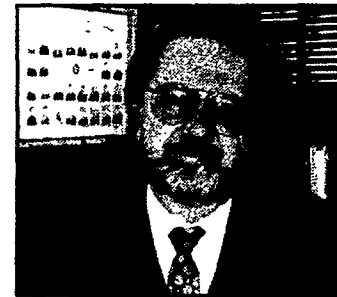
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