



"NEITHER TRIUMPH NOR DESPAIR"

On the Consecrations at Écône and the Duty of Catholic Reconciliation

A Pastoral Letter from the Primus of the Old Roman Apostolate

HE The Mt Revd Dr Jerome Lloyd DD OSJV FRSA

To Their Excellencies the Most Reverend Pascal Schreiber, Michael Goldade, Michel Poinciset de Sivry and Marc Hanappier; to the bishops, priests, religious, seminarians and faithful associated with the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X; and to the bishops, clergy, religious and faithful of the Old Roman Apostolate: grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord.

My Lords, Reverend Fathers, dear Brethren in Christ,

On 1 July 2026, within the Octave of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul according to the traditional Roman calendar, four priests of the Society of Saint Pius X received episcopal consecration at Écône from Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta, assisted by Bishop Bernard Fellay. The new bishops are Pascal Schreiber, Michael Goldade, Michel Poinciset de Sivry and Marc Hanappier.¹

This is an event of grave consequence for the Society, for those faithful who depend upon its ministry, and for the wider Church. It should be considered neither with the triumphalism of those who imagine that Écône has prevailed over Rome, nor with the indiscriminate denunciation of those who treat every canonical irregularity as though it were already identical with formal schism.

The consecrations took place beneath the shadow of Peter and Paul. That circumstance is providential. Saint Peter represents neither arbitrary power nor administrative absolutism, but the office established by Christ as the visible principle of ecclesial unity. Saint Paul represents neither private judgement nor independence from the Church, but fidelity to revealed truth even when that fidelity required him to withstand Peter to the face.

The Church cannot dispense with either principle. Authority is bound to the divine deposit which it exists to guard and transmit. Yet fidelity to the deposit cannot be separated from the divinely constituted order of the Church. Authority is not above Tradition; but neither is resistance above the constitution which Christ gave His Mystical Body.

It is in that difficult conjunction of truth and authority, Tradition and obedience, sacramental necessity and canonical order, that the present events must be judged.

To the Newly Consecrated Bishops

My Lords, you have received not an ecclesiastical distinction, nor the vindication of a party, but the supreme degree of Holy Orders and a correspondingly grave responsibility before God.

The episcopate is not possessed for oneself. It exists for the sanctification, government and instruction of the faithful within the order established by Christ. A bishop is not merely a priest capable of ordaining other priests. He is consecrated to serve the unity, continuity and apostolic mission of the Church.

You have received episcopal consecration without a pontifical mandate. That fact should not be concealed beneath euphemism. Canon 1013 expressly forbids a bishop to consecrate another bishop unless the existence of a pontifical mandate is first established, and the revised penal law of the Latin Church attaches a grave canonical penalty to both the consecrator and the recipient of such a consecration.²

At the same time, Catholic precision requires distinctions which public controversy often ignores. The canonical offence of episcopal consecration without pontifical mandate and the canonical crime of schism are not defined as though they were simply the same offence. Schism is separately defined as the refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or of communion with those subject to him. An unlawful consecration may constitute, manifest or lead to a schismatic act; but the juridical and theological questions cannot be settled merely by repeating the word “schism” without examining intention, profession, conduct and the subsequent exercise of episcopal ministry.²

The gravity of the act must therefore be admitted without exaggerating what has yet to be proved.

The Society has publicly declared that these consecrations were not undertaken to claim ordinary jurisdiction, establish a parallel authority or deny the supreme jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. It presented the dossiers of the four candidates to the Holy See and stated that their episcopal ministry would be limited principally to Holy Orders, Confirmation and sacramentals reserved to bishops.³

Those declarations now impose obligations upon you.

If you claim no ordinary jurisdiction, you must not behave as though you possess it. If you deny any intention to establish a parallel hierarchy, you must not permit your episcopate to develop into one. If you profess submission to the Roman Pontiff, that submission must be more than a theoretical formula invoked to answer accusations. It must be visible in your public teaching, in your restraint, in your rejection of sedevacantism and in your continued pursuit of a canonical settlement.

The extraordinary character claimed for these consecrations must remain extraordinary. Necessity cannot become a self-perpetuating ecclesiology by which the Society alone determines whether a crisis exists, how long it continues, what powers it supplies, and when the ordinary authority of the Church may be disregarded. A plea of necessity which admits no external judgement and no foreseeable termination risks becoming indistinguishable from permanent autonomy.

You must therefore exercise the episcopate in such a manner that every ordination and confirmation points not towards the consolidation of separation, but towards the eventual restoration of normal ecclesial order.

The Society has asked Catholics to believe that you were consecrated to preserve the Church's Tradition rather than to create another Church. The burden of demonstrating that claim now rests substantially upon you.

The Lesson of 1988

The events of 2026 cannot be considered without reference to 30 June 1988, when Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre consecrated four bishops without pontifical mandate.

Pope John Paul II judged that act to be one of grave disobedience and described it as schismatic. Yet even the severity of *Ecclesia Dei afflictata* did not bring the history of the matter to an end. Twenty-one years later, Pope Benedict XVI remitted the excommunications declared against the four surviving bishops. He explained that this was intended to remove an obstacle to reconciliation, restore trust and address the scandal of division.⁴

Pope Francis subsequently granted the priests of the Society faculties for the valid and licit hearing of confessions and authorised arrangements by which Society priests could assist at marriages with the delegation of the local ordinary. The Holy See did this while continuing expressly to recognise the Society's objective canonical irregularity.⁵

These acts did not amount to complete canonical recognition. They do, however, establish something important. Rome has already found juridical and pastoral means to care for the faithful associated with the Society without pretending that the irregularity does not exist. It has remitted penalties, supplied sacramental faculties and created practical provisions for marriages.

It cannot therefore be maintained that nothing practical can be done.

The Pope possesses the dossiers of the four newly consecrated bishops. The Apostolic See has the competence to remit penalties, grant faculties, provide canonical structures and regulate episcopal ministry. The obstacle is not an absence of papal power. It is a decision concerning whether and how that power should be exercised.

The Society, for its part, cannot invoke the concessions already granted by Rome as though they rendered a pontifical mandate unnecessary. Those concessions demonstrate Rome's pastoral concern; they do not abolish the canonical constitution of the episcopate.

The lesson of 1988 is therefore not that Archbishop Lefebvre was entitled to do whatever he personally judged necessary. Neither is it that Rome's judgement resolved every doctrinal and pastoral problem which produced the rupture. The lesson is that an irregular episcopal act can produce consequences lasting for generations, while punishment alone does not heal the underlying wound.

The Church should not repeat that history without having learned from it.

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Society

To the priests, religious, seminarians and faithful of the Society of Saint Pius X, I counsel sobriety.

You may reasonably be relieved that bishops now exist who can continue the ordination of priests and the administration of Confirmation according to the traditional Roman Rite. That relief should not be converted into celebration of an act performed against the express will of the Pope.

There has been no victory over Rome, because no Catholic victory can consist in a further impairment of visible communion with the Apostolic See.

You should continue to assist at the traditional rites, receive the sacraments, form your families in the Faith and support priests who preach Catholic doctrine without compromise. You should also reject the sectarian conclusion that fidelity is confined to the Society or that Catholics beyond its chapels are necessarily faithless, compromised or beyond the ordinary means of grace.

The Society did not create the traditional Roman liturgy, the scholastic theology of the Church or the doctrines which it preserves. These belong to the whole Catholic Church. They are not the property of Écône, nor of any priestly fraternity, episcopal lineage or traditionalist movement.

You must therefore resist two contrary errors. The first is the modernist error which treats inherited doctrine and worship as obstacles to be overcome. The second is the sectarian error which treats possession of the traditional liturgy as sufficient proof of ecclesial rectitude.

Do not permit legitimate criticism of the post-conciliar crisis to become contempt for the papal office. Do not allow anger at Roman authorities to become habitual derision of the Pope. Do not mistake the grave failures of churchmen for the disappearance of the visible Church.

The sedevacantist solution is no solution. It substitutes a private conclusion for the visible constitution of the Church and leaves each adherent dependent upon his own judgement as to when the Apostolic See ceased to possess an occupant and by what authority that judgement binds the faithful.

Pray, therefore, sincerely and publicly for Pope Leo XIV. Pray for him not as a mere verbal safeguard against the accusation of schism, but as the reigning Roman Pontiff upon whom rests the care of the universal Church.

Teach your children the truth about the crisis, but do not form them in bitterness. Explain why the traditional Mass was suppressed, why doctrine has been obscured and why Catholics have resisted destructive innovations. Teach them also that the purpose of resistance is the restoration of Catholic order, not the indefinite preservation of an embattled subculture.

A generation instructed only in what it opposes may eventually cease to understand what it was intended to preserve.

To the Old Roman Apostolate

My dear brethren of the Old Roman Apostolate, we cannot address the Society's position as though the questions raised at Écône had no bearing upon ourselves.

Our history is not identical with that of the Society of Saint Pius X. Our episcopal succession, institutional origins and present circumstances are distinct. We must not appropriate every argument advanced by the Society, nor cite its actions as a retrospective justification for every irregular act in our own history.

Nevertheless, we too maintain Catholic sacramental life in circumstances which do not possess ordinary canonical recognition. We therefore have a particular obligation to speak with accuracy, humility and consistency.

We have described ourselves as Roman Catholics in irregular circumstances. That description must govern us in fact and not merely serve as an apologetic formula.

Irregularity is not an ecclesial identity. It is not a mark of superiority. It is not evidence that those who possess ordinary canonical recognition are less Catholic than ourselves. It is a wound in the visible order of the Church which may sometimes have to be endured, but which should never be treated as desirable or permanent.

Valid apostolic succession is necessary for the continuation of sacramental ministry, but validity alone does not confer canonical mission. The historical transmission of episcopal orders does not make each recipient the final judge of his own authority, territorial competence or ecclesial status. Apostolic succession is not merely a genealogy of consecrators; it is ordered to the apostolic faith, the sacramental life of the Church and communion within her divinely established constitution.

We must therefore guard against the characteristic temptations of prolonged irregularity. A bishop may begin as the custodian of an inheritance and end by behaving as its proprietor. Independence initially endured from necessity may become independence preferred from habit. Reconciliation may be professed in principle while every practical possibility of it is regarded as a threat to institutional autonomy.

We must examine ourselves honestly.

Do our bishops and clergy understand irregularity as a condition to be remedied, or as a status to be defended?

Do we pray for the Pope because we recognise in him the successor of Saint Peter, or merely because the mention of his name distinguishes us from sedevacantists?

Do we genuinely desire a canonical settlement, or only one which would require no sacrifice, scrutiny, correction or change on our part?

Have we formed our faithful to desire the visible unity of the Church, or to suspect that any reconciliation with Rome must necessarily involve betrayal?

These questions do not imply that recognition should be purchased by doctrinal compromise. We cannot accept as the price of regularisation the denial of the received Faith, the

abandonment of the traditional Roman Rite or silence concerning errors which have caused demonstrable harm to the Church.

But neither may we employ the defence of truth as a pretext for avoiding every serious attempt at reconciliation.

As Primus of the Old Roman Apostolate, I therefore renew publicly our desire for honourable reconciliation with the Apostolic See: a reconciliation founded upon the perennial Magisterium, the integrity of Catholic doctrine, the preservation of the traditional Roman liturgy and a truthful acknowledgement of our history and circumstances.

We do not seek recognition at the price of truth. Neither do we invoke truth as an excuse never seriously to pursue recognition.

The events at Écône should move us not to self-congratulation, but to an examination of conscience and a renewed commitment to the visible peace of the Church.

To the Holy Father

Most Holy Father, your appeal of 29 June was direct and paternal. You recognised the Society's attachment to liturgical life, priestly formation and the preservation of Tradition, while pleading with Father Davide Pagliarani to desist from the intended consecrations. Father Pagliarani replied by denying any intention of separation from the Roman Church, expressing confidence in an eventual resolution and asking for your blessing.⁶

The consecrations have nevertheless proceeded.

The Apostolic See must now respond. That response should uphold the genuine authority of the Roman Pontiff and the canonical order of the episcopate. It should also distinguish carefully between unlawful consecration, canonical disobedience and a proved refusal of submission constituting schism.

Indiscriminate language will not assist the Church. Neither will penalties imposed without a corresponding pastoral plan for the priests and faithful who depend upon the Society.

Holy Father, do not answer the wound with amputation.

The faithful must not be used as instruments by either side. They should not be deprived of sacramental care in order to compel the submission of their superiors, nor should their attachment to Tradition be used to justify an indefinitely expanding parallel structure.

The Holy See should receive Father Pagliarani personally, appoint intermediaries possessing doctrinal orthodoxy and genuine knowledge of the traditional movement, and establish a definite process directed towards canonical resolution.

The dossiers have been submitted. Rome has regularised irregular bishops in other circumstances. It remitted the penalties imposed upon the Society's bishops in 2009. It granted sacramental faculties without requiring the prior resolution of every doctrinal disagreement. There is therefore no absence of juridical competence and no want of possible mechanisms.^{4 5}

What is required is the will to employ them prudently.

A lawful provision for episcopal ministry would not resolve every dispute concerning the Second Vatican Council, religious liberty, ecumenism, collegiality or the liturgical reform. It would, however, remove the recurrent claim of sacramental necessity and place future disagreements within an ordered canonical relationship rather than an expanding state of exception.

The Society must be required to recognise the real jurisdiction of the Apostolic See. Rome, in turn, must make that recognition practically possible without demanding silence concerning legitimate doctrinal questions or the abandonment of the traditional Roman Rite.

The authority of Peter is not diminished when it acts with paternal generosity. It is vindicated.

The Responsibility of the New Bishops

My Lords, your future conduct will determine how the consecrations of 1 July are eventually understood.

If you assume ordinary jurisdiction, encourage contempt for the Apostolic See, tolerate sede vacantism, multiply episcopal acts without restraint or prepare further consecrations as though papal authority were irrelevant, you will substantiate the charge that the present act established a parallel hierarchy.

If, however, you limit your ministry according to the purpose publicly declared by the Society, profess and demonstrate submission to the Roman Pontiff, resist every movement towards formal separation and work consistently for regularisation, you will provide evidence that the act, although canonically unlawful, was not intended to found another Church.

You must not allow praise from those embittered against Rome to determine your course. Neither should hostile commentary from those indifferent to the destruction of Tradition provoke you into greater separation.

Your duty is not to satisfy a party. It is to preserve the Catholic Faith, sanctify souls and place the episcopal ministry you have received at the service of the whole Church.

That service will remain incomplete for as long as your ministry lacks normal canonical mission. You should therefore regard regularisation not as an optional concession which Rome may one day offer, but as an object towards which your own conduct must be deliberately ordered.

A Common Duty

The present crisis will not be resolved while every party regards repentance and correction as obligations belonging solely to others.

Rome must acknowledge the doctrinal confusion, liturgical destruction and pastoral injustice which have contributed to the alienation of traditional Catholics.

The Society must examine whether its interpretation of necessity has become so comprehensive that no practical act of Roman authority can bind it whenever its own superiors judge the crisis to continue.

The Old Roman Apostolate must ensure that its profession of Roman Catholic identity is expressed in a serious and practical desire for ecclesial reconciliation.

Traditional Catholics generally must distinguish principled resistance from anger, factionalism and contempt.

Those who defend the post-conciliar settlement must cease to use obedience as though it relieved them of the obligation to answer substantive doctrinal and pastoral criticism.

The Church cannot be healed by falsehood. Neither can she be healed by the indefinite multiplication of exceptional structures.

The task before us is to preserve the Faith without converting resistance into a permanent principle of separation; to uphold papal authority without treating it as arbitrary power; and to seek canonical peace without making peace dependent upon the suppression of truth.

To the newly consecrated bishops, I offer my prayers and the counsel of a brother bishop acquainted with the burdens of irregular ministry.

To the clergy and faithful of the Society, I commend sobriety, fidelity and continued prayer for the Roman Pontiff.

To the bishops, clergy, religious and faithful of the Old Roman Apostolate, I renew the obligation to apply to ourselves every principle which we invoke in judging others.

To the Holy Father, I make this filial appeal:

Holy Father, provide a lawful road home—not only for the Society, but for all Roman Catholics who preserve the received Faith and worship of the Church while enduring irregular circumstances.

May the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul obtain for us fidelity without rebellion, authority without arbitrariness and unity without compromise.

May Saint Pius X preserve the Church from Modernism and from every false remedy which would cure error by separation.

May the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of Good Counsel, obtain the reconciliation of father and sons before the present wound is permitted to deepen.

Oremus pro invicem

LX.

✠ **Jerome Seleisi**

Brichtelmestunensis

In Octava S. Joannis Baptistæ

Commemoratio: Tertia die infra Octavam Ss. Apostolorum Petri et Pauli MMXXVI A.D.

Notes

¹ Society of Saint Pius X, “Episcopal Consecrations at Écône—July 1, 2026,” and “The General House Announces the Names of the Future Bishops,” 26 May and 1 July 2026. The Society identified Pascal Schreiber, Michael Goldade, Michel Poinciset de Sivry and Marc Hanappier as the four candidates and stated that Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta would act as principal consecrator, assisted by Bishop Bernard Fellay.

² Code of Canon Law, canons 751, 1013 and 1387. Canon 1013 prohibits episcopal consecration without an established pontifical mandate; canon 1387 prescribes the penalty attached to the act; canon 751 separately defines schism as refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or communion with those subject to him.

³ Society of Saint Pius X, “The General House Announces the Names of the Future Bishops,” 26 May 2026. The communiqué stated that the dossiers were presented to Pope Leo XIV and denied any intention to claim jurisdiction, establish a parallel authority or challenge the supreme jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff.

⁴ John Paul II, apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, 2 July 1988; Congregation for Bishops, “Decree Remitting the Excommunication *Latae Sententiae*,” 21 January 2009; Benedict XVI, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Concerning the Remission of the Excommunication of the Four Bishops Consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre,” 10 March 2009.

⁵ Francis, apostolic letter *Misericordia et misera*, 20 November 2016, no. 12; Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, “Letter to the Ordinaries of the Episcopal Conferences Concerned on the Faculties for the Celebration of Marriages of the Faithful of the Society of Saint Pius X,” 27 March 2017.

⁶ Leo XIV, “Letter to the Reverend Father Davide Pagliarani, Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X,” 29 June 2026; Davide Pagliarani, “Letter from the Superior General in Response to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV,” 30 June 2026.