



## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SEMINARY

### **"I AM ONLY A BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH"**

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Monday of Holy Week, 1991, in the middle of the night, the seminarians of Ecône were called to the Chapel to pray. In the hospital of the neighboring city of Martigny, Archbishop Lefebvre, combatant for the Faith, had rendered his fine soul to God.

On that year, Holy Monday fell on March 25<sup>th</sup>, the date on which the Church celebrates the conception of Our Lord in the most chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin – it is the date both of His conception and of His priestly ordination. He who had received from God the mission of defending the Catholic Mass and Priesthood, died at the very hour in which the Church commemorates the mystery of the cross and in which She celebrates the Priesthood of Christ, begun in the womb of the Virgin Mother. How could we not discern here the thoughtfulness of Providence? Stressing this correspondence of dates, a fine Valaisan writer entitled an article devoted to Msgr. Lefebvre shortly after his death: *To die the day when it all begins*.

To reflect upon this noble figure 25 years after his death would be sterile if that consideration consisted only in praising his prudent and wise action. Filial admiration would be in vain if we were not to follow the path that he traced by courageously and faithfully fighting the combat of the Faith of which St. Paul speaks.

The combat of Msgr. Lefebvre was that of a shepherd of the Roman Catholic Church, defending the flock while proclaiming the doctrines of the Faith, in season and out of season, always against the current and often alone. This loneliness and this combat were expressed with force in June 1988, in the sermon of the ceremony of the episcopal consecrations: *I am only a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church who continues to transmit doctrine: 'Tradidi quod et accepi'* (1 Cor. 15:3). He handed on what he had received: the fight for the honor of Christ and the radiance of His Cross.

To fight so that the reign of Christ does not remain a dead letter, only a vague idea, but, on the contrary, an ecclesiastical, social, familial reality.

His fight was prompted by the intimate conviction which animated his whole life as bishop, hinted at in the passage of St. John's Gospel which he had chosen as his episcopal motto: *Credidimus Caritati*, "We have believed in Charity." He fought so that Faith, Hope and Charity might lead souls to God.

Shepherd of souls and missionary, Msgr. Lefebvre was animated by these three beautiful theological virtues, which kept him habitually focused on God and on the virtue

of religion that he cherished so much and whose champion he willingly became. The enormous combat he undertook against modern errors can be truly understood only if one becomes aware of the ardent intensity of his soul, burning with God's Love, and which was clearly expressed in his book *Spiritual Journey*.

Msgr. Lefebvre was a faithful prelate. He was faithful in his union to God, his love of doctrine and the means of sanctification of souls, in his love of the Mass and of the Catholic Priesthood, in his profound and staunch love of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. At a time when most bishops have already surrendered, how can we not stress this?

There is no need to describe his historical role: it is enough to note that his vigorous, peaceful and supernatural action allowed the Catholic Mass and Priesthood not to sink into oblivion. His beneficial influence continues nowadays, because today's combat is primarily the same as yesterday's – indeed, Modernism continues to distill its deadly poisons within the Church. The attackers have other faces, the frontlines have changed, but the substance of the evil is exactly the same as that described and opposed by St. Pius X and Msgr. Lefebvre.

It will be up to the historians to outline the contours of this continuing providential action. It will be necessary for them to underline Msgr. Lefebvre's posthumous role and to note that his children have kept intact his heritage in the midst of a tempest without precedent, without departing from his principles and his conduct. Like their Father, they are found at the foot of the Chair of Peter, animated by a lively and constant Faith and a Hope that nothing can extinguish, by an incomparable love for Christ and His Divine Spouse, the Church, and by an ardent zeal for souls. They thus continue his action, all the while demanding from the Pope, respectfully but firmly, the return to eternal Rome and the abandonment of modernistic Rome.

These 25 years are also a privileged occasion to thank God for having kept us faithful to Msgr. Lefebvre's teaching and action during these times of war within our Holy Mother, the Roman Catholic Church. Our grateful children's hearts see in this a special protection that we owe him and an additional reason for our thanksgiving and fidelity.

May God grant us the grace of keeping intact and of transmitting, in our turn, the teaching that Msgr. Lefebvre left us as a spiritual testament during his sermon of September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1979: *For the glory of the Most Holy Trinity, for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, for the love of the Church, for the love of the Pope, for the love of bishops, of priests, of all the faithful, for the salvation of the world, for the salvation of souls, keep this testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ! Keep the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ! Keep the Mass of always!*

*In Christo sacerdote et Maria.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'Y. le Roux' with a stylized flourish at the end. Below the signature is a horizontal line with a small cross on the left and an arrow pointing to the right.

Fr. Yves le Roux