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Interview with Bishop Richard Nelson Williamson

Bishop Richard Nelson Williamson is the Rector of the Nuestra Senora Corredentora Seminary of the Society of St. Pius X in La Reja, Argentina. Before that time he was Rector of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in both Winona, Minnesota and Ridgefield, Connecticut. And prior to that he was asked by Archbishop Lefebvre to be a seminary professor in Econe. From nearly the beginning of his priesthood His Excellency has been entrusted with the care and formation of future priests. Throughout the years Bishop Williamson has explored many issues relating to the encroaching anti-Catholic culture that surrounds us. Many have read those letters, but few know much about him.

This year is the 30th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, of happy memory. I visited His Excellency in Argentina to talk about his 30 years of priesthood. This interview is one of the results of 4 days of conversation.



Your Excellency, let's start at the beginning. What was family life like in the Williamson household ?

I had parents that were not Catholic but most certainly looked after their three children as best they knew. They made sure I had a very good education up to the age of 18, even 21.

Who were the other two children ?

I have an older and a younger brother—neither of them Catholic, but both still living. My younger brother lives in New Zealand so I see him rarely, and my older brother lives in England so I see him occasionally.

What do they think of having a bishop for a brother ?

They are not unsympathetic. They are happy that I am “doing my thing.”

I have heard that you met Dr. Albert

Schweitzer in your younger days. Is that true ?

Yes, between 1963 and 1965 I was a schoolmaster in Ghana, West Africa, formerly the Gold Coast until it became independent in 1958. For my summer vacation in 1964, I took a French steamboat down the West African Coast to Libreville, the capital of French Gabon, in order to visit Dr. Schweitzer, not far away. At that time he had long been famous as a missionary hero in Africa—something like the Mother Teresa of his day. I spent four weeks in his famous jungle hospital because guest-workers were always welcome. I was able to speak to him personally twice. He was an interesting figure. While he certainly didn't have the Catholic Faith, he was very realistic about Africa

and its politics. He was quite old when I met him. He came from Alsace, and he knew music very well, especially Bach. And I can remember talking to him about Beethoven, whom he admired for “his modulations, and the freedom of his orchestra.”

Why was his hospital famous ?

It was very crude by modern standards, but it did a great deal of good, medically speaking, because it was very realistically adapted to African conditions. I had a most interesting holiday! Dr. Schweitzer had been thoroughly hospitable.

Some people say that Beethoven played a great part in your conversion. Is that true ?

Certainly. Without Beethoven during my adolescent years, I’m not sure I would be a Catholic today. Mozart also greatly helped, and Wagner provided an extra religious dimension.

Wasn’t Wagner a favorite of the Nazis and Hitler ?

Wagner appealed to Hitler precisely because his operas offer a religious dimension without the Faith, in other words, a substitute redemption.

Who is the redeemer in Wagner’s operas ?

Basically, woman. Especially in the Flying Dutchman and The Ring.

Why was that ?

Because, as St. Paul says (I Cor. 11), as Christ is head of the man, so man is head of the woman. Now, broadly speaking, around the time of the French Revolution, modern man refused to be under Christ, but, to hold things together, women stayed under man for a while. So she “saved” the situation for about a hundred years, which is when Wagner was writing his operas. But by the 20th century she had had enough, and that is when the “emancipation” of women began. The foundations have shaken ever since!

To get back to opera, would you say it helps our Catholic lives ?

Opera is obviously not necessary for a Catholic life. However, like all great art, it contains a great deal of truth about human life. And as St. Augustine said, all truth belongs to Catholics, meaning that Catholics can profit by truth wherever they find it. Opera is very much human nature, and so especially in today’s more and more anti-human world, opera can provide a good “sentimental education,” or education in the human heart, a far better education of the heart than either Hollywood or television provide.

Apart from music, what else contributed to your conversion ?

Especially reading the beginning of St. Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae. A Jesuit friend of the family recommended I read Teilhard de Chardin, but he added that “if I liked the older stuff,” I might try St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas. So I tried the Summa and I loved it. It was so utterly unsentimental. I had been used to religion in gooey washes of mush and slush. And here were great truths as hard as nails. I loved it.

So you converted—to the Novus Ordo Church ?

Yes, initially. I was received into the Church in early 1971 by a “conservative” priest. He did not agree with Archbishop Lefebvre, but he believed I had a vocation, so he sent me firstly to a diocese and secondly to a religious congregation in London. After I got kicked out for the second time, he said, in his heavy Irish accent, “If you can’t keep your big mouth shut, there’s only one place for you, and that’s Ecône.” So that’s where I went.

What were your initial impressions of Ecône and the Archbishop ?

Ecône—peace and order. The Archbishop—radiant with peace and order.

And what about your fellow seminarians, whom Bishop Tissier called in his book a “fragile and disparate” bunch ?

The seminarians were good men, like fragments after the explosion of the 1960's, magnetized by the Archbishop picking up pieces in the 1970's. The magnetism was very strong, without being a cult of personality. There was a quiet joy and a real sense of purpose.

Do you see any difference in the character of those who sought Tradition in the 1970's and those who are seeking it today ?

In the 1970's one was only 20 years away from pre-conciliar times, so the Archbishop was able to profit at that time from remains of the relative order and sanity of the pre-conciliar world. Also, in the '70's the fight for Tradition was fresh, everything was new, the Society was a novelty, and was just getting its “act” on the road. Today the novelty is gone, the “act” has been on the road for 35 years, and the Society is a full-scale operation (for instance, just in France we have six boys' schools), and tiredness threatens a number of our priests and faithful.

As for order and sanity in the world around us, between the 1970's and today there has been an enormous deterioration. The world of today exerts a relentless, soft pressure on Catholics, 24/7.

But isn't the Society solidly on its feet ?

Time must tell. In Communist Russia the Church had to go underground as deeply as possible. Classic Catholic congregations and seminaries were out of the question.

Do you expect us to have to operate underground in the near future ?

It seems to me to be a distinct possibility.

What might precipitate that ?

A Russian and/or Chinese attack and victory over the West is one possible speculation.

Some might balk at likening Russia and China simply because they both had their roots in atheistic communism. They have definitely taken different paths to the current political situations in their respective countries.

I do not pretend to be an expert, but the Old Testament perspective will be the truest. According to that perspective, the apostate West is running up a tidal wave of sins, for which the Lord God “needs,” i.e. will often use, a human scourge, like the Assyrians for the Israelites of old. Now who would or might that scourge be today ?

Surely China has never ceased to be Communist, i.e. intent upon establishing the Communist “paradise” throughout the world. China has long despised the domineering materialistic West. Many reports speak of China's preparation for war upon the USA in the Pacific theater, and of Chinese infiltration within the USA.

As for Russia, Putin does indeed seem to be a Russian nationalist. As such he resents and fears Russia being encircled by American military bases, whatever be or be not his residuary Communism. In other words, he too has more than sufficient human reason to serve as a scourge for the Lord God of Hosts. Certainly our media cannot be relied upon to tell us the truth about either Russia or China. Back to the Old Testament !

Apart from this distinction between Russia and China, people believe that the West is invincible. Is it not ?

You have to believe the media to believe that.

Well, getting back to the 1970's for a moment, tell us about the "Hot Summer" of 1976.

The summer of 1976 was when the first big class of new priests was ordained at Ecône. In 1974 there had been one or two, in 1975 there were three, in 1976 we were 14 altogether.

What was the atmosphere like ?

Strangely enough I have no special memories, perhaps because we ordinands were in the calm in the eye of the storm. The Archbishop, on the other hand, was taking a lot of heat. Yet he remained firm, very firm. He knew what was at stake and he protected us. Essentially, he told us, "You're not going to do all of your seminary training only to have me abandon you. I will not abandon you." I clearly remember him saying it, perhaps because it was so typically him, without fanfare or rhetoric. He said it very quietly. And he was as good as his word.

Rome might menace and scream and threaten and thunder, and the media might stir up a global storm, as they did in 1988, but the Archbishop just went about his Heavenly Father's business.

In 1983 you had to deal in Ridgefield, Connecticut, with the split from the Society of nine American priests in the Northeast. It's been over 20 years. How do you look back on that now ?

It was a bit spectacular at the time. Things had to be kept going.

And what of the sedevacantist positions which those priests took ?

I am rather less anti-sedevacantist than a number of my colleagues. I don't happen to believe sedevacantism is the biggest sin in the book. It has been demonized. At worst, sedevacantists are proud and sterile, but there are also some very honest and intelligent Catholics who simply cannot believe that recent Popes are true Vicars of Christ.

Do you agree with their consecrating their own bishops ?

I can't say it was a wise idea for most of them. Yet we are living through an unparalleled crisis. And I think the magnitude of the crisis calls for a great deal of charity and compassion, 355 degrees, almost all around the compass, and more charity and compassion with each day that passes. The Archbishop was a man of deep charity and trust.

Some people say he trusted too much, as when in 1975 he walked into the kangaroo trial with the three cardinals in Rome.

Well, his trust and charity were also matched with excellent judgment. For example, in the 1970's a number of candidates for the priesthood were ordained that might have been a disappointment, and would have never made it through our seminaries today. But I don't think that he was wrong for ordaining them. There was a desperate need and he wanted to keep the Mass and the Sacraments going....In the 1970's it looked as though the whole Church was in the hands of the Enemy. It was an unbelievable situation.

Dr. White's biography of the Archbishop [see "Book Review" on p.27-Ed.] says that the future Bishop Lefebvre felt fearful to be called a bishop. Did you feel a fear when you were first told you would be elevated ?

I trusted the Archbishop completely. If he had come up to me on the evening before the Consecrations and said, "You're not being consecrated tomorrow," that too would have been fine by me.

There's the famous picture of all four of you enthroned with mitre and crozier, seated, with Fr. Laisney unmistakably smiling. What were you thinking at that moment ?

I was probably thinking, what do I do next? I'm not very good at ceremonies, so I was probably trying to remember the next step in the ceremony.

What about the next morning, when you woke up a bishop ?

To be honest, becoming a priest from being a deacon seemed a bigger step in my mind than going from priest to bishop. To go from not being able to say Mass to being able to do so is a tremendous leap, as opposed to "merely" adding the powers of Confirmation and Ordination. The priest interceding at the altar is the very heart of our religion.

Speaking of the priesthood, Fr. Peter Scott some months ago deplored the small number of vocations to the first and second year at the Seminary in Goulburn. He stated that this was a hindrance to presenting Benedict with the "fruits of Tradition." What can we, as laymen, do to encourage vocations ?

Apparently there are now a number of priestly vocations in France and the United States. Perhaps we in the Southern Hemisphere only need to wait.

You said once in a sermon that the reason vocations to the brotherhood are so few may be because the world is stamping out humility. What is the world doing to make priestly vocations difficult ?

It is destroying innocence. Also, God has become so pushed to one side that it is today difficult for a young man to conceive of giving up his whole life, and marriage, to serve such a marginalized God. A young man can easily see what he sacrifices—family life, children, a sweet wife (or so he thinks!), etc. What he cannot see is how souls need to be saved, because in today's world God has been made into such a nice guy that no one goes to hell.

At Fr. Stafki's first Mass, Fr. Doran said we will not get priests by Mom introducing her son to the pastor as "little Johnny that will be a priest." How can we encourage vocations ?

Number one: get Dad to take his religion seriously. By this I mean the example of Dad, and not just his words. Number two is very close. Let Mom create a home in which the Catholic religion is as natural as it is supernatural, a home in which religion is not a running away from the modern world because then it is artificial, and children don't want artificiality. Nor do we want artificial priests.

Why do people always say there will be a "Williamson schism" in the case of a deal with Rome ?

Maybe a number of people sense that I would have great difficulty in going along with neo-modernists because I didn't struggle out of liberalism only to go back into it a few years later in a cassock with red piping.

It is said that because 1) you are a former Anglican, a sect which is "episcopally centered," and because 2) you converted at an unfortunate time, during a period in which we have been deprived of a Catholic pope, you therefore suffer from a lack of Romanitas and are overly hostile to Curial authorities.

It is certain that I have less “piety” towards Rome than many Catholics. However, the upside of that is that, for me, maybe piety doesn’t get too much in the way of truth. For sure and certain, the bottom line in the Church is always a question of truth. Converts may have their upside as well as their downside!

Let’s begin talking about the “new stage” in relations between the SSPX and the Roman Curia, dating from the Jubilee Pilgrimage of 2000. What was your impression, then and now, of Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos ?

The heart of the matter is something I said to him at his lunch party of August 11, 2000: “Eminence, we have two different religions!” “Oh no,” he replied. And later in the conversation he came back to the topic saying, “We have the same God, Jesus Christ, and the same Church, and the same Eucharist.” By this I believe he was attempting to answer my previous objection.

Were you respectful to the Cardinal during the meeting ?

Yes, I believe so. I don’t believe in being disrespectful to high-ranking Curial prelates. As Our Lord says, they occupy the chair of Moses.

Let’s go back to 2000-02 and Fr. Aulagnier. After reading about him and his closeness to the Archbishop, may I ask what happened ?

Is it true he is no longer allowed to say Mass publicly on any SSPX altar ?

Yes, I believe so. He separated himself from the Society because he firmly believed in some kind of Campos-style agreement between the [SSPX](#) and Rome.

That sounds like Fr. Bisig, the former SSPX Assistant who helped form the FSSP.

Indeed. An insufficient grasp of the importance of doctrine as against “piety” towards Rome.

Now let’s speak of 2003 and Campos. I read Mouth of the Lion not too long ago and read about a fiery young priest named Padre Rifan. Earlier this year the website AngelQueen hosted an interview with a conciliar bishop named Dom Fernando. Would somebody tell me what Dom Fernando did to Padre Rifan ?

There is a Winona letter entitled Campos Has Fallen [available on SSPX.org] in which I wrote on this subject. Essentially, since 1991, they had been deprived of their rock, Bishop de Castro Mayer. Also, I am told, Brazilian priests in general are accustomed to following, so they followed where they were misled.

So much for the previous Declaration of the Campos priests Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman [available from Angelus Press; price: \$5.95–Ed.].

Their “reconciliation” is a de facto admission that they were wrong all along, and it’s a disgrace to Bishop de Castro Mayer’s legacy.

Fiftiesism came back with a vengeance. But do not despair of all the Campos priests. As Dr. White says, they did too much good for it all to be lost.

Also, let’s consider 2004-05 and the long illness of Pope John Paul II and the election of Benedict XVI. Unlike Bishop Tissier, you have never met Joseph Ratzinger, as bishop, cardinal, or after his election as Pope ?

That’s correct.

You have another Winona letter from 1999 which talks about Milestones, his autobiography.

Yes. I said there that his life-story “is of interest to all Catholics, because it shows how crippled is even the seeming best of today’s Romans when it comes to defending the Faith. Despite their apparent benevolence they cannot defend what they no longer understand.”

This reminds me of a quote from the Archbishop in Bishop Tissier’s book on the Archbishop, concerning a confrontation with Cardinal Ratzinger regarding religious liberty :

For us, Our Lord Jesus Christ is everything. He is our life. The Church is Our Lord Jesus Christ; the priest is another Christ; the Mass is the triumph of Jesus Christ on the cross; in our seminaries everything tends towards the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ. But you! You are doing the opposite; you have just wanted to prove to me that Our Lord Jesus Christ cannot, and must not, reign over society.

Recounting this incident, the Archbishop described the Cardinal’s attitude: “Motionless, he looked at me, his eyes expressionless, as if I had just suggested something incomprehensible or unheard of” (p.548).

Truly, they cannot defend what they no longer understand.

Quite a few colleagues of mine on the Internet have ridden the wave of the “Universal Indult” as it has teased its way throughout the year. During Holy Week, for example, people were checking certain websites two or three times a day based on news from Italian newspapers. I’ve remained (and remain) skeptical throughout. That being said, it is quite a road to go from “wildcat seminary” to the fairly universal assumption that it is only a matter of time before the true Mass will be “authorized.” What say you, Your Excellency ?

I may be wrong, but I’m in favor of the “Universal Indult.” The Tridentine Mass has a power and grace all its own. If unshackled, it will make its own way. Much more grace will flow.

The downside is, of course, that a number of lines will be blurred which are presently clear, separating true Tradition from any kind of compromise. Also, the very idea of the intrinsically legitimate Tridentine Mass needing an “indult” is false. But I think, over all, much more good than harm would come from the true Mass being “liberated.”

What about the General Chapter of the FSSP this year? I considered this to be a non-event, though more moderate colleagues of mine who are personally acquainted with Fr. Berg, the new Superior General, tell me he is a “hard-liner.” I don’t know how “hard line” one can be in a congregation that accepts the legitimacy of the illegitimate New Mass as part of their raison d’être, but perhaps I am being too hard ?

Perhaps Rome didn’t interfere this time because they feel that they have the FSSP sufficiently under control. As for the FSSP, perhaps they are firming up. Most of their priests may have a genuine repugnance for the teachings and orientation of the Newchurch.

What about the SSPX General Chapter? What does the re-election of Bishop Fellay signify ?

Negatively, the at least seeming lack of a viable alternative. Positively, the desire on the part of many [SSPX](#) Superiors for the Society to continue going the way it has been going over the last several years.

Alright, Your Excellency, let’s shift gears a bit. Sts. Athanasius and Eusebius consecrated bishops and gave them jurisdiction in a time of crisis. The Church responded to these actions with canonization. Some say that the Society should be setting up jurisdictional bishops of its own. Is this fair ?

Firstly, the Society cannot give an ordinary jurisdiction which it does not itself have. And secondly, in

modern circumstances rather different from the 4th century, the Archbishop refused to set up any such bishops because he wanted to avoid for the Society even the appearance of schism.

At the end of his book *The Great Façade*, Chris Ferrara postulates that along the lines of Cluny the SSPX might be used to reform the Church. Can we hope the Society will work a Cluny-style reform of the Church ?

There are interesting points of comparison. Certainly the Church needs a revival. Certainly the Society is preserving what the rest of the Church must eventually come back to. However, Cluny was a long-term operation, wrought over two centuries by thousands of holy monks under a handful of saintly abbots.

On the contrary, the Society has presently not many vocations and may not have much time ahead of it to exert any influence comparable to that of Cluny.

Some people say you're a myopic Fatimist—that you see everything through the lens of Fatima, to your detriment.

Goodness gracious! Isn't Fatima one of the two special lights God gave us to illuminate the darkened 20th and 21st centuries? In 1907, God gave us, through St. Pius X, the Encyclical *Pascendi*. Ten years later, He sent His Blessed Mother to Fatima, Portugal. If you want to call me a Fatimist, please also call me a Pascendist.

In 2005, Bishop Alfonse de Galarreta gave a sermon in Winona in which he said that we are in the Napoleonic stage of the Revolution in the Church, meaning, the Revolution has become institutionalized. Do you agree ?

It's an interesting analogy. Napoleon was a dynamo. He spread the Revolution everywhere, though it was cloaked in his imperialism. Similarly John Paul II and now Benedict XVI have consolidated the Revolution of Vatican II.

Your Excellency, going back to the interview I did with Bishop Tissier for *The Remnant* in April, Fr. Anthony Cekada wrote an article in response that said that for Bishop Tissier, there are no consequences for professing heresy. Is that a fair assessment ?

Bishop Tissier would certainly say that what he calls the heresy of Benedict XVI has the very gravest consequences, namely the destruction of the Catholic Church!

Then what do you think Fr. Cekada had in mind ?

From today's destruction of the Church, Fr. Cekada concludes that Benedict XVI cannot possibly be a true Pope. Fr. Cekada surely wishes that Bishop Tissier would draw the same conclusion.

Is Fr. Cekada right or is Bishop Tissier right ?

Myself, I believe that Benedict XVI is the true Pope, so I think Bishop Tissier is right.

But what about Benedict XVI's heresy ?

To be such a heretic as to so put oneself out of the Catholic Church that one cannot possibly any longer be its head, i.e., Pope, one must know that one is denying what one knows to be a defined dogma of the Catholic Faith, because such a denial amounts to deliberate apostasy. To become, or to continue being, a Catholic, is a choice. If I know what a Catholic must believe in order to be Catholic, and if I refuse to believe it, then I am choosing to be a heretic instead of a Catholic, and I put myself outside the Church.

So Fr. Cekada would believe that this is the case of Benedict XVI, and you believe it is not ?

Correct.

Why ?

Because modern minds are very sick, as minds, and Benedict XVI has a modern mind, like millions and millions of modern people, including churchmen, around him.

Firstly, in what does the sickness consist, and secondly, how can Benedict XVI not be aware of it ?

The sickness consists in believing that there is no fixed, objective truth which absolutely excludes error. For example, I may believe that two and two are four, but I will believe that they can also be five or six or 600,000 or whatever. The “truth” is what my mind makes it. But the mind is made for objective truth like lungs are made for oxygen, so just as lungs without external oxygen are sick to death, so a mind with no external truth is sick to death.

And how do we see this in someone like Benedict XVI ?

Benedict XVI believes that Catholic “truth” can evolve. For instance, very serious statements of Catholic truth that cannot change, like the Syllabus or Pascendi, he calls merely “substantial anchorages” in Church doctrine, meaning that the Church could anchor there, and usefully anchored there for a while, but in modern times the Church needs new “substantial anchorages” in doctrine. He cannot see that this anti-modern Catholic doctrine of his predecessors is of such a nature that it cannot change, and not even as Pope can he change it. His poor mind, however gifted, is sick with that modern—especially German—philosophy which unhooks the mind from its object, like cutting off lungs from oxygen.

But—and that was my follow-up question –how can Benedict XVI not be aware of his condition? He is an educated man, a high churchman, learned in philosophy and theology !

Yes, but like so many high churchmen, even before Vatican II, he is learned in the wrong philosophy! And since in our sick age the wrong philosophy (two and two are four but can be, or become, five) has become “normal,” then he cannot imagine he may be wrong. When John Paul II promoted “conservative” conciliarism, 2,000 bishops praised him for being “conservative” and the other 2,000 blasted him for being so. Only two bishops dared to protest to his face that he was not truly conservative at all, because he was conciliar. Humanly speaking, repeat, humanly speaking, how could he believe that the two were normal and the four thousand were abnormal? How could he not think he was being “normal”?

Well, how could he ?

In the good old days, a Catholic Pope put very intelligent and orthodox theologians in the Holy Office, formerly known as the Inquisition, and these would interrogate a neo-modernist thus: “You have written that Pascendi is only a ‘substantial anchorage.’ This amounts to heresy. Either you retract, or the Pope has authority to excommunicate you. Kindly choose.” And the neo-modernist would have had to choose, having been made aware, by Church authority, of his heresy.

In other words, a heretic might have blinded himself, but Mother Church used to use her God-given authority to force him to be aware of his heresy.

Correct. But this last resort is unavailable to today’s churchmen, because they are the authority! As Archbishop Lefebvre said in the 1970’s to the Conciliar Holy Office when they interrogated him on his

anti-Conciliarism, "I should be sitting in your place, and you should be sitting in mine." God bless him, the Archbishop never lost his grip on objective Catholic truth!

Then churchmen such as Benedict XVI are completely innocent of what they are doing ?

I did not say that. If they are the authorities of God's Church, then logically the Lord God is offering them all the graces they need to lead the Church rightly. If then they are misleading the Church, they are refusing those graces, which means that they cannot, inside themselves, be innocent. But we are entering into inner depths upon which God alone can judge.

Well, after that long but fruitful digression, may I further ask why Benedict XVI's "Reform of the Reform" is pointless and doomed, Your Excellency ?

Because it's a half-measure. (Starts singing)

"With me, it's all or nothing,
Is it all or nothing with you?
It cain't be in between,
It cain't be now and then,
No half and half romance will do."

So, Your Excellency, it all comes down to the flighty girl in Oklahoma !

There is wisdom in opera and even in musicals !

Okay, Your Excellency, so you are an advocate of the "Universal Indult," the first pre-condition of Curial relations. Now for the second pre-condition, how to deal with the "excommunication" ? Some say that the Society's insistence on the "excommunications" of July 1988 is just the Society showing itself to be prideful, like a child, wanting to say, "See, I told you we were right all along !" Is it a matter of pride, Your Excellency ?

No. It's a matter of truth. To handle the "excommunications" in any such way as to indicate that they at least once were valid is to suggest that 18 years ago "Rome" was right and the Archbishop was wrong in his defense of the Faith. The Faith itself requires a form of words such as, for example, "Rome withdraws the decree of excommunication."

In April, Bishop Tissier said that the Society Bishops have "no leading role." Also, the Archbishop made it clear to you all that the four bishops he consecrated were to have no apostolic mission, but were there strictly to confirm and ordain. Yet it seems to me that the very office of bishop carries with it the character of governing. We look to the bishops of the Society for guidance, leadership, and counsel. And we would do so even had a priest been elected instead of Bishop Fellay, because as laymen, we are not governed by the Superior General. That is not disrespect, it is simply an acknowledgment that the office of bishops is larger than the Society. They serve the Church in general, simply by existing. The Church asks, in a way, all bishops to have a leading role. Your thoughts, Your Excellency ?

Society bishops serve the Society. Bishops of the Catholic Church serve the Catholic Church.

Any final thoughts on your 30 years of priesthood? Gratitude, regrets ?

God has been extremely good to me for the last 30 years, and for the previous 36 years! I have no regrets except all sins and unfaithfulness.

Stephen L.M. Heiner runs a tutoring and test prep company in Overland Park, Kansas. He spends his weekends in St. Marys, Kansas where he goes to the Latin Mass and spends time writing freelance articles in print and on the Internet. Photograph of His Excellency beneath the crucifix taken by Stephen Heiner.

Sources :

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