THE PRIEST AS MEDIATOR AND THE DEVIL'S ATTACK ON THE PRIESTHOOD

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On this Maundy Thursday we commemorate the institution of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, but also of the sacrament of the priesthood. And priests often annoy us. Priests are often on our lips; we gladly talk about their faults, real or imagined, but have we ever really asked ourselves the question: „Why do we need a priest, why do we need a clergyman?"

Dear faithful, in order to answer this question we must go back to the very beginning of the human race, to the fall of our first parents Adam and Eve, who lost God's grace, who committed original sin, who rebelled against their Creator. And as a consequence all of mankind sank for long ages into the darkness of error and sin. Between the divine Majesty, offended by human sin, and fallen mankind a chasm opened up. A chasm that no man was able to cross. And the action of God Himself was needed. It was necessary for the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, to take on human nature and to become Victim and Priest at once. On Good Friday, on the wood of the Cross, He offered Himself as a spotless sacrifice making atonement for our human sins. *Mediator Dei et hominum*, the mediator between God and men. And without this sacrifice of Jesus Christ there would be no salvation.

In His mercy and His wisdom the Lord Jesus desired that we too, living 2000 years after Good Friday, should have the opportunity to benefit from the fruits of the redemption, from those merits which He won through His painful Passion on the Cross. And that is why He instituted the Most Holy Sacrifice, but at the same time He instituted the sacrament of the priesthood. The priest is the one who, after the pattern of Jesus Christ, is a mediator between heaven and earth.

A TWO-WAY MEDIATOR

Dear faithful, as the Catholic Church teaches, when a priest administers the holy sacraments, when he celebrates Holy Mass, he acts *in persona Christi*, in the person of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ Himself who speaks the words: „I absolve you from your sins." It is Jesus Christ Himself who speaks the words: „For this is My Body, for this is the chalice of My Blood." The priest lends to the Savior, in whose eternal priesthood he shares, his hands, his tongue, his mouth, so that Christ the Lord may accomplish here on earth the sacraments through which He gives us His grace. Every priest could repeat the words of Saint Paul the Apostle: „It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

Dear faithful, being a mediator is what constitutes the essence of the priesthood. And a mediator acts in two directions. On the one hand, the priest is the one who offers to the Most Holy Trinity a holy, pure and spotless sacrifice, as the most venerable liturgical prayer of the Church, the Roman Canon, says of the Holy Mass. The priest is the one who carries up to heaven, before the face of the Most Holy Trinity, the Most Holy Sacrifice, the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who in an unbloody manner makes present on the altar the bloody sacrifice of Good Friday. He does so for a fourfold purpose, as the Church teaches. First, for the purpose of adoration, of rendering homage to the Most Holy Trinity, which is the foremost duty of every creature, of every man. Second, for the purpose of offering a sacrifice of atonement for our sins; third, a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the graces received; and fourth, a sacrifice of petition for the graces we need.

And as I mentioned, this being a mediator works in two directions. So the priest offers the Most Holy Sacrifice, and at the same time he draws down God's grace here upon the earth. Padre Pio used to say that the world could exist without the sun, but it could not exist without the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass. What would the world look like in

which there was no Most Holy Sacrifice? Completely sunk in sin, in darkness, deprived of God's grace, deserving only destruction, to be reduced to dust.

Dear faithful, we are here because we realize the infinite value of Christ's priesthood. We realize that priests are indispensably necessary to us as mediators of God's grace, as those who carry up to heaven our cry for God's mercy, for the graces we need, our supplication, our thanksgiving, our praise before the Most Holy Trinity, and on the other hand as those who draw down to earth these graces which we need. We realize what a priceless treasure Christ's priesthood is, and we realize how much the devil hates the priesthood. Since the priest is a mediator between God and man, the devil desires to destroy both every individual priest and the priesthood itself.

THE 1968 ORDINATION RITES

Dear faithful, we are witnesses of a great attack of the devil on the Catholic priesthood. An attack which has been going on for several decades, which began with the destruction of the Catholic rites of ordination, which took place already in 1968, that is, before the introduction of the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The first rite destroyed by Judeo-Masonry: the rites of ordination. Why did the devil strike precisely there? Because he knows perfectly well, far better than many a Catholic, where the heart of the Church beats. Plunging a dagger into the priesthood means death, the slow death of the Catholic Church.

In the rite of priestly ordination, besides the laying on of hands, which is the matter of the sacrament, and the sacramental form, there take place, as with the other sacraments, explanatory rites, showing what the Church wishes to do in conferring the given sacrament. One of such rites during priestly ordination is the handing over, the conferring upon the newly ordained priest, of the chalice with wine and the paten with the host placed upon it. And in handing over the chalice with the paten, the bishop speaks to the priest the words: „Receive the power to offer sacrifice and to celebrate Holy Mass, for the living as well as for the dead, in the name of the Lord." Words which express the very essence of the priesthood. The priest as sacrificer, the priest as mediator between heaven and earth. And it is no accident that when the so-called reform was set in motion, which was in truth the destruction of the Catholic priesthood, these words simply disappeared from the new rite approved in 1968. They simply disappeared. Why? Because the post-conciliar church has an entirely different understanding of the priesthood. Because the post-conciliar church understands quite differently who a priest is. That is why these words, which expressed the essence of the priesthood, had to disappear. They had to disappear, because the post-conciliar church no longer needs Christ, His sacrifice. Man takes the place of God. Man has no one to apologize to and nothing to apologize for, because man knows everything best, does everything best. Sin does not offend the Lord God in any way. There is no need for atonement. Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday was merely an expression of love for man. Man who, as Vatican II teaches, is the source and summit of all things on earth. The post-conciliar church has no need of the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, no need of a priest, a sacrificer, who would mediate between heaven and earth, who would offer the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of atonement, of petition and of thanksgiving. The post-conciliar church has no need of altars. The post-conciliar church has no need of the beauty of the liturgy, because at the center of the post-conciliar anti-church stands man. Man, before whom even God ought to bow. Man, to whom even God ought to render homage.

ARCHBISHOP LEFEBVRE'S CONSECRATIONS

My dear ones, we are here because we understand that these changes which were introduced after the Second Vatican Council were aimed at the destruction of the Catholic Church, the destruction of the Catholic priesthood. And that was the reason why Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988 consecrated four bishops, having earlier ordained priests. He realized that it is necessary to preserve the Catholic priesthood free from the doubts connected with the new rites. He could not allow his seminarians to be ordained by bishops about whom we do not know whether they are bishops or mere impostors in costume. This change, which took place in 1968, which many have downplayed as if nothing great had happened, was in

its essence the plunging of a dagger into the heart of the Church. It was no trifle. The reformed rite does not express the Catholic teaching, the Catholic faith concerning the sacrament of the priesthood. If these exquisite words are removed: „Receive the power to offer sacrifice and to celebrate Mass for the living and the dead in the name of the Lord," it means that one wants to remove what constitutes the essence of the Catholic priesthood. That to which the priest is called. It means that the post-conciliar priest, bishop, is no longer a mediator between heaven and earth. He is a master of ceremonies. He is a master of ceremonies whose job is to entertain the audience gathered at the feast, to make sure that no one gets bored, that it is all cheerful.

And we see, my dear ones, how they teach, what the teaching of these post-conciliar priests is, with a question mark. We hear how the post-conciliar bishops, with a big question mark, call us to visit synagogues. They see no difference between a place of blasphemy, a place of ritual murders, and the house of God, a Catholic church, a Catholic altar. And we may wonder why this is so. Well, philosophy says: *agere sequitur esse*. How you act follows from who you are. And observing the actions of these people, observing their false, poisoned teaching, we can, my dear ones, draw the conclusion that they are not Christ's priests, Christ's bishops. Are they mere impostors in costume, destroyers of the Catholic Church? And it is astonishing that so many supposedly traditional priests do not see this, that they do not see the enormity of the doubts connected with the new rites of ordination, stripped of what is Catholic. It is not enough, my dear ones, to put on a chasuble, even a Roman one, in order to be a priest, in order to be a priest of Christ.

PERSEVERANCE OF PRIESTS

Dear faithful, let us thank the Most Holy Trinity today for this great gift for us, for men, in the form of the Catholic priesthood. The Catholic priesthood, which continues uninterrupted for 2000 years, the Catholic priesthood, which is hated by the devil. By the devil, who did what he could to destroy it. Let us give thanks that this Catholic priesthood, in spite of the machinations of the evil spirit, endures, that we have the opportunity to take part in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, to approach the holy sacraments, which are celebrated as the Church did through the centuries. An inconceivable grace in our times, because we see around us what happens when Christ's priesthood fades away, when the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass fades away. This demonic world around us is the fruit of the rejection of Christ's sacraments. It is the fruit of the rejection of Christ's priesthood, of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass. Where there is no Holy Mass validly and worthily celebrated, there is no God's grace.

Dear faithful, we must therefore today commend those few priests who have impressed upon their souls the indelible mark of Christ's priesthood, who are faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must ask for perseverance for them in these difficult times that lie before us. We must ask that there be no lack of those who will wish to enlist under the standard of Christ the King, the High Priest, who will wish to serve Jesus in the priesthood. We must ask for perseverance for priestly vocations, which today are so weak, so few. We must ask, my dear ones, that there be no lack of those who will proclaim to us Christ's Gospel, who will feed us with the Most Holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will absolve us, free us from the burden of our sins, and who, God willing, will anoint us in the last hour of our life, so that we may depart in peace into eternity. There, my dear ones, where we shall see what an abomination in the eyes of God the post-conciliar revolution was, what scoundrels were those who carried it out, and what scoundrels were those who remained silent when Jesus Christ was being tortured and murdered anew.

We are here because we do not want to remain silent. We are here because we wish to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus. We are here because we wish to pass on to our children and grandchildren what we have received from the Catholic Church. We are here because we are perfectly aware that there is no Church without the priesthood, that without the priesthood there is no God's grace. Without the priesthood there is only spiritual death. And we, my dear ones, wish to live, and to live in the fullness of Christ's grace. And may we never forget, my dear ones, the respect with which we ought to surround Christ's priesthood. May we never forget that here beats the heart of the Church, and here the attacks of the devil are heaviest and fiercest.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ. For ever and ever.