



S S P X



Ad Orientem

Seminary Newsletter
Issue Number 11 April 2015

The Spirit of Our Founder

During the academic trimester which runs from Epiphany through Easter, His Excellency Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais visited Winona to deliver a series of lectures on the life of Archbishop Lefebvre. Over the course of eight conferences, His Excellency presented to the attentive seminarians, in his vibrant and energetic way, the history and spirit of their spiritual father, tracing the roots of the Archbishop's personality and actions as far back as his earliest childhood.

No man could claim to be such an authority on the Archbishop's life as Bishop Tissier, who was among the first of Archbishop Lefebvre's seminarians when, in 1969, he received permission from Bishop Charrierre of Fribourg to establish a house for the formation of priests according to the traditional methods of the Church. At that time, when the Church was already descending into the darkness of

the post-Conciliar age, the aged Archbishop launched into a venture whose success seemed hardly probable, but which was the only way remaining to guarantee the transmission of the Catholic priesthood "in all of its doctrinal purity and in all of its missionary charity" (Spiritual Journey, Preface).

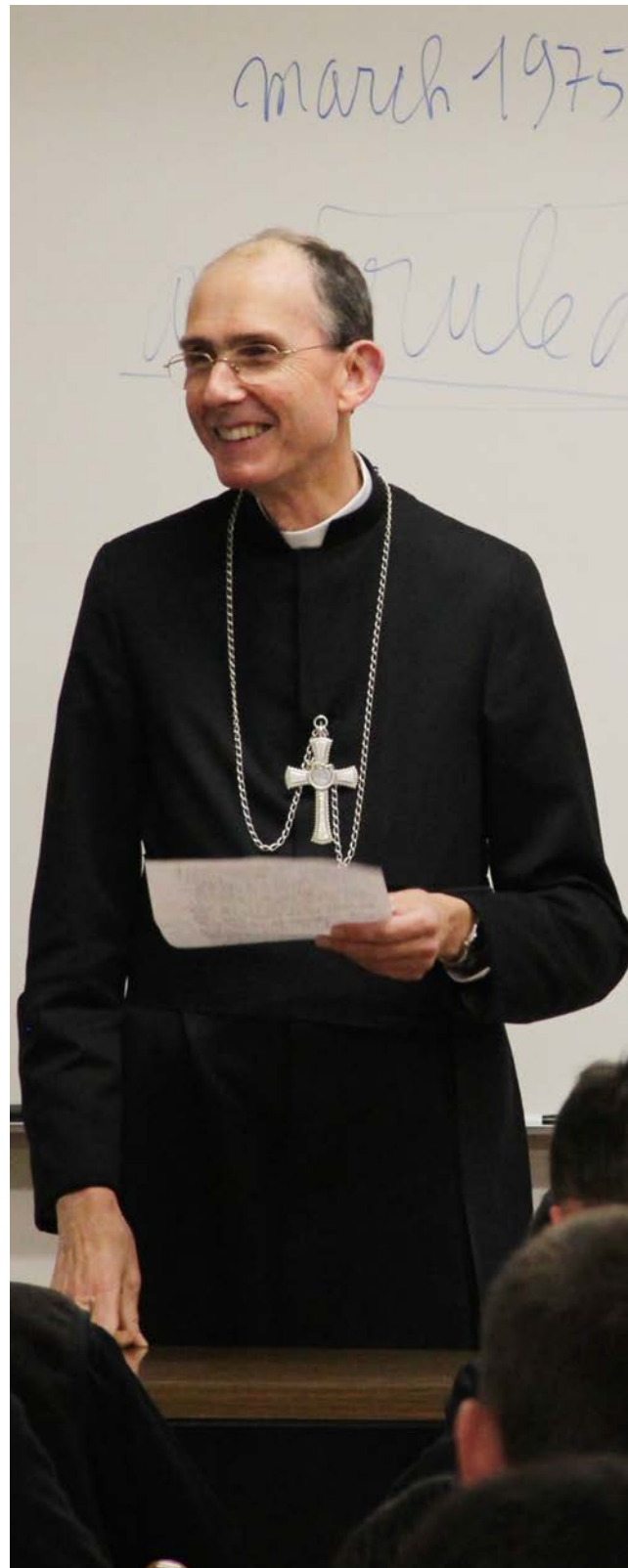
Archbishop Lefebvre opened his seminary at the age of sixty-three, alone, without priests or professors. Bishop Tissier was one of nine seminarians who arrived that first year. Excepting one, they were entirely new to seminary life; so the Archbishop, besides giving them a seminary rule, instructed them in the basics of spirituality, teaching them to meditate, to pray the Rosary, to do spiritual reading.

It was here that Bishop Tissier received his priestly formation directly from the founder of the Society of St.

Pius X, and here he was an eye-witness to the critical events that shaped the Society's course. He attended the spiritual conference in November of 1969 in which Archbishop Lefebvre announced his decision to refuse the Novus Ordo Missae. When the departure of some seminarians in 1970 caused the Archbishop to weep from discouragement, Bishop Tissier was among the seminarians who encouraged him to continue, opposing the Archbishop's suggestion that they disperse. On November 8 of that year, the Archbishop was able to show his seminarians the diocesan bishop's approval of the Society's statutes. Soon afterwards, with Bishop Adam's oral consent, the Seminary was unified at Ecône; within two years it held ninety-five seminarians.

The year after his ordination, Bishop Tissier was made a professor at Ecône, and thus continued to live and work in close proximity to Archbishop Lefebvre. The time that he spent with the Archbishop clearly made a deep impression on him and convinced him of the Archbishop's sanctity and providential mission in the history of the Church. Some time after the Archbishop's death in 1992, Bishop Tissier began to interview others who had known the Archbishop and to search through archives, achieving a thorough knowledge of the remarkable man's life. So closely has he studied his subject, that in his conferences he hardly references his notes, recalling from memory even remote details concerning the Archbishop's lineage and family history.

During his visit, Bishop Tissier could give only an abridgement of the wealth of information recorded in his published work, *Marcel Lefebvre: the Biography*. Yet it was sufficient to create a lasting impression on the seminarians, and his evident enthusiasm could only stimulate them to look deeper into the life and writings of their founder, and to make his spirit their own. ❖



(Above) His Excellency explains the events of the Society in its beginnings. (Left) Bishop Tissier performs his first episcopal blessing at the episcopal consecrations of 1988.



Minor Orders

During the days preceding Passion Sunday, Bishop Tissier de Mallerai again visited St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary to confer the minor orders and the Subdiaconate. Although the four new subdeacons rightly drew the Seminary's attention by their vow of perpetual chastity and their obligation to pray the breviary, we here focus upon the nine third-year seminarians who received the orders of Porter and Lector and the eleven fourth-year seminarians who received those of Exorcist and Acolyte. Because these orders have been suppressed by the post-Conciliar Church, we should consider the rationale behind their institution.

The providence of God so disposes things that progress is always distinguished by degrees; the perfect is attained through the intermediate, and the intermediate through the more rudimentary. This is advantageous both for the beauty of the whole society, which is adorned by the harmonious cooperation of diverse parts, and for the individual, who is trained in easier things before he is entrusted with heavier responsibilities. The sacrament of Holy Orders is ordered primarily to the Holy Eucharist, which alone among the sacraments contains the Author of grace, Jesus Christ. The tremendous power of confecting the Eucharist belongs to the priest, but this perfect degree of Holy Orders is anticipated by various lesser orders, which gradually elevate the ordinand by granting him certain powers.

The Acolyte, who possesses the highest of the minor orders, has the privilege of bringing to the altar the cruets containing the water and wine. The remaining three minor orders dispose the faithful to receive the Blessed Sacrament. Those without faith are to be entirely excluded from the divine worship; it is the office of the lowest order, the Porter, to prohibit such persons from entering the church. Others are of good will, but not yet instructed; the Lector catechizes them. Others are instructed, but unfit to receive the Blessed Sacrament because they are under the power of the devil; these are purified by the Exorcist. Thus the lower orders remove impediments to the reception of the Sacrament, while the higher orders positively contribute to its consecration.

These orders attest to the deep veneration in which the Church holds the Holy Eucharist. By establishing these intermediate states, she teaches the layperson the loftiness of what he is approaching; and at the same time she sanctifies each function of the liturgy, as if to admonish her children that even the pettiest tasks, if directed to the service of Christ, can be ennobled with a supernatural dignity. All that touches Christ becomes sacred. ❖



The bishop pronounces the words which confer the order while the ordinands touch the sacred object over which the order gives them power - a Book of Lessons for Lector (above) and the cruets for Acolyte (below).





ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

SEMINARY

The Society of St. Pius X is an international priestly society of common life without vows, whose purpose is the priesthood and all that pertains to it.

St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary is an international seminary of the Society currently located in Minnesota. *Ad Orientem* chronicles life at the seminary and the construction of the new St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Virginia. To find out more about the project or to contribute, visit newseminaryproject.org.

St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary

21077 Quarry Hill Road

Winona, MN 55987

(507) 454-8000

webmaster@stas.org

info@newseminaryproject.org