

Paul VI & Archbishop Lefebvre

Kevin J. Symonds, M.A.

“In the thirteen years of my pontificate, this is the biggest cross.”

—**Pope Paul VI to Jean Guilton,
concerning Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and a potential schism**

In response to the crisis within the Church following in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Swiss Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre took certain actions that questioned his canonical standing with the Church. The most controversial was the consecration in 1988 of four new bishops without a papal [mandate](#). Lefebvre has become the figurehead of what is called the “traditionalist movement” within the Church.

During the pontificate of Paul VI (1963-1978), deep concerns were raised about the possibility of Lefebvre causing a schism. Lefebvre’s differences with Paul VI were recently raised for discussion in the light of new historical disclosures and the impending [canonization](#) of Paul VI. In light of that ongoing discussion, I am providing a first-ever English translation of a forgotten conversation of Paul VI on Archbishop Lefebvre. First, however, a quick background on the recent developments.

Paul VI and Recent Developments

Typically accompanying a canonization is a heightened interest in the one to be canonized. In *Paul VI and the Liturgical Reform. He Approved It, But Didn’t Like It Much* [published](#) April 19, 2018 in *Chiesa Espresso*, Italian journalist Sandro Magister discusses some facts about Paul VI and the liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council. This discussion is based upon Fr. Leonardo Sapienza’s book [entitled](#) *Paolo VI. Una storia minima* (2018).

As the title of Magister’s article suggests, Sapienza reveals Paul VI’s dissatisfaction with at least some elements of the liturgical reform. The web site *Rorate Caeli* expressed its disagreement in a [post](#) about some claims in Sapienza’s book,¹ largely revolving around how Paul VI was being painted as a “victim” of a “revolution,” as opposed to being its “driving force” as some Catholics have long-maintained.²

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On May 16, 2018, Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli published an [article](#) for the Italian web site *La Stampa (Vatican Insider)* entitled *Ecco il verbale segreto dell'incontro fra Paolo VI e Lefebvre* (A look at the secret transcript of the encounter between Paul VI and Lefebvre). This article was also based upon another new book from Fr. Leonardo Sapienza [entitled](#) *La barca di Paolo* (2018) containing unedited documents from Paul's pontificate, among them being a written record of the meeting between Archbishop Lefebvre and Paul VI on September 11, 1976.

This meeting was already well-known to the public. Archbishop Lefebvre himself [discussed](#) it in conferences shortly after the meeting took place. However, what was *not* available was an account of the meeting from the Holy See. Fr. Sapienza's *La barca di Paolo* provided this missing piece of the historical documentation.³ As the account was not available in English, Fr. John Zuhlsdorf [provided](#) an English translation (with personal commentary) of the account from Tornielli's article.⁴

On a personal note, I had decided in the summer of 2017 to engage in a modest study of Paul's pontificate in order to understand better his rather turbulent times. This study led me to a 1979 book [entitled](#) *Paul VI Secret*.⁵ Written in French by Pope Paul's friend Jean Guilton, *Paul VI Secret* provides accounts of some of their conversations.

Forgotten Discourses of Paul VI on Archbishop Lefebvre

While going through the book, I was quite surprised to find a lengthy section wherein Guilton spoke with Paul VI about Archbishop Lefebvre.⁶ As I spot-read the French, there were some disclosures concerning the mind of Paul VI on what Guilton called the "Ecône Affair."⁷ The thought occurred to me at the time to make an English translation of this text. Time-constraints did not permit me to do so and I shelved the idea. The recent discussions about Paul VI and Archbishop Lefebvre brought back to my mind Guilton's book. It seemed fitting to make a translation with a friend, Camille de Kok, of [Impeccable Business English](#).

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First, it is important to note that the meetings between Paul VI and Guitton took place between September 8-9, 1976—just two to three days before Paul’s meeting with Lefebvre. Guitton’s account of his interview provides some necessary context that was available in the Francophone world, but not the Anglophone. Thus far, the available documentation in the latter has spoken of what took place *during* the meeting.⁸ Guitton’s account provides the public with a window onto events *preceding* the meeting between Paul VI and Lefebvre.

What was Paul VI thinking? How did he view the matter of Archbishop Lefebvre? How would he speak of it to a long-time friend? What influence, if any, would Guitton exert on Paul VI’s mind? Was the later meeting between Paul VI and Lefebvre influenced by the meetings of Paul VI and Guitton? These questions can now be studied in greater depth by people in the Anglophone world with the introduction of the present English translation.

The Meetings of Paul VI and Guitton—Introduction

Guitton begins his account in *Paul VI Secret* with an article that appeared in the French periodical *Le Figaro* entitled *The Future of the Council*. This article, which he himself had written, had been published on August 27, 1976.⁹ Guitton begins with his article because a notable portion of it frames his meetings with Paul VI.

The article itself provides a window onto Guitton’s thinking with respect to several matters of importance. These matters include the Church, Archbishop Lefebvre, Ecumenism, Mass in Latin, the Second Vatican Council, the thinking of Paul VI, and others.¹⁰ Guitton states that the Pope had the article in front of him and he “found it good.” From there, Guitton begins his recounting of his meeting with Paul VI on September 8, 1976.

The two men begin, according to Guitton, by discussing various matters of importance, including the question of a Pope resigning, some famous and/or influential people, and the French language (very much beloved by Paul VI). They conclude their meeting on a note about the bad

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application of the liturgical reform in France and then a question about some other influential French figures (Charles de Gaulle, Mauriac, Maupassant and Mallarme).

Paul VI and Guitton on Lefebvre—A Summary of the Conversation

The next day, September 9, the conversation about Archbishop Lefebvre takes place.¹¹ Guitton begins by describing the conversation as “touching” (*pathétique*). He notes that the face of Paul VI was rather severe-looking, and that “for the first time, I hear him speak as a Pope.” The Holy Father’s demeanor, wrote Guitton, made him “afraid.” They begin the meeting by talking about some correspondence between them going back twenty years. They then discuss a book about John Henry Cardinal Newman written by Lucie-Faure Goyau.¹²

Guitton writes that there was an “exchange of views” between himself and Paul VI on Newman. He then writes that the conversation quickly escalated to “higher problems” and Guitton states that these problems are the same that Newman had experienced. Guitton defines the problems in the form of a question: “how to define the identity of the Church at the time?” He does this, he explains, because the “Ecône affair” (as he labeled the matter with Archbishop Lefebvre) had no interest to him unless he framed it in terms of the identity of the Church in the present.

At this point, Guitton reminds Paul VI about a promise made in 1950 that he (Guitton) would always tell Paul all of his thoughts. After doing so, Guitton raises the matter of Lefebvre, explaining his thought to Paul in terms of schism. Guitton then made a parallel between Lefebvre and Newman, saying that the latter did not accept some changes from Rome but that he also understood the meaning of development (which Guitton calls the “true Tradition”).

Paul VI then raises the matter of the possibility of his receiving Archbishop Lefebvre in audience. Guitton, favorable to the possibility, questions the consistency of Paul VI’s own actions. The observation is made that Paul will not receive the Archbishop in audience but yet receives “schismatics, heretics, unbelievers.” Guitton furthers his point by saying that “many are surprised

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that you are so hard on Archbishop Lefebvre when you are so gentle to those who are much more disobedient than he, since, under the cover of the Council, they break down the Church.”

Paul VI responds to the observation by revealing that he sent messengers to Lefebvre who turned down the gesture. Guitton reiterates that messengers are not the same as a one-on-one meeting. Paul replies that he is not sure he can receive Lefebvre after a recent statement the Archbishop made in Besançon (France), “I will kneel before the Pope on the condition that he does not ask me to be a Protestant.”¹³ Paul VI elaborates to say that Lefebvre called him a modernist, a heretic. The Holy Father states that he feels abused by Lefebvre.

Guitton continues his discussion with Paul VI and reiterates the importance of avoiding a schism. He points out that the “whole problem of Tradition...is posed symbolically” with Lefebvre. Paul VI says that he was well aware of the problem and refers to the matter of a potential schism as being the “biggest cross of my pontificate.”

Guitton then makes a further observation about making distinctions with Lefebvre. He says that “Archbishop Lefebvre disobeys insolently, whereas other bishops disobey subtly.” Guitton is interrupted by Paul VI who indicates that he is aware of the distinction, but that people did not know that he had taken *private* action against abuses. Paul points out that “In the case of Archbishop Lefebvre, this is an open, senseless, damaging revolt: the revolt of a bishop, who trains priests against me. If I receive him, there is risk that he can damage me; afterwards, by distorting my words.”

At this point of the account there is some confusion. Guitton provides a paragraph with a summative narration of part of his meeting with Paul VI. This summary is then followed by a discourse from Guitton to Paul indicated by the European-style quotation marks « and ». Was this passage meant to summarize the discourse in quotation marks, or was it a section of dialogue that is not recorded? A definitive reading is not clear.

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Guitton's discourse after the summary narrative frames the "Ecône affair" in terms of Ecumenism. Guitton tells the Holy Father that various Christian groups "assume implicitly that the Pope is actually the true schismatic, that they represent the truth. This is the same position as that sometimes expressed by Archbishop Lefebvre." Guitton essentially reiterates his previous observation about the consistency of Paul VI receiving in audience these various Christian groups but not Lefebvre. Guitton rests his case on the fact that "the ecumenism defined at Vatican II brings a new spirit" one that promotes openness and willingness to listen in order to resolve difficulties.

Paul VI's response to Guitton distinguishes between the past and the future. He then asks Guitton about solutions to what he calls "the crisis of faith in the Church of France." Guitton provides the Holy Father with some "proposals," the exact number of which is not specified by Guitton. From the discourse between the two men, there were at least three as the first and third are named and discussed. Much of this discussion surrounds the liturgy.

The third of Guitton's propositions was that the "Mass of St. Pius V be allowed, during a probationary and provisional period." This would effectively end an interdiction on this liturgy which was then in force in France. Paul VI's response to this proposal was unequivocal: "It will never happen because it is an unfounded argument [*mauvaise querelle*]! I have kept the canon of St. Pius V in the four canons of the new liturgy, where it holds the first place." Guitton clarified to Paul VI that the issue is not about the canon, but rather the offertory wherein the notion of sacrifice "appears restrained." Paul believed the differences were minimal.

The Holy Father then expresses another reason for rejecting Guitton's third proposal:

[T]his so-called Mass of St. Pius V, as seen in Ecône, becomes the symbol of the condemnation of the Council. I will, however, not accept under any circumstances that which condemns the Council with a symbol. If this exception was accepted, the entire Council would be shaken. And, consequently the apostolic authority of the Council.

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Guitton presses the case with Paul VI, arguing that the concession would avoid a schism. This train of thought ends on the above note and the two men move to discuss the forgiveness of insults.

The dialogue here reveals that Paul VI is willing to forgive Archbishop Lefebvre, but that his repentance must be sincere, although Paul does not hold out much hope for such sincerity. Guitton reminds the Holy Father of the infirmity of mankind and not to expect mathematical precision. Paul VI acknowledges the point but tells Guitton that “in a mind as inconsistent as that of Archbishop Lefebvre, [one statement] will be followed tomorrow by an opposite statement.”

Guitton admits that he is not exactly a friend of Lefebvre, even referring to himself as having “occupied against [his will] this Ecône affair.” He then speaks about his own formation:

I have no sympathy for fundamentalism. I was formed by minds condemned to silence by St. Pius X, Pouget, Portal, Lagrange, Bergson, Blondel. You saved me from the claws of Monseigneur Parente, who in 1948, wanted to blacklist my book on Mary; this was the origin of your benevolence towards me.

Guitton then relays some impressions of his about Lefebvre:

I have all the imaginable reasons to beware of Archbishop Lefebvre. I saw him twice for two hours, I found in him a spirit so contrary to mine that it is almost impossible to conceive it. But the more Archbishop Lefebvre is opposed, the more I want to be fair with him, according to the method that can be summed up in these words of Lacordaire: ‘I do not seek to convince my opponent of error, but to unite myself to him in a higher truth.’ And in this actual crisis, I have the impression that I am for Ecône a valid interlocutor, because I am a layman, and thus not an enemy *a priori*. Now, I would have more authority if I could say you authorize me to come to Ecône, if I could explain to Archbishop Lefebvre what you tell me about the proofs of his sincerity.

The Pope refuses to name Guitton as an interlocutor in the matter but does not forbid him to go to Ecône. He asks only that Guitton speak not in his name, but “in the name of the Church.”

This part of the meeting then ends and a third part begins. Guitton returns to discussing the danger of schism and the long-lasting consequences that could result from it. The Pope’s reply indicates that he is well-aware of the problem and reiterates that the potential schism is the “first true cross, for the

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last thirteen years, of my pontificate.” Paul VI indicates that he does not see how in a few months he “will not be obliged to transform this non-communion into excommunication.”

Guitton replies that if Paul does so, he would be obliged also to excommunicate “those who alter the essence of the faith. The condemnation of the right will follow a condemnation of the left.” Paul states that he is also aware of this fact, saying that it “might be the cross of my life, my way of dying a martyr.” A knock on the door interrupts the conversation and both men go to eat. Afterward, they go to the chapel of St. Gregory for a prayer of thanksgiving. Paul ends the conversation on a hopeful note and Guitton adds some concluding thoughts.

Conclusion

Guitton’s discussion with Paul VI on Archbishop Lefebvre was a prelude, if not a preparation, for the Holy Father’s September 11, 1976 meeting with Lefebvre and should be seen in that context. I have avoided commentary, except to facilitate the text, in order to allow Guitton’s text to speak for itself and to permit people to draw their own conclusions. It is hoped that this article and the English translation will provide another window onto an otherwise difficult subject.

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French-English Parallel Comparison of the Texts

French	English
<p>8 septembre 1976. – Pour comprendre l’entretien que je vais rapporter, il faut avoir sous les yeux un article du <i>Figaro</i> appelé « L’avenir du Concile », paru le 27 août 1976.</p> <p>J’en reproduis l’essentiel :</p> <p>Depuis un mois je reçois des lettres, des visites jusque dans le désert pour me demander ce que je pense sur le drame d’Ecône. Jean d’Ormesson, avec une amicale insistance, me pressait d’écrire dans <i>Le Figaro</i>. J’ai longtemps préféré garder le silence. Le problème posé par cette affaire est un des plus graves qui soient aux yeux d’un philosophe de la religion : je n’ai cessé d’y réfléchir depuis un demi-siècle. Comme me l’écrivait un ami romain, dire mon jugement d’une manière sincère est devenu pour moi « un droit et un devoir ». <i>Cet ami était le Saint Père.</i></p> <p>Chacun sent confusément que sous l’occasion d’une messe en latin et d’un séminaire, une question capitale est en jeu, qui engage l’avenir du Concile.</p> <p>L’œcuménisme a deux faces, l’une radieuse et pleine d’espérance, celle d’un amour qui cherche à surmonter les conflits des chrétiens (comme Leibniz jadis l’écrivait à Bossuet) ; l’autre douloureuse et plèine d’angoisse, celle qui oblige de hautes consciences éprises de vérité, les unes à condamner, les autres à se séparer. Il est facile d’exprimer ces écartèlements par la passion, l’ignorance, l’orgueil. La raison dernière de la division des chrétiens est la conviction qu’ils sont fidèles à la volonté du Christ Jésus. Toute la morale œcuménique exige ce respect réciproque des choix ultimes et déchirants, comme l’a dit avec force le dernier Concile.</p>	<p>September 8, 1976 – In order to understand the meeting that I’m going to report, one should have before one’s eyes an article that appeared in <i>Figaro</i> called “The future of the Council,” published on August 27, 1976.</p> <p>I am reproducing the essentials:</p> <p>For a month I have been receiving letters, visits into the desert to ask me what I think about the drama of Ecône. Jean d’Ormesson, with friendly insistence, urged me to write in <i>Le Figaro</i>. I have long preferred to keep the silence. The problem posed by this case is one of the most serious that there is in the eyes of a philosopher of religion: I have not stopped thinking about it for half a century. As a Roman friend wrote to me, revealing my opinion in a sincere manner has become for me “a right and a duty.” <i>This friend was the Holy Father.</i></p> <p>Everyone feels some confusion on the occasion of a Mass in Latin and of a seminary, a critical question is at stake, which may bind the future of the Council.</p> <p>Ecumenism has two sides, one radiant and full of hope, that of a love that seeks to overcome the conflicts of Christians (as Leibniz formerly wrote to Bossuet); another painful and full of anxiety, which imposes great awareness enamored of truth, some to condemn, others to separate. It is easy to express these divisions through passion, ignorance, pride. The last reason for the division of Christians is the conviction that they are faithful to the will of Christ Jesus. All ecumenical ethics demand this mutual respect for the ultimate and heartbreaking choices, as the last Council has stated forcefully.</p>

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Cela étant rappelé, voici comment je me représente le double monologue de l'évêque et du pape. Mgr Lefebvre se considère comme le défenseur de la foi. Il juge cette foi compromise après dix ans, non qu'elle soit attaquée du dehors, mais parce qu'elle paraît douter d'elle-même et de son identité. On caricature l'évêque de Tulle en le présentant comme un passéiste attardé : ce qu'il entend défendre, c'est la foi permanente d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain. Jadis, il se bornait à dire qu'il acceptait le Concile mais qu'il repoussait certaines conséquences qu'on avait tirées indûment du Concile. Depuis quelque temps, je ne sais pourquoi, il a cédé à un vertige logique ; il a prétendu que Vatican II était un concile schismatique, ce qui est aberrant et déraisonnable.

Quant à Paul VI, il se juge responsable devant l'histoire de ce Concile qu'il a présidé, dirigé, accompli. Et il exige de l'évêque l'obéissance au successeur de Pierre, au vicair de Jésus-Christ. Non qu'il se croie infaillible dans sa conduite, mais parce qu'il a l'autorité suprême pour faire appliquer le Concile.

Le pape pense en effet que le Concile ouvre à l'Eglise une immense espérance à un moment décisif de l'histoire humaine, où l'Eglise catholique a la chance (si rare) d'être respectée, écoutée du monde, d'apparaître comme un facteur d'unité et de salut. Le Concile, selon la pensée de Newman qu'il relit, développe la foi de toujours sous la poussée de l'Esprit. Il explicite certains traits toujours présents du dépôt de foi qui, au cours des siècles passés, avaient été implicites ou obscurcis. Ainsi, la liberté de la conscience indispensable au mérite de la foi, les bases communes aux religions monothéistes et aux confessions chrétiennes, etc. C'est l'esprit de

Having been reminded of this, here is how I would imagine the double monologue between the bishop and the pope. Archbishop Lefebvre considers himself to be the defender of the faith. He judges this faith to have been compromised after ten years, not because it was attacked from outside, but because she seems to doubt herself and her identity. We caricature the bishop of Tulle by presenting him as a stagnated backwards-looking person: what he intends to defend is the permanent faith of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Formerly, he confined himself with saying that he accepted the Council but rejected certain consequences that had been unduly drawn from the Council. For some time, I do not know why, he succumbed to a logical dizziness; he claimed that Vatican II was a schismatic council, which is absurd and unreasonable.

As for Paul VI, he feels responsible for the history of this Council over which he presided, directed, negotiated. And he demands from the bishop obedience to the successor of Peter, to the vicar of Jesus Christ. Not that he should believe himself infallible in his conduct, but because he has the supreme authority to enforce the Council.

The Pope thinks that the Council opens to the Church an immense hope at a decisive moment of human history, where the Catholic Church has the chance (so rare) to be respected, listened to by the world, to appear as an instrument of unity and salvation. The Council, according to Newman's thoughts that he re-read, develops the faith of all ages under the influence of the Spirit.¹⁴ It explains certain traits that are always present in the Deposit of Faith that, over the past centuries, had been implicit or obscured. Thus, the freedom of conscience which is indispensable in relation to the faith, the common foundations of the monotheistic religions and Christian confessions, etc. This is the thinking of this Paul, whose name

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ce Paul, dont il a choisi le nom, apôtre de ceux du dehors, se faisant « tout à tous » pour qu'au dernier jour Dieu « soit tout en tous ».

Certes Paul VI mesure mieux que tout observateur la crise de la civilisation, la crise de l'Eglise, l'accélération des crises. Il sait le déclin de la vie spirituelle, de la foi. Il connaît ces extravagances de la liturgie sur lesquelles on se tait, mais qui ébranlent la confiance du peuple et font s'éloigner les élites sur la pointe des pieds. Il a parlé avec effroi de « l'autodestruction » de l'Eglise... Mais confiant en l'Esprit, sachant que « les portes de l'enfer ne prévaudront pas », il espère qu'après une crise inévitable (celle qui suivit le Concile de Nicée dura un siècle), l'Eglise retrouvera sa vitesse de croisière et qu'elle aidera l'humanité à passer un seuil redoutable.

On oppose la messe de Pie V à la messe de Paul VI, fort abusivement. Les deux pontifes ont voulu codifier des traditions plus anciennes. Le rituel de saint Pie V fixait des prières qui remontent aux premiers siècles, comme chacun le sentait en lisant ces beaux textes si simples. Paul VI a simplifié, il a élargi. Il a proposé quatre « canons » dont le premier demeure le canon ancien. Le public, a été mal informé, déconcerté. Comment faire admettre aux simples et aux sages de ce pays raisonnable que la messe seule, célébrée par les Pères du Concile deviendrait seule interdite ? Comment faire comprendre aux esprits Français, épris de cohérence et de tolérance que le pluralisme respecterait toutes les écoles, sauf l'école qui veut garder la liturgie célébrée pendant tant de siècles ? Pour s'enraciner dans la lente et longue durée, une réforme exige maturation, indulgence et patience. Il est temps que nos évêques réaffirment sans ambages la licéité de ce que Rome maintient.

he chose, an apostle to those on the outside, making himself “everything to all” so that on the last day God “may be all to all.”

Indeed, Paul VI measures better than any observer of the crisis of civilization, the crisis of the Church, the acceleration of crises. He knows the decline of the spiritual life, of the faith. He knows these extravagances of the liturgy about which one is silent, but that shake the confidence of the people and make the elites distance themselves on tiptoes. He spoke with dread of the “self-destruction” of the Church ... But confident in the Spirit, knowing that “the gates of hell will not prevail,” he hopes that after an inevitable crisis (the one that followed the Council of Nicaea lasted a century), the Church will regain its cruising speed and help humanity to pass a formidable threshold.

To pit the Mass of Pius V against the Mass of Paul VI, is a strong abuse. The two pontiffs wanted to codify older traditions. The ritual of Saint Pius V fixed prayers that go back to the first centuries, as everyone could feel it in reading these beautiful, simple texts. Paul VI simplified, he expanded. He proposed four “canons” the first of which remains the old canon. The public, was misinformed, disconcerted. How to admit to the simple and the wise of this reasonable country that the only Mass, celebrated by the Fathers of the Council would alone become forbidden? How does one make French minds understand, so in love with coherence and tolerance that pluralism would respect all schools, except the school that wants to keep the liturgy celebrated for so many centuries? To take root in the slow and long term, a reform needs to mature and requires indulgence and patience. It is time for our bishops to reaffirm without ambiguity the lawfulness of what Rome maintains.

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Et un des résultats paradoxaux de tant de paradoxes sera que la crise accentuera le pouvoir arbitral du Saint-Siège, en tant qu'il est garant de l'identité de la foi. Responsable suprême de la foi d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain, il est moins influencé par l'opinion que les épiscopats des nations.

Et il faut bien envisager une conséquence presque fatale. Si le Siège romain sévit contre Ecône, cible visible devenue provocante, la logique l'amènera à condamner plus encore ceux qui, sous le couvert du Concile, mettent en cause l'essence de la foi. Et, en ce temps de réconciliation où les catholiques se rapprochent de leurs frères, ils risquent de se trouver séparés en trois familles distinctes. Qui ne ferait tout le possible pour éviter cela ?

Mais qu'arriverait-il demain si Ecône se trouvait, sans l'admettre, hors de la communion ecclésiale ?

Alors, l'ancien évêque de Dakar et de Tulle ne pourrait plus siéger à côté de ses frères ? Il se trouverait dans la situation de l'archevêque de Canterbury. Alors, jouerait l'honneur œcuménique, la reconnaissance des torts mutuels, la porte toujours ouverte à la réconciliation, la parabole de l'enfant prodigue, Mgr Lefebvre a toujours demandé d'être reçu seul à seul par le Saint Père, comme le fils par le père. Une fois hors, l'audience lui serait accordée.

On ne peut échapper à l'amour œcuménique. Comme tout amour absolu, l'œcuménisme triomphera toujours : aussi bien dans la joie que dans la douleur, autant dans les communions qui rassemblent que dans les séparations qui déchirent. Le Christ sera-t-il écartelé jusqu'à la fin ? Et trouvera-t-il alors de la foi sur la terre ?

And one of the paradoxical results of so many paradoxes will be that the crisis will accentuate the arbitrating power of the Holy See, insofar as it is the guarantor of the identity of the faith. Supreme Leader of the faith of yesterday, today and tomorrow, it is less influenced by the opinion from the episcopates of the nations.

And we must consider an almost fatal consequence. If the Roman See prevails against Ecône, a visible target become provocative, the logic will lead it to condemn further those who, under the guise of the Council, question the essence of the faith. And, in this time of reconciliation where Catholics draw closer to their brothers, they risk finding themselves separated into three distinct families. Who would not do everything possible to avoid that?

But what would happen tomorrow if Ecône was, without admitting it, out of ecclesial communion?

Then, could the former bishop of Dakar and Tulle no longer sit next to his brothers? He would find himself in the situation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. So, he would play the ecumenical honor, the recognition of the mutual wrongs, the door always open to reconciliation, the parable of the prodigal son, Archbishop Lefebvre always asked to be received alone by the Holy Father, as the son by the father. Once outside, the audience would be granted him.

One cannot escape ecumenical love. Like all absolute love, ecumenism will always triumph: as much in joy as in pain, as well as in the communions which gather together in the separations that tear apart. Will Christ be torn apart until the end? And will he then find faith on earth?

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Mais l'espérance œcuménique, qui est une « espérance contre l'espérance » sait qu'elle aboutira à l'unité, dans ce monde ou dans l'autre.

Le Concile qui a défini l'ouverture suppose plus encore la fidélité. La joie de ma foi, l'avouerais-je ? C'est de communier dans l'identité avec le peuple innombrable des fidèles de vingt siècles...

Tout changement suppose une permanence, plus profonde encore que le changement. (Et cela est vrai en politique aussi).

Le pire est hélas ! toujours possible. Mais, nous savons que le meilleur, un jour, sera. J'aimais ce mot, si modeste et si pur, d'un ami incroyant : « Je ne sais rien, j'ai peine à croire. J'espère tout ».

Le Pape avait cet article sous les yeux. Il le trouvait bon, quoiqu'il jugeât paradoxale l'idée que Mgr Lefebvre, excommunié serai reçu plus aisément.

- « Je crois que vous n'êtes pas partisan qu'un Pape démissionne. Et cependant, à l'académie, les secrétaires dits « perpétuels » renoncent à la perpétuité. Mais vous avez soutenu l'idée que la Papauté n'est pas une fonction, mais un état, et qu'on ne démissionne pas de la paternité. J'ai lu votre article à ce sujet ». Je développe l'idée que, si l'on sait qu'un Pape démissionnera à quatre-vingt ans, on verra son autorité diminuer à mesure qu'il approchera du terme, et qu'il faut laisser à Dieu le secret de l'heure dernière. Le Pape ne donne pas son sentiment sur ce point.

Il me demande si j'ai connu Péguy, si Péguy s'est converti au catholicisme, si Bergson s'est converti au catholicisme. Je lui dis avoir bien connu Jeanne Bergson, la fille du philosophe, qui, après la mort de son père, s'est

But the ecumenical hope, which is a "hope against hope" knows that it will lead to unity, in this world or in the other.

The Council which defined the opening supposes even more the fidelity. The joy of my faith, will I acknowledge it? It is to commune with the identity of innumerable peoples of the faith of twenty centuries ...

Any change supposes a permanence, even more profound than the change (and this is true in politics also).

The worst is unfortunately always possible! But, we know that the best, one day, will be. I loved that word, so modest and so pure, from an unbelieving friend: "I know nothing, I struggle to believe. I hope for everything."

The Pope had this article in front of him. He found it good, although he judged the idea paradoxical that Archbishop Lefebvre, once excommunicated, would be more easily received.

- "I believe that you are not in favor of a Pope resigning. And yet, at the academy, the secretaries known as 'perpetuals' renounce perpetuity. But you have supported the idea that the Papacy is not a function, but a state, and that we do not resign from fatherhood. I read your article on this subject." I have developed the idea that, if we know that a Pope will resign at eighty years of age, we will see his authority diminish as he approaches this term, and that it must be left to God the secret of the last hour. The Pope does not give his opinion on this point.

He asks me if I knew Péguy, if Péguy became a convert to Catholicism, if Bergson converted to Catholicism. I tell him that I had known Jeanne Bergson well, the philosopher's daughter, who, after the death of her father,

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convertie au catholicisme. Il me dit : « — Vous devriez écrire un petit livre intitulé trois femmes mystiques de ce temps : qui étaient aussi des philosophes :

Simone Weil Edith Stein Jeanne Bergson ».

La conversation passe à Monsieur Michelin, le Directeur du Journal « La Croix ». Le Pape dit : « Je l'ai beaucoup connu, beaucoup apprécié. C'était le « vrai Israélite dont parle l'Évangile » de saint Jean, je veux dire, l'homme droit dans lequel il n'y avait aucune ruse : caché dans l'ombre et si simple. Je ne sais s'il avait une forte culture. Ce que je sais, c'est qu'il avait quelque chose de supérieur à la culture : la profondeur, l'humilité, l'esprit de service. Si j'avais à parler de lui, je diviserais mon propos en trois parties : l'intelligence, la fidélité, le dévouement ».

Le soir du 8 septembre, je dis au Pape, parlant au nom de tous les laïcs : Nous avons toute confiance en vous pour couronner votre Pontificat en affermissant la foi, en confirmant vos frères. Ce sont les derniers temps d'une vie qui en sont le couronnement. — Oh, dit-il, le couronnement d'une vie, c'est la mort et le jugement qui suit la mort. Je répète que Jésus n'a dit qu'à Pierre de confirmer ses frères. Réponde qu'il le sait, mais qu'il a besoin que des amis le soutiennent, le réconfortent ». Pendant le repas, on parle de liturgie. J'expose que la traduction française de la liturgie a fait baisser de plusieurs degrés, le côté mystérieux, sacré, *numineux* de la liturgie. Le français, n'est pas une langue poétique, c'est une langue analytique, faite pour l'exposition distincte, la conversation, l'entretien.

Le Saint Père répond : « la langue française est si parfaite. Lorsque je veux savoir si ma pensée est une véritable pensée, je la traduis en Français. J'aime aussi votre poésie, et je vais

converted to Catholicism. He said to me: "You should write a little book called 'three mystical women of that time: who were also philosophers:

Simone Weil Edith Stein Jeanne Bergson.""

The conversation moves on to Mr. Michelin, the Director of the Journal *La Croix*. The Pope says: "I knew him well, appreciated him a lot. He was the 'true Israelite of which the Gospel of St. John speaks,'¹⁵ I mean to say, the right man in whom there was no guile: hidden in the shadows and so simple. I do not know if he had a strong culture. What I know is that he had something superior to culture: depth, humility, the spirit of service. If I had to talk about him, I would divide my discussion into three parts: intelligence, loyalty, devotion."

On the evening of September 8, I say to the Pope, speaking on behalf of all the laity: "We have every confidence in you to crown your Pontificate by strengthening the faith, by confirming your brothers. These are the last days of a life's crowning glory." — "Oh," he says, "the crowning of a life is death and the judgment which follows death." I repeat that Jesus only told Peter to confirm his brothers. He answers that he knows it, but that he needs "friends to support him, comfort him." During the meal, we talk about liturgy. I submit that the French translation of the liturgy has degraded by several degrees, the mysterious, sacred, *numinous* side of the liturgy. French is not a poetic language, it is an analytical language, made for clear expression, conversation, interview.

The Holy Father answers: "the French language is so perfect. When I want to know if my thought is a true thought, I translate it into French. I also like your poetry, and I'm

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en donner un exemple. » Alors il me récite les vers de Ronsard :

*Et, rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin.*

Il ajoute : « Ce mot de *rose*, ce mot d'*espace*, comme cela est beau ! Vous dites que l'*e* muet empêche votre langue d'être chantante, comme l'est l'italien. Mais, à côté du chant chantant de notre pays, il y a un chant assourdi, presque muet, qui est la beauté suprême, et qu'on ne trouve que chez vous. Je vais maintenant vous réciter un poème de Victor Hugo, tiré de ce recueil si bien nommé, les *Contemplations* : Hugo évoque sa fille morte.

*Elle avait dix ans, et moi trente ;
J'étais pour elle l'univers ;
Oh! Comme l'herbe est odorante,
Sous les arbres profonds et verts.*

Enfin, dit le Pape, il y a Verlaine. Bien sûr, il faut oublier la vie de Verlaine, ses aventures. Mais ce qu'on doit retenir d'un poète, ce sont ses poèmes, ce ne sont pas les vicissitudes. Je vais vous réciter ce que je sais de Verlaine :

*Mais vous aimez ! Voyez comme je suis enfant
Vous dont l'amour toujours monte comme
la flamme*

*Et pourtant je vous cherche en longs
tâtonnements.*

*Je devrais goûter sur terre mes prémices,
La paix du cœur, l'amour des pauvres et
mes soirs mystiques,*

*En attendant l'assomption dans ma lumière,
L'éveil sans fin dans ma charité
coutumière.*

Vous m'avez dit qu'en Italie nous avons une langue plus poétique que la vôtre, plus musicale à cause de l'accent. Je l'admets. Mais cette langue n'est pas faite pour le dialogue. En Italie, chacun

going to give an example.”¹⁶ He then recites to me the verses of Ronsard:

*And, pink, she lived what roses live,
The space of a morning.*

He adds: “This word about *pink*, this word about *space*, how beautiful this is! You say that the silent ‘e’ prevents your language from being sung, like Italian. But, besides the song-singing of our country, there is a muffled, almost silent song that is the supreme beauty, and which is found only where you come from. I am now going to recite a poem by Victor Hugo from this collection so aptly named, the *Contemplations*: Hugo evokes his dead daughter.

*She was ten years old, and I thirty;
I was for her the universe;
Oh! As the grass is fragrant,
Under the trees deep and green.*

“Finally,” says the Pope, “there is Verlaine. Of course, we have to forget the life of Verlaine, his adventures. But what must be remembered about a poet are his poems, not vicissitudes. I will recite to you what I know of Verlaine’s:

*But you love! See how I am a child
You whose love always goes upwards like
the flame*

*And yet I am looking for you in long trial
and error.*

*I should taste on earth my first fruits,
Peace of heart, love of the poor and my
mystical evenings*

*While waiting for the assumption in my light,
The endless awakening in my customary
charity.*

You told me that in Italy we have a language that is more poetic than yours, more musical because of the accent. I admit it. But this language is not made for dialogue. In Italy,

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chante son chant. Chez nous, on n'écoute guère. J'ajoute que chez nous, il y a maintenant de très mauvais chants que les femmes chantent en chœur ! Mais les hommes ne chantent plus. Ne vous faites pas d'illusions : la réforme liturgique n'a pas été bien appliquée en Italie. Quant aux prêtres, ils ont pris la mauvaise habitude de ne lire que le Canon II, qui est le plus court, le plus expéditif. C'est un effet fatal de la paresse humaine ». Puis, il m'interroge sur la France : « Parle-t-on encore du Général de Gaulle ? Qu'est-il devenu dans la mémoire des français ? » Il me pose la même question à propos de Mauriac, de Maupassant, et aussi de Mallarmé.

9 septembre 1976, --- Conversation pathétique. Visage du Pape sévère. Il est assis sur un fauteuil surelevé. Pour la première fois, je l'entends parler en Pape. Il me dit qu'il représente dans l'Eglise l'autorité suprême. Je ne sais pas pourquoi, je m'effraie d'être seul avec lui, comme s'il était, non plus un ami, mais un juge. D'autant qu'il ouvre un dossier, où je suis surpris de voir les lettres que je lui ai écrites depuis vingt ans, même les plus insignifiantes, qui étaient classées dans des chemises de papier blanc. Il me parle du livre de Lucie-Faure Goyau sur Newman, que je lui ai envoyé. Le livre qui, lu vers 1917, m'avait pour la première fois révélé le nom de Newman. J'avais retrouvé cet exemplaire. Il l'avait fait relier en vert, sa couleur préférée. Echanges de vues sur Newman, mais vite l'entretien s'élève à des problèmes plus hauts, qui sont ceux que Newman avait vécus : comment définir l'identité de l'Eglise dans le temps ? A mes yeux, l'affaire d'Ecône ne m'intéressait que si je la rapportais à cette question fondamentale. Je me souviens très

everyone sings his song. At home, we hardly listen. I add that with us, there is now very bad songs that women sing in chorus! But men do not sing anymore. Do not be fooled: the reformed liturgy has not been well-applied in Italy. As for the priests, they have taken on the bad habit of reading only Canon II, which is the shortest, the most expeditious. This is a fatal effect of human laziness.”¹⁷ Then he asks me about France: “Are we still talking about General de Gaulle? What did he become in the memory of the French?”¹⁸ He asks me the same question about Mauriac, Maupassant, and also Mallarme.

September 9, 1976 – A touching conversation. Face of the Pope severe. He is sitting on an elevated chair. For the first time, I hear him speak as a Pope. He tells me that he represents in the Church the supreme authority. I do not know why, I am afraid to be alone with him, as if he were no more a friend, but a judge. Especially since he opens a file, where I am surprised to see the letters that I wrote him for twenty years, even the most insignificant, which were classified in folders of white paper. He tells me about Lucie-Faure Goyau's book on Newman, which I sent him.¹⁹ The book which, I read about 1917, had for the first time revealed the name of Newman to me. I found this copy. He had it bound in green, his favorite color. Exchanges of views on Newman, but the conversation quickly escalates to higher problems, which are those that Newman had experienced: how to define the identity of the Church at the time? In my view, the Ecône affair did not interest me unless I brought it back to this fundamental question. I remember very exactly the dialectic of

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exactement de la dialectique de cet entretien qui ne s'égara jamais, qui s'éleva toujours.

J'avais commencé en rappelant la promesse que Mgr Montini m'avait demandée le 8 septembre 1950, de lui dire toujours toute ma pensée. Et je développais l'idée que l'affaire d'Ecône pouvait être l'origine d'un schisme, qu'un schisme durait trois siècles, que j'avais comparé Mgr Lefebvre au premier Newman, lequel n'admettait pas les changements introduits par Rome, pensant que l'Eglise doit conserver toujours les mêmes formes ; mais Newman devait comprendre, (et c'est pourquoi il s'est converti), que l'Eglise doit changer pour conserver son identité profonde, c'est ce que Newman appelle le *développement*, qui est la vraie Tradition. De sorte que l'affaire Lefèvre, (qui en ce moment est au cœur de l'Eglise), demeure aussi au cœur de ma pensée.

Le Pape reprend : « J'ai compris en vous écoutant, hier, que vous désiriez que je reçoive Lefèvre ». Je lui réponds : « Je n'ai pas à juger les raisons très graves que vous avez de ne pas recevoir cet évêque. Mais je me place au point de vue du public dans les élites comme dans le peuple, on ne comprend pas que vous n'ayez jamais voulu recevoir Monseigneur Lefèvre, alors que vous avez reçu tous les schismatiques, les hérétiques, les incroyants, et plusieurs s'étonnent que vous soyez si dur pour Monseigneur Lefèvre alors que vous êtes si doux pour ceux qui sont beaucoup plus désobéissants que lui puisque, sous le couvert du Concile, ils décomposent l'Eglise. C'est de ce point de vue purement extérieur que je me place, et de ce point de vue je pense que ce serait un signe que d'accorder un entretien à Monseigneur Lefèvre ».

– « Mais je lui ai envoyé des messagers qui l'ont supplié en mon nom et qu'il a repoussés !

this meeting which will never be abandoned, which will always arise.

I began by recalling the promise that Monsignor Montini had asked me on September 8, 1950, always to tell him all my thoughts. And I developed the idea that the Ecône affair could be the origin of a schism, that a schism lasted three centuries, that I had compared Archbishop Lefebvre to the first Newman, who did not admit the changes introduced by Rome, who thought that the Church must always keep the same forms; but Newman had to understand, (and that's why he converted), that the Church must change to keep her deep identity, this is what Newman calls *development*, which is the true Tradition. So that the Lefebvre affair, (which at this moment is at the heart of the Church), also remains at the heart of my thoughts.

The Pope continues: "I understood from listening to you yesterday that you would like me to receive Lefebvre." I answer him: "I am not able to judge the very serious reasons that you have for not receiving this bishop. But I put myself in the public's shoes, both the elite and people in general, we do not understand that you have never wanted to receive Archbishop Lefebvre, whereas you have received all the schismatics, heretics, unbelievers, and many are surprised that you are so hard on Archbishop Lefebvre when you are so gentle to those who are much more disobedient than he since, under the cover of the Council, they break down the Church. This is from a purely external point of view that I place myself, and from this point of view I think it would be evidence to grant an audience with Archbishop Lefebvre."

– "But I sent him messengers who implored him in my name and he turned it

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» – « Mais cela, ne peut pas remplacer un entretien face à face et seul à seul, l'entretien d'un père avec un fils » – « Comment recevoir celui qui a dit hier encore à Besançon : Je m'agenouillerai devant le Pape à condition qu'il ne me demande pas de me faire protestant, - celui qui a écrit que j'étais moderniste, hérétique, hier encore ; celui qui m'injurie ? »

– Mais, s'il vous disait : « Je me repends, je fais amende honorable », est-ce que vous refuseriez de le recevoir ? »

– « C'est une hypothèse idéale abstraite, qui ne correspond pas à la réalité concrète des faits. Bien sûr, on peut toujours espérer un miracle de la grâce, un événement improbable absolument. Dans ce cas, je lui ouvre les bras. Mais en ce moment je ne vois aucun signe de sa repentance : je vois au contraire des signes inverses ».

– « Mais, lui dis-je, s'il était seul avec vous, s'il se repentait après cette entrevue, vous seriez justifié, aux yeux du monde, d'avoir tenté l'impossible pour empêcher un schisme qui peut déchirer l'Eglise. L'affaire d'Ecône n'est pas locale. Elle aura des retentissements en Europe, en Afrique, en Amérique. Elle peut occasionner un départ silencieux de plusieurs milliers d'âmes. Il s'agit d'un événement qui peut marquer l'histoire de l'Eglise et l'avenir du Concile. Car c'est tout le problème de la Tradition qui se pose symboliquement ».

– « Je le sais, et c'est pourquoi je vous dis que depuis treize ans c'est la plus grande croix de mon pontificat. C'est pourquoi j'en parle ce matin avec vous. Mais j'ai réfléchi, j'ai tout tenté et s'il y a plus tard un schisme, ce n'est pas moi qui en serai responsable, mais l'obstination insensée et devenue morbide de Monseigneur Lefebvre, qui

down!" – "But that cannot replace a face-to-face and one-to-one meeting, the meeting of a father with a son" – "How to receive the one who said yesterday again in Besançon: 'I will kneel before the Pope on the condition that he does not ask me to be a Protestant,'²⁰ – the one who wrote that I was a modernist, heretic, even yesterday; the one who abuses me?"

– But, if he said to you: I'm going to stop, I am going to make amends," would you refuse to receive it?"

– "This is an ideal abstract hypothesis, which does not correspond to the concrete reality of the facts. Of course, we can always hope for a miracle of grace, an absolutely improbable event. In this case, I would open my arms to him. But at this moment, I do not see any sign of his repentance: On the contrary, I see the opposite signs."

– "But," I tell him,²¹ "if he were alone with you, if he repented after this audience, you would be justified, in the eyes of the world, to have tried the impossible to prevent a schism that can render the Church asunder. The Ecône affair is not local. It will have reverberations in Europe, Africa, America. It can cause a silent departure of several thousand souls. It could act as an event that can be marked in the history of the Church and the future of the Council. Because that is the whole problem of Tradition which is posed symbolically."

– "I know it, and that's why I'm telling you that in thirteen years, this is the biggest cross of my pontificate. It is why I'm talking about it with you this morning. But I've thought about it, I've tried everything and if there is a schism later on, it is not me who will be responsible, but the meaningless and morbid obstinacy of Archbishop Lefebvre, who

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déchire l'Eglise et qui la scandalise par sa désobéissance ».

J'expose au Saint Père que Mgr. Lefèvre désobéit insolemment, mais que d'autres évêques désobéissent subtilement, par exemple en couvrant de leur autorité des faits scandaleux, en critiquant les paroles du Saint Siège sur la morale sexuelle... Le Pape m'interrompt. « Je le sais, dit-il. A Lyon, il y a quarante-sept théologiens qui m'ont attaqué sur ce dernier point, cela a été une grave peine pour moi. Croyez que, lorsqu'il y a eu des abus dans le sens du relâchement, nous avons pris des mesures, réprimandé, les évêques aussi l'ont fait. Mais le public ne l'a pas su. C'est par charité pour les âmes que nous avons agi avec discrétion. Dans le cas de Mgr Lefèvre, il s'agit d'une révolte ouverte, insensée, injurieuse : la révolte d'un évêque, qui forme des prêtres contre moi. Si je le reçois, il risque de m'injurier ; après, de déformer mes paroles ».

Nous parlons de l'œcuménisme pris dans ses hauteurs mystiques, de l'idée que la mystique œcuménique définie par le Concile conseille de respecter tous les autres, de penser qu'ils sont au fond de bonne foi, qu'ils se pensent fidèles à la vérité. L'œcuménisme, comme l'amour, a deux faces : l'une de communion dans le Christ ; l'autre de séparation à cause du Christ.

« Mgr. Lefèvre se trouve dans le même cas que les Anglicans, les Luthériens, les Orthodoxes. Ils ont le sincère désir de s'unir aux catholiques, à condition que l'Eglise reconnaisse qu'ils ont raison d'être anglicans, luthériens. Ils supposent implicitement que le Pape est en réalité le véritable schismatique, qu'eux représentent la vérité. C'est la même position que celle exprimée parfois par Mgr Lefèvre.

renders asunder the Church and who scandalizes her by his disobedience.”

I put to the Holy Father that Archbishop Lefebvre disobeys insolently, whereas other bishops disobey subtly²², for example by covering with their authority scandalous facts, in criticizing the words of the Holy See on sexual morality... The Pope interrupts me. “I know it,”²³ he says. “In Lyon, there are forty-seven theologians who attacked me on this last point, this has caused me serious pain. Believe that, when there were abuses in the sense of laxity, we took action, reprimanded, the bishops did so also. But the public did not know. It is out of charity for the affected souls that we have acted with discretion.²⁴ In the case of Archbishop Lefebvre, this is an open, senseless, damaging revolt: the revolt of a bishop, who trains priests against me. If I receive him, there is risk that he can damage me; afterwards, by distorting my words.”

We speak of ecumenism taken in its mystical heights, of the idea that the ecumenical mystique as defined by the Council advises to respect all others, to think that they are on the foundation of good faith, that they think themselves faithful to the truth. Ecumenism, like love, has two faces: one of communion in Christ; the other separation because of Christ.²⁵

“Archbishop Lefebvre is in the same situation as the Anglicans, the Lutherans, the Orthodox. They have the sincere desire to unite with Catholics, provided that the Church recognizes that they are right to be Anglicans, Lutherans. They assume implicitly that the Pope is actually the true schismatic, that they represent the truth. This is the same position as that sometimes expressed by Archbishop Lefebvre.

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Au fond, l'œcuménisme est traversé par une souffrance profonde qui est la recherche de la vérité. S'il y a entre les chrétiens des séparations, c'est parce que ceux qui se séparent ont l'idée latente que la papauté a été infidèle au Christ, alors sont restés fidèles. Or, il est difficile de signer le texte concile sur l'œcuménisme et de condamner Mgr Lefèvre à ne jamais être reçu par vous : car il est dans la même situation que les évêques schismatiques avec lesquels vous correspondez, – comme, le mois passé, vous avez correspondu avec l'archevêque de Cantorbéry à propos de l'ordination des femmes ».

« Le cas d'Ecône m'intéresse, en tant que j'y vois, comme dans une coupe vivante, le mécanisme de toutes les séparations qui ont jalonné l'histoire de l'Eglise depuis deux mille ans, où des consciences s'opposent sur la vérité. Il y a des torts mutuels, des paroles imprudentes, des durcissements, à la fin des condamnations. Mais l'œcuménisme défini à Vatican II apporte un esprit nouveau ».

Le Saint Père reprit : « Sur le passé, nous n'avons pas barre. Le négatif du passé, nous le connaissons. Il s'agit de savoir comment nous devons envisager l'avenir œcuménique. Hier, vous m'avez parlé, me dit-il, de la crise de la foi dans l'Eglise de France. Avez-vous songé aux remèdes pendant votre nuit ? » – « Oui, lui dis-je, j'ai même mis sur le papier quelques pensées sous le titre *Propositions* ». – « Voyons ces Propositions », dit-il. Je lui tends mon papier. Il y avait un premier paragraphe sur la foi, où il était dit que le principal problème de notre époque est celui de la foi, de sa permanence. Car la foi ne peut être vraie que si elle est permanente, c'est-à-dire si la foi d'aujourd'hui est la même que celle d'hier et que celle de demain. Le Pape dit : « Le progrès

Basically, ecumenism is crossed by a profound suffering that is the search for truth. If there are divisions between Christians, it is because those who separated themselves have the latent idea that the papacy was unfaithful to Christ, so it is they who have remained faithful. However, it is difficult to sign the Council's text on ecumenism and condemn Archbishop Lefebvre never to be received by you: because he is in the same situation as the schismatic bishops with whom you correspond, – such as, last month, you have corresponded with the Archbishop of Canterbury on the ordination of women.”

“The case of Ecône interests me, as I see in it, as in a living cup, the mechanism of all the separations that have punctuated the history of the Church for two thousand years, where consciences are opposed to the truth. There are mutual wrongs, imprudent words, intransigence and, in the end, condemnations. But the ecumenism defined at Vatican II brings a new spirit.”

The Holy Father resumes:²⁶ “Concerning the past we have no bar. We know about the negative things of the past. It's about knowing how we should envisage the ecumenical future. Yesterday, you spoke to me, he tells me, of the crisis of faith in the Church of France. Have you dreamt about remedies during your night?” – “Yes,” I said to him, “I even put on paper some thoughts under the title *Proposals*.” – “Let's see these Proposals,” he said. I give him my paper. There was a first paragraph on faith, where it was said that the main problem of our time is that of faith, of its permanence. Because faith can only be true if it is permanent, that is to say, if the faith of today is the same as yesterday and that of tomorrow. The Pope says: “Progress

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suppose la tradition. Nous l'avons toujours affirmé solennellement, en particulier dans notre profession de foi ». – « La difficulté, vient de ce qu'on parle de l'Eglise conciliaire comme si cette Eglise effaçait ce qui avait été auparavant. Or, si l'Eglise conciliaire efface et corrige sur des points essentiels l'Eglise antérieure, elle reconnaît que dans le passé elle a pu errer. Et, si elle a erré dans le passé, pourquoi n'errerait-elle pas dans le présent et dans le futur ? »

Le Saint Père me dit : « Considérez la réforme liturgique. Je vais encore plus loin que vous. Non seulement nous avons maintenu tout le passé, mais nous avons retrouvé la source qui est la tradition la plus ancienne, la plus primitive, la plus proche des origines. Or, cette tradition avait été obscurcie au cours des siècles, et particulièrement au Concile de Trente ». « Le difficile, lui dis-je, c'est de ne pas donner l'impression que Trente a abandonné ou rejeté ce qui était avant Trente, et par exemple que la messe du Concile de Trente, où il est insisté sur le caractère sacrificiel de la messe, (qui renouvelle mystiquement le sacrifice de la Croix), a été colorée par une réaction antiluthérienne ; que Luther était plus vrai que le Concile, puisque Luther affirmait qu'ils revenait à la source primitive ».

« Mais, dit le Pape, l'identité de la foi, sa vérité permanente n'est pas ici en question. Le canon de Vincent de Lérins, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, (ce qui a été cru toujours, partout, par tous), restera toujours le critère de la foi ».

Le Pape lit alors le troisième point de mon papier, où il est dit qu'il serait désirable que la messe de Saint Pie V soit autorisée, pendant une

presupposes tradition. We have always solemnly affirmed, especially in our profession of faith.” – “The difficulty comes from when we speak of the conciliar Church as if this Church was erasing what had been before. Now, if the conciliar Church erases and corrects essential points pertaining to the earlier Church, she must recognize that in the past she may have erred. And if she has erred in the past, why not in the present and in the future?”

The Holy Father tells me: “Consider the liturgical reform. I go even further than you. Not only have we maintained all the past but we have found the source that is the oldest tradition, the most primitive, the closest to the origins. However, this tradition had been obscured over the course of the centuries, and particularly at the Council of Trent.” “The difficult thing,” I tell him,²⁷ “is not to give the impression that Trent abandoned or rejected what was before Trent, and for example that the Mass of the Council of Trent, where there was insistence on the sacrificial character of the Mass, (which mystically renews the sacrifice of the Cross), was colored by an anti-Lutheran reaction; that Luther was truer than the Council, since Luther claimed they were returning to the primitive source.”

“But,” says the Pope,²⁸ “the identity of the faith, its permanent truth is not in question here. The canon of Vincent of Lérins, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, (which has always been believed everywhere, by all), will always remain the criterion of the faith.”

The Pope then reads the third point of my paper, where it is said that it would be desirable that the Mass of Saint Pius V be

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période probatoire et provisoire, par conséquent que soit retirée l'interdiction faite en France de dire cette messe de Saint Pie V (que le Concile n'a jamais prétendu abolir). Le Pape me dit sévèrement : « Cela, jamais ! D'autant que c'est une mauvaise querelle, puisque le canon de Saint Pie V, je l'ai gardé dans les quatre canons de la nouvelle liturgie, où il tient la première place ». – « Mais, répondis-je, il ne s'agit pas du canon. Il s'agit de l'offertoire, où, dans la nouvelle liturgie, l'idée de sacrifice semble restreinte ». – « Je reconnais que la différence entre la liturgie de Saint Pie V et la liturgie du Concile (appelée souvent, je ne sais pourquoi, liturgie de Paul VI), est très petite. En apparence, le différend porte sur une subtilité. Mais cette messe dite de saint Pie V, comme on le voit à Ecône, devient le symbole de la condamnation du concile. Or, je n'accepterai en aucune circonstance que l'on condamne le Concile par un symbole. Si cette exception était acceptée, le Concile entier serait ébranlé. Et par voie de conséquence l'autorité apostolique du Concile ». – « Cependant, lui dis-je, une concession sur ce point aurait sans doute pour conséquence la soumission ; un schisme ne serait plus à craindre. Un si grand enjeu ne mériterait-il pas une concession minime, – d'autant que l'opinion ne peut admettre que toutes les messes soient permises sauf celle de Saint Pie V, messe que tous les évêques disaient pendant le Concile ? ».

L'entretien finit sur ce point, l'on passe à une autre considération, qui est le pardon des injures. Le Saint Père devient beaucoup plus grave. Il me dit : « Vous devinez, me dit-il, vous qui êtes un ami, que je suis prêt à pardonner : à chaque instant et totalement. Mais à une condition, et c'est ce *si* qui importe. La condition est que Mgr Lefèvre soit sincère

allowed, during a probationary and provisional period, thus the ban passed in France to say this Mass of Saint Pius V (which the Council never claimed to abolish) would be removed. The Pope says to me sternly: "It will never happen because it is an unfounded argument! I have kept the canon of St. Pius V in the four canons of the new liturgy, where it holds the first place." – "But," I replied,²⁹ "it's not about the canon. This is about the offertory, where, in the new liturgy, the idea of sacrifice appears restrained." – "I recognize that the difference between the liturgy of Saint Pius V and the liturgy of the Council (often called, I do not know why, the liturgy of Paul VI)³⁰, is very small. On the face of it, the dispute is about a subtlety. But this so-called Mass of St. Pius V, as seen in Ecône, becomes the symbol of the condemnation of the Council. I will, however, not accept under any circumstances that which condemns the Council with a symbol. If this exception was accepted, the entire Council would be shaken. And, consequently the apostolic authority of the Council." – "However," I say to him,³¹ "a concession on this point would, without doubt, result in submission; a schism would be feared no longer. Isn't such a big issue worthy of a minimal concession, – since opinion cannot admit that all Masses are allowed except that of St. Pius V, Mass that all the bishops said during the Council?"

The meeting ends on this point, we move on to another consideration, which is the forgiveness of insults. The Holy Father becomes much more serious. He says to me: "You will sense," he says to me, "you who are a friend, that I am willing to forgive: at any moment and totally. But on one condition, and that's even if it matters. The condition is

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dans son repentir. Or, j'ai tout lieu de croire qu'il n'est pas sincère, que je serais dupe d'une soumission ». – « Mais, dis-je, autant dire que vous ne pardonneriez jamais, même s'il se repent, puisque ce repentir ne sera jamais sincère à vos yeux. Dieu agit-il ainsi avec nous, qui l'injurions chaque jour ? Et comment pouvons-nous donner une preuve mathématique de notre sincérité, de notre pur amour, de notre contribution parfaite ? » Le Pape reprend : « Il y a des présomptions d'insincérité telles que le doute est toujours possible. En tous les cas, vous avez raison de poser le problème où il doit être posé : quels sont les critères de la sincérité ? Je pense que ces critères ne peuvent pas se résumer par un propos, par une déclaration qui, chez un esprit aussi peu cohérent que celui de Mgr Lefèvre, seront suivis demain d'une déclaration inverse. Il faudra un changement réel, une longue maturation, une convergence de preuves, non seulement de Monseigneur Lefèvre, mais de son entourage et de ses disciples. Alors, il y aurait une présomption de sincérité aujourd'hui je ne vois pas cela ». Je rappelle au Pape le toast où Newman disait : « Je bois à ma conscience d'abord et au Pape ensuite ». Il me dit : « Il est vrai que la conscience est la première lumière, le fondement de toutes les autres lumières et que nous devons la respecter chez ceux qui se trompent. Il reste donc, dit-il en souriant, à prier pour que le Saint Esprit fasse irruption dans la conscience de Mgr Lefèvre ! » Et alors le Pape se lève soudain. Il me demande de dire avec lui le *Pater Noster*.

Après je dis : « C'est pour le bien de la France et pour le bien de l'Eglise que je me suis, contre mon gré, occupé de cette affaire d'Ecône. Je n'ai aucune sympathie pour l'intégrisme. J'ai été formé par des esprits

that Archbishop Lefebvre be sincere in his repentance. Now, I have every reason to believe that he is not sincere, that I would be fooled by a submission.” – “But,” I say,³² “to go as far as to say that you will never forgive, even if he repents, since this repentance will never be sincere in your eyes. Does God act so with us, who insult Him every day? And how can we give a mathematical proof of our sincerity, of our pure love, of our perfect contribution?” The Pope replies: “It is always possible that there are presumptions of insincerity such as doubt. In any case, you are right to pose the problem where it should be posed: what are the criteria of sincerity? I think these criteria cannot be summed up by a statement, by a statement that, in a mind as inconsistent as that of Archbishop Lefebvre, will be followed tomorrow by an opposite statement. It will take a real change, a long maturation, a convergence of proofs, not only from Archbishop Lefebvre, but from his entourage and from his disciples. So, there would have to be a presumption of sincerity today [and] I do not see that.” I remind the Pope of the toast where Newman said: “I drink to my conscience first and then to the Pope.” He said to me: “It is true that conscience is the first light, the foundation of all other lights and that we must respect it in those who are wrong. It remains, he said smiling, to pray for the Holy Spirit to burst into the conscience of Archbishop Lefebvre!” And so, the Pope suddenly stands up. He asks me to say with him the *Pater Noster*.

Afterwards, I say: “It is for the good of France and for the good of the Church that I have, against my will, become occupied with this affair of Ecône. I have no sympathy for fundamentalism. I was formed by minds

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condamnés au silence par Saint Pie X, ainsi Pouget, Portal, Lagrange, Bergson, Blondel. Vous-même m'avez sauvé des griffes de Monseigneur Parente, qui, en 1948, voulait faire mettre à l'index mon livre sur Marie, c'est là qu'a été l'origine de votre bienveillance pour moi. J'ai toutes les raisons imaginables de me méfier de Mgr Lefèvre. Je l'ai vu deux fois pendant deux heures, j'ai trouvé en lui un esprit aussi opposé au mien qu'il est possible de le concevoir. Mais plus Mgr Lefèvre est opposé, plus je veux être juste avec lui, selon la méthode qui se résume dans ce mot de Lacordaire : Je ne cherche pas à convaincre d'erreur mon adversaire, mais à m'unir à lui dans une vérité plus haute ». Et en cette crise actuelle j'ai l'impression que je suis pour Ecône un interlocuteur valable, parce que laïc, non ennemi *a priori*. Or, j'aurais plus d'autorité si je pouvais dire que vous m'autorisez à venir à Ecône, si je pouvais expliquer à Mgr Lefebvre ce que vous venez de me dire sur les preuves de sa sincérité ».

Le Pape répond : « Je ne puis pas vous désigner comme interlocuteur. C'est à votre conscience de décider. Allez -à Ecône. Mais ne parlez pas de moi, et si vous voyez Mgr Lefebvre agissez comme vous l'avez fait toujours dans votre vie ; comme un philosophe ; autonome, responsable, mais solitaire. Ne pensez pas à moi ! Pensez à l'Eglise ! Ne parlez pas en mon nom ! Parlez au nom de l'Eglise ! » Ainsi finit la deuxième partie de notre entretien.

La troisième fut encore plus émouvante. L'heure passait, je reprends le problème le plus grave. « Il faut se représenter l'enjeu. Un schisme est possible, entraînant des milliers de catholiques, qui vont être ainsi dans un état virtuel de péché. Or, un schisme peut durer trois cents ans, plus peut-être, un

condemned to silence by St. Pius X, Pouget, Portal, Lagrange, Bergson, Blondel. You saved me from the claws of Monseigneur Parente, who in 1948, wanted to blacklist my book on Mary; this was the origin of your benevolence towards me. I have all the imaginable reasons to beware of Archbishop Lefebvre. I saw him twice for two hours, I found in him a spirit so contrary to mine that it is almost impossible to conceive it. But the more Archbishop Lefebvre is opposed, the more I want to be fair with him, according to the method that can be summed up in these words of Lacordaire: 'I do not seek to convince my opponent of error, but to unite myself to him in a higher truth.' And in this actual crisis, I have the impression that I am for Ecône a valid interlocutor, because I am a layman, and thus not an enemy *a priori*. Now, I would have more authority if I could say you authorize me to come to Ecône, if I could explain to Archbishop Lefebvre what you tell me about the proofs of his sincerity.”

The Pope answers: “I cannot name you as interlocutor. It's up to your conscience to decide. Go to Ecône. But do not talk about me, and if you see Archbishop Lefebvre act as you have always done in your life; as a philosopher; autonomous, responsible, but solitary. Do not think of me! Think of the Church! Do not speak in my name! Speak in the name of the Church!” So ends the second part of our meeting.

The third was even more moving. The hour passed, I go back to the most serious problem. “We must imagine the problem. A schism is possible, involving thousands of Catholics, who will thus be in a virtual state of sin. However, a schism can last three hundred years, more perhaps, a schism hardly

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schisme ne se sépare guère. Ce schisme, s'il existe, marquera l'histoire de l'Eglise, il jettera son ombre sur le Concile. Or, ne faut-il pas faire le possible et l'impossible pour éviter une telle séparation ? Au reste, il faut considérer que ce schisme ne sera pas visible. Les fidèles qui se sépareront ne formeront pas (comme jadis), une Eglise séparée. Ils cesseront de croire. Ils seront indifférents. Ils n'élèveront plus leurs enfants dans la foi catholique ».

Le Pape reprend : « Je sens cela exactement comme vous. Et même infiniment plus que vous : c'est la première croix véritable, depuis treize ans, de mon pontificat. Mais je puis dire que j'ai fait pour éviter cela tout ce que j'ai pu ». Je reprends : « Il faut voir les conséquences. Si Ecône est condamné... »

« Et je vois mal, dit le Pape, m'interrompant, comment, en effet, dans quelques mois, on ne sera pas obligé de transformer cette non-communion en excommunication ».

« Si donc Ecône est excommunié, Ecône qui est un jansénisme (c'est-à-dire un excès de fidélité à la tradition), alors une logique immanente obligera le Saint Siège à « excommunier » aussi ceux qui altèrent l'essence de la foi. A la condamnation de droite succèdera une condamnation de gauche. De sorte que, vous qui êtes le Bon Pasteur, le pape du dialogue et de la réconciliation, vous avancerez seul, entouré d'un champ jonché de cadavres à droite, et à gauche plus encore ». Le Saint Père reprend : « J'envisage cette éventualité ; ce sera peut-être la croix de ma vie, ma manière de mourir martyr ». – « Oui, dis-je, vous serez écartelé, vous qui êtes le symbole de l'unité de l'Eglise. Au contraire, si vous résolvez ce problème, vous serez le Pape

distinguishes. This schism, if it exists, will mark the history of the Church, it will cast a shadow over the Council. Now, should we not do the possible and the impossible to avoid such separation? Moreover, it must be considered that this schism will not be visible. The faithful who will separate will not form (as formerly), a separate church. They will cease to believe. They will be indifferent. They will no longer raise their children in the Catholic faith.”

The Pope continues: “I feel exactly as you do. And even infinitely more than you: it is the first true cross, for the last thirteen years, of my pontificate. But I can say that I have done everything I could to avoid it.” I resume: “He must see the consequences. If Ecône is condemned...”

“And I cannot see,” said the Pope, interrupting me,³³ “how, in effect, in a few months, we will not be obliged to transform this non-communion into excommunication.”

“If, therefore, Ecône is excommunicated, Ecône which is a Jansenist (that is to say, an excess of fidelity to tradition), then an immanent logic will oblige the Holy See to ‘excommunicate’ also those who alter the essence of the faith. The condemnation of the right will follow a condemnation of the left. So that you who are the Good Shepherd, the Pope of dialogue and of reconciliation, you will advance alone, surrounded even more by a field strewn with corpses on the right, and on the left.” The Holy Father continues: “I have considered this eventuality; it might be the cross of my life, my way of dying a martyr.” – “Yes,” I say, “you will be pulled apart, you who are the symbol of the unity of the Church. On the contrary, if you resolve this problem, you will be the Pope of

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de la foi. Ce sera votre couronnement terrestre, qui montrera votre vrai visage ». On frappe à la porte. Le Pape me dit : « Ce fut un entretien vraiment dramatique ! Passons à table ».

Après le repas, le Pape dit : « Allons remercier saint Grégoire, l'on passe à la chapelle. » Puis, il me prit les mains doucement, tendrement. Il était très serein. Il me dit : « Je vous remercie de votre visite, qui m'apporte un rafraîchissement. Espérons que cette affaire s'arrangera dans la paix. Le problème, je le répète, est de définir les critères de la sincérité. Mais on ne sait jamais quelles sont les voies divines. Il peut y avoir, pour résoudre cette difficulté, une lumière, *un événement divin*. Si vous allez à Ecône, dites-leur que mes bras sont toujours grands ouverts pour les recevoir tous ! ».

Je pensais au premier entretien, celui du 8 septembre 1950, que j'ai raconté, – et qui avait été l'origine de nos relations. Je me disais que la vie humaine se ressemble à elle même, j'avais tenu le serment de 1950, de dire ce que je pensais être juste, même si cela ne devait pas être conforme à ce qu'il pensait. (Il m'était arrivé d'agir ainsi avec le Général de Gaulle, ce n'est jamais aisé). Comme on préférerait devoir se taire !

Dès que je le pus, je rédigeais ces notes sur cet entretien, dont le Pape m'avait dit qu'il avait été pathétique. Jamais je n'avais assisté aux débats de son cœur, ni mesure autant sa grandeur secrète.

faith. This will be your earthly coronation, which will show your true face.” Someone’s knocking at the door. The Pope said to me: “It was a truly dramatic meeting! Let us go to table.” After the meal, the Pope says: “Let us go and thank St. Gregory; we go to the chapel.”³⁴ Then, he took my hands gently, tenderly. He was very serene. He says to me: “I thank you for your visit, which brings me a refreshment. Let us hope that this affair will be settled in peace. The problem, I repeat,³⁵ is to define the criteria of sincerity. But we never know what the divine ways are. There may be, to solve this difficulty, a light, *a divine event*. If you are going to Ecône, tell them that my arms are always wide open to receive them all!”

I was thinking of the first meeting, that of September 8, 1950, which I have recounted, – and which had been the origin of our relations. I told myself that human life is like itself, I had taken the oath of 1950, to say what I thought to be right, even if it did not conform to what he thought. (As I had done with General de Gaulle, and it is never easy to do). How one would prefer to keep quiet!

As soon as I could, I wrote these notes on this meeting, which the Pope had told me had been touching. Never had I been present³⁶ for the debates of his heart, nor so much aware of his inner [*secrète*] grandeur.

Article Notes:

¹ The article was entitled *Don't whitewash history: Paul VI was front and center the creator of the New Mass of Paul VI*. Written under the pseudonym “New Catholic,” the editor of *Rorate Caeli*, the article disagreed with the presentation in Sapienza’s book that characterizes Paul VI as “almost a victim of the liturgical revolution” that followed the Second Vatican Council. New Catholic argued that there was a “whitewashing of history” owing to the impending canonization of Paul VI.

² The liturgical reform following the Second Vatican Council is questioned by many adherents of the traditionalist movement. Many within it largely prefer the celebration of the Rite of Mass according to the liturgical

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books as they stood in 1962. The [reforms](#) following the Second Vatican Council were formalized and promulgated in Advent, 1969 by Pope Paul VI. They became known in popular speech as the *Novus Ordo Missæ* (New Order of Mass) or the *Missæ Pauli VI* (Mass of Paul VI).

³ The conversation between Paul VI and Archbishop Lefebvre was in Italian and French. The text in *Vatican Insider*, however, is entirely in Italian.

⁴ Fr. Zuhlsdorf does not clarify if he verified the Italian translation of the French texts in the transcript.

⁵ Jean Guittou, *Paul VI Secret* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979). Hereafter *Paul VI Secret* followed by page number.

⁶ *Ibid*, 147-162.

⁷ Ecône is a city in Switzerland where Archbishop Lefebvre had established his main seminary. It remains the primary seminary for the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX)—the organization founded by the Archbishop that continues his work.

⁸ Given the news reports and subsequent statements either from Lefebvre or the Holy See, it could be argued that what took place *after* the meeting was also known.

⁹ A photo of the first page of this particular edition of *Le Figaro* is available [online](#). About a month later, Guittou published in *Le Figaro* another [article](#) entitled *The Two Masses (Les deux messes)* on September 21, 1976.

¹⁰ It is unnecessary to expound upon Guittou's thinking in these areas. Instead, the reader is encouraged to read Guittou's article which is provided in the English translation of his encounter with Paul VI.

¹¹ Their meeting took place in three parts, as Guittou notes in his account.

¹² The book is unnamed by Guittou, but a modest search indicates that it is likely *Newman, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Perrin et Compagnie Libraires-Éditeurs, 1901). A [digital copy](#) of this book has been made available by the University of Toronto.

¹³ A digital recording of this particular speech is available on [YouTube](#): (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IQtLFCEV6s>) <Accessed 27 June, 2018>.

Parallel Texts Notes:

¹⁴ The expression “the faith of all ages” was decided upon to translate *la foi de toujours* because Guittou seems to be expressing the Faith as it has always been throughout the ages.

¹⁵ The French text reads « vrai Israelite dont parle l’Evangile » de saint Jean... » The punctuation indicates that Paul VI did not say the words “of St. John” but that these words were added by Guittou in his reconstruction of Paul’s discussion to clarify *which* Gospel made this statement. This distinction is here noted, but not upheld in the English translation for the sake of convenience.

¹⁶ The French text does not close the quotation. It is added here in the French and English texts for clarity.

¹⁷ The preceding dialogue appears to have been from Paul VI. Guittou marked the closing of the dialogue but not its beginning.

¹⁸ Closed quotation marks are here supplied in the French and English texts.

¹⁹ The book is unnamed by Guittou, but a modest search indicates that it is likely *Newman, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Perrin et Compagnie Libraires-Éditeurs, 1901). A [digital copy](#) of this book has been made available by the University of Toronto.

²⁰ A digital recording of this particular speech is available on [YouTube](#): (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IQtLFCEV6s>) <Accessed 27 June, 2018>.

²¹ The quotation marks in the English translation differ from the French text. This was done in order to distinguish what Guittou said to the Holy Father at the time from his later reconstruction.

²² There was a spelling mistake in the French original that is here corrected. The text read *sublilement* when it should be *subtilement*.

²³ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

²⁴ The French reads “souls” or “the souls” (*les âmes*). Paul VI may have been referring to the specific people influenced by the abuses that he mentioned. However, he may have been speaking more broadly.

²⁵ There is some confusion with this paragraph. It is followed by an actual discourse of Guittou to Paul. Is the paragraph a summary of the subsequent dialogue in quotation marks, or was it a section of unrecorded dialogue *preceding* the dialogue? The correct reading is not clear.

²⁶ The word “resumes” was chosen to translate the French *reprit*. The idea is that Guittou had just issued this long discourse to the Holy Father without an interruption. After listening for such a protracted time, the Holy Father “resumes” his discussion once more.

²⁷ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

²⁸ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

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²⁹ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

³⁰ The text in parentheses appears in the French, but it is not clear whether it is a thought interjected by Guitton or words said by Paul VI.

³¹ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

³² For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

³³ For the difference in punctuation from the French, see the note in endnote 21.

³⁴ Guitton did not close the quotation in the French original. It is closed here in both the French transcription and English translation. Also, the paragraph is not indented as that was the way it appears in the French.

³⁵ The words “I repeat” (*je le répète*) are Paul VI’s. They are not the introduction of a new discourse from Guitton. The entire paragraph is a statement from Paul VI.

³⁶ The French word *assisté* was misspelled as *assité* in the original text. It is here corrected.