

The Study of our Faith, that is our duty.

(Why Not Follow Mr. Nice Guy?)

(A Look at the Thuc Line)

Not long past there was a time when one could practice his faith without concern as to where to go to Mass. If one traveled he simply asked where the Catholic Church was and there he went to Mass.

Today, the church one would be directed to would be, not only totally foreign but also often heretical in its teachings and worship. One has to be a veritable detective in order to find the true Mass today and then there is the question as to whether or not the priest offering the Mass is a true Catholic or some schismatic.

Added to these problems is that in which most Catholics, and most priests it seems, come from a time when the Church was easily taken for granted and as a result many did not learn their Faith as it should have been. If one learned the prayers and catechism answers necessary to receive the sacraments and did a little extra reading he just coasted along with Mass on Sundays and Holy Days contenting himself with the idea that he was above the average.

Even since the obvious turmoil in the Church people have not taken their duties of learning their Faith seriously but rather look for a Mr. Nice Guy, preferably a priest or bishop, to follow after like dumb sheep. They don't know anything and there is so much to learn and keep up with in an unusually fast-paced world that is changing all the time.

Well, the 'why not follow Mr. Nice Guy' is the subject or reason for this article.

One progresses through life trying to follow the path to salvation. But, to some, the time will come when he will see that a given path will almost certainly mean the loss of a friend or relative's soul. Since one is only a naive layman, is one to smile and wave goodbye? One asks oneself, "Who am I to make statements on complex religious issues? Who am I to warn others of a path so obviously dark and promising of hell?"

People don't like being told anything, least of all by their inferiors. Human pride can't abide it. So does this mean that one should say nothing? I don't think so. In the name of charity one has a duty to warn those in danger. How does one do so and soothe the listener's pride in order that he will listen and think instead of taking the position of wanting to argue every point? Perhaps the best way to do so is to use humility if one can do so in the eyes of the listener. Perhaps one could hand the listener(s) a club and make it easy to use it. That is what I intend to do by giving you, the reader, the club -a written document- with which to beat me. Perhaps there are errors in grammar. Perhaps there are errors in research or judgement. But consider that my purpose here is not actually to provide one with a 'club' but rather to warn that we, as traditional Catholics, need to stop fooling

with our Faith and take it seriously enough that we will avoid finding ourselves and our families in hell. The intent is not that the reader follow me but that he study these questions and not just what is being presented herein. Note: The writer is far from an authority on anything, let alone Church Law.

The Steamy Validity Question

Validity - The quality of being valid.

Valid - Founded on truth or fact; in Church law, that which conforms to conditions essential to the efficacy of a sacrament; that is, the proper rite in administration, the intention and jurisdiction of the minister and the moral fitness and intention of the recipient. (The Concise Catholic Dictionary)

A few years back traditional Catholics were bombarded with articles from one side and then the other as to the validity of the Thuc line of bishops which has included some ex-Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) priests made bishops.

It is said that unless one can provide positive proof that form, matter, and intention were not in place then one has to accept that a sacrament is valid. And one is to accept the questioned sacraments and religious.

In normal times this was so, for if one didn't accept he would cause division, strife and scandal in the Church. But in those normal times there was a hierarchy that worked to keep the Church running smoothly. If there was a question as to validity or schism the Church could investigate the required documents, interview the witnesses and make an official announcement as to the Church's position.

This procedure isn't available to the person following the traditional teachings of the Church today. So how are the faithful to protect their soul and those of their family?

While in the army, a guard came to the Sergeant in whose office I was filling out a fire-arms report and told the sergeant that he thought there was a round in the chamber of the rifle he had received for duty. The sergeant, seeing that I was busy, asked the guard to give the rifle to him. After inspecting the rifle awhile the sergeant said, "Cure, you better hope there's not a round in this rifle." Then he pulled the trigger. The rifle went off and the guard, in his surprise fell to the floor unhurt. The only real damage was a hole in the ceiling and roof and a ringing in our ears. The sergeant didn't have enough knowledge of the rifle to check the chamber and to eject the round. The stupidity of pulling the trigger to find out if there was a round in the chamber didn't end up as the disaster it could have been.

Expecting traditional Catholics to accept new religious without question seems similar to the sergeant pulling the trigger. One can't just take the sacraments with so little respect and reverence as to try it to see if you like it. Once one has committed oneself to a situation one can seldom back away from that situation or the position he has taken. It is of utmost importance that one not commit oneself to a position of faith until he has no realistic doubt that it is a Catholic position.

So how do Catholics in these days and under these circumstances clarify whether someone is valid or schismatic? The instructions of some are that if you can't prove invalidity you must assume validity and accept. What ever happened to the sage advice one used to get to avoid questionable religious, Masses and groups?

"When in doubt follow the safest course." Isn't the reason for attending the traditional Latin Mass that we knew it couldn't be wrong, as it sanctified thousands or millions of saints, and that the New Order of the Mass was easily shown to be questionable, so we follow the safer course of attending the traditional Latin Mass? With study and some time one could easily see that much was wrong. But really it wasn't the study and reasoning that brought people to the realization that things were wrong with the New Order of the Mass. It was common sense understanding that the fruits were bad that brought most to seek the true Mass.

The instruction given to those seeking refuge from the Novus Ordo was to do what one knew was right and to avoid that which was questionable. Why are we not given the same advice and instruction today instead of that of accepting questionable goings on and groups, of unbelievably bad fruits? The carryings on of the Thuc line reads like a chapter from the Three Stooges. Bishop Thuc started this masquerade by ordaining a group of persons, among whom were Old Catholics, and then consecrating some of them to bishops. (Old Catholics are formal schismatics and heretics, who have rejected the teachings of the Church on the infallibility of the Pope.) Part of the amazing stupidity is that those who accept Bishop Thuc's goings on claim to be traditional Catholics that would mean that they accept the traditional teachings of the church. One of the primary pet peeves of traditional Catholics is the Pope treating those outside the church as if nothing were wrong and even showing acceptance of them. Well the Pope has never ordained formal heretics or consecrated formal schismatics. If he had these sedevacantist would really have howled, and for good reason. But yet they accept Bishop Thuc who ordained and consecrated Old Catholics. Can it be that there isn't something seriously wrong here?

The purpose of a bishop is to teach. How can anyone take anything this line of bishops says, seriously? Why are not the Society of St. Pius X bishops surrounded by such tragic carryings on. It is obvious that something is seriously the matter with the Thuc Line of Bishops.

The concerning issue is not the matter of validity but rather that of whether an act is licit (legal) or illicit (illegal), in other words right or wrong. Validity is only a small part of the issue and more of a smoke screen.

In the article The Thuc Consecrations: A Postscript by Rev. Donald J. Sandborn, he stated, "The right or wrong, however, of seeking sacraments from these bishops cannot influence our thinking as to the validity of their orders. It is an entirely separate issue."

True one has to segment subjects so as to simplify complicated subjects for better understanding of the whole issue. But why consider validity without going on to discuss whether or not it is right or wrong to receive the sacraments from a particular validly ordained religious. Since validity is only a small part of the question why is so much of the discussion centered around it?

In times past the Church could and, in time, would tell the Faithful if and when a Religious was unlawful in his position. Those days of leisurely following are gone.

One can assume that one of the reasons that the issue of licitness or legality is not discussed is due to its difficulty of comprehension due to its complex nature. The attitude seems to be that since most all priests offering the true Mass are doing so illicitly there is no way to draw a line on what is licit or illicit (legal or illegal).

There was a time when a religious was performing an illegal sacrament if he gave the sacraments outside of his church defined arena whether that arena was geographic or whether it concerned his religious duties. If that sacrament was Holy Orders then the newly ordained priest or bishop would be illegal and most every sacrament he performed would be illegal.

All have seen instances where the illegal thing was the proper thing to do. The law says the speed limit is 65 mph but if a serious emergency were at hand one would not only not be guilty by exceeding it but might even be guilty for failing to drive above it. The name for such a situation in the Church is Epikeia. The definition for Epikeia, according to the Concise Catholic Dictionary is: "An interpretation of a law whereby it is considered not to bind in a particular case because of some special circumstances; an interpretation of the law in a particular instance against the letter of the law but in keeping with its spirit; an interpretation of the mind of the lawmaker which reasons that he, knowing the conditions, would not wish his law to bind in this particular case."

Many times Epikeia is used as justification without proper reason. The key to applying Epikeia is in keeping with the spirit of the law. In other words keeping with the intent and purpose of the law, and that only in extreme need is there to be a parting from the letter (strict interpretation) of the law. When one departs from the letter of the law the problem becomes where to draw the line.

If the children are told that they are not to go into the street, the curb is the designated border, the line is clear. But when they are told they can go fetch baby brother who has gone into the street, even though the line remains the same as before, the law doesn't stand with such clarity as previously. If baby brother can be retrieved why not the dog, a wagon, a ball? Religious are not children and the laws in consideration are more complex than street curbs but it seems to get the point.

The problem today is that most don't know where to draw the line. And some traditional Catholics are intent on not drawing any lines at all. Just because a bishop is a validly consecrated bishop does it mean he has the right to ordain priests and consecrate more bishops?

Back to the defined use of Epikeia as a justification to consecrate bishops. One of the key requirements of Epikeia is that the spirit of the law be kept.

A paraphrasing of the spirit of the law in question may be beyond me but without it we are left in midstream without the means to get to our destination. The law, basically, is that one is not to consecrate bishops without approval by Rome. The spirit of the law in regulating the consecration of bishops is to insure that only those who are truly Catholic, properly trained and disposed, and those with the intent of being servants to the Church would be raised to the position of bishop. Note: The above underlined portion is my understand of the spirit of the law. Check to see if it is correct.

If the strict letter of the law were followed in these days there would be no true Mass or sacraments. There is no argument that today, especially; one needs to receive the sacraments in order to obtain sufficient grace to lead Catholic lives.

Confirmation is a sacrament that is of great worth in turbulent times. It is a speculation to say that we are heading into even worse times so far as retaining one's faith because of persecution, but nevertheless an accepted theory. What

alternative direction is there for the Church but downward, without a vibrant, Church militant?

If the Church is to once again become an active, vibrant force guiding the world then it will surely have to become so through the grace of receiving the sacraments or from the blood of martyrs or a combination of both.

From these deductions it appears that the extreme need is present, to some extent, to justify Epikeia. Just because one has seen a mouse doesn't give justification for twenty cats, or the need to fire a machine gun where the law restricts the use of firearms.

By what means would one keep to the spirit of the law? How would one insure that those receiving the Sacrament: of Holy Orders and being consecrated bishops would fulfill the purpose of the Church? The way in which the Church has done this in the past was for a bishop needing priests to start a seminary to properly train prospective priests in the manner in which the bishop knew they needed to be trained. During the training process reports as to the spiritual advancement as well as academic advancement of the seminarians could be obtained by the bishop. Once the seminarians were ordained and were caring for parishes their progress could be used to help the bishop in making a qualified decision as to who should be recommended for advancement to bishop. The Church could then determine whether or not that individual was interested in serving the Church or some other group or person or themselves.

It takes time to establish the above program. Short cuts could be, and at times have been, taken in emergencies but the above program probably can't be beat and I believe do show conformity with the spirit of the law.

It is quite obvious that the criteria used by Bishop Thuc (if indeed any criteria was used) to screen recipients of the office of bishop was not that of the usual means of selecting bishops. At the beginning of Bishop Thuc's string of consecrations there didn't seem to be any discretionary decisions as to who was to be made priest or bishop.

For further information regarding Bishop Thuc's consecrations one might read "Two Bishops in every Garage" by Father Cekada and The Bulletin of October 1993 by Father Kelley, both opposing the Thuc consecrations.

For the above reasons one can conclude, without any feeling of remorse or concern for one's decision, that the Thuc line of bishops is illegal. We have thieves stealing from Mother Church precious Catholic souls.

Anytime Epikeia is used by religious the faithful not only have a right but a duty to demand proof that it was properly used because illegal religious give no graces through the sacraments they give and can condemn the receiver of those sacraments. Schism is a very serious sin.

Schism

"Schism - Formal separation from the unity of the Church, a separation from communion with the Church; separation from the head of the Church or from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Pontiff. The movement of any person or group of persons of the Church who refuse to recognize the central

authority of the Church; a denial of the authority of the Pope of Rome." (From the Concise Catholic Dictionary)

"Schism is, in the language of theology and canon law, the rupture of ecclesiastical union and unity, i.e.: either the act by which one of the faithful severs as far as in him lies the ties which bind him to the social organization of the Church and make him a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, or the state of dissociation or separation which is the result of that act." (From the Catholic Encyclopedia 1912.)

A formal schism would be an officially proclaimed schism proclaimed by either the schismatics themselves or by the Church. In these days the true Church, because of modernism, isn't likely to proclaim someone as a schismatic. This doesn't mean there are no new schisms needing to be proclaimed for the safety of the faithful.

When the Church condemns a schism it states the persons who have originated the schism. It does not take the trouble of notifying the faithful to beware each time a new member joins the ranks of the schism or heresy. The point is that just because a person isn't listed in something like a "Who's who of Schisms and Heresies" doesn't mean they aren't a part of that schism.

One becomes part of a schism when he is in communion with the schism. The words "in communion with" probably come from the receiving of the Blessed Sacrament. Thus the idea of receiving the sacraments from a schismatic puts one in communion with the schism and makes one part of the schism although one may not be a formal schismatic.

On the subject, the Catholic Encyclopedia says, "Anyone becomes a schismatic who, though desiring to remain a Christian, rebels against legitimate authority, without going as far as the rejection of Christianity as a whole, which constitutes the crime of apostasy." Note three things: #1. One can become a schismatic very simply whereas a formal schism is somewhat complicated and involves legalities. #2. One need not intend to remove himself from the Church. #3. More than one person need not be involved to cause schism.

Quoting again from the Catholic Encyclopedia, "I who follow no guide save Christ am in communion with Your Holiness, that is with the chair of Peter. I know that on this rock the Church is built. Whosoever partakes of the Lamb outside this house commits a sacrilege." (Jerome, "Epist."XV,2) Note: To be part of a schism is very serious, in fact a sacrilege. Even the innocent participator is severely wounded in that he thinks he is gaining merit by receiving the sacraments but is in fact receiving no grace and will most likely be punished for not performing his duty by researching the stand he should have taken.

From the Catholic Encyclopedia, "I know not": writes Bayle, a writer above suspicion of partiality and a tolerant judge, "a more grievous crime than that of tearing the mystical body of Jesus Christ, His church which He purchased with His own blood, that mother which bore us to God, who nourishes us with the milk of understanding, who leads us to eternal life." (Supplement to Philosophical Comment, preface)." Note: It was stated by Rome that because of Thuc's action of ordaining and consecrating outside the church he was schismatic and excommunicated. This is somewhat of an unusual position for modernist Rome to condemn someone but it was a good and very proper thing for Rome to do as Thuc

was tearing the Church. Bishop Thuc made amends with Rome but then went back out and did more of the same, although not quite as wildly, which put him into the same position with Rome.

There are varying degrees of schism as we saw with the quote above stating that if one disobeyed his bishop he was schismatic. This surely isn't what most people would think of when thinking of a schism. To demonstrate we can point out that there are varying degrees of seriousness in breaking the fifth commandment. If one looks cross-eyed at someone it is possible he has broken the fifth commandment, but has committed no mortal sin. But if one plans and kills a man it is a mortal sin unless it was in self-defense. If someone said you have broken the fifth commandment because you have looked cross-eyed, not many people would be very upset. Traditional Catholics seem to get real bent- out-of-shape when someone accuses them of being schismatic and indeed possibly for some good reason. But the charge may not be as serious as it might seem. The reason for them getting all bent-out-of-shape is possibly that they don't understand that the charge may not be all that serious and in fact could be a compliment in some very rare situation. But quite often the problem is that guilty persons don't like having fingers pointed at them. To be a formal schismatic is a mortal sin because one would receive notice from the proper authorities that one was schismatic for committing a stated wrong. If one was to continue down the same path after having been shown where one was wrong one could be quite in danger of hell. The reason formal schism is so positively serious is because there is no longer innocence. One could possibly say, "Well I don't believe what the authorities are telling me." But never-the-less the innocence is gone and one has the duty to seriously research the subject. If one doesn't research the issues then one is in grave danger. But on the other hand, one can be right and be wrongly accused. Such a case is that of St. Athanasius who, almost single handedly stood up against the Arian Heresy. It was easily stated that he was in schism because his work seemed to divide the Church. But in reality it was his accusers who were schismatics because he was one of the few of the hierarchy who held to the True Faith. Athanasius was excommunicated because he was dividing the Church so much that he was considered schismatic but in reality he was neither schismatic nor excommunicated because what he was doing was right and he was doing it for the faith.

We have a segment of the traditionalists stating that it is an extreme wrong to call someone schismatic. How wrong is it to allow schismatics to go about stealing precious Catholic souls while not warning those of the faith of the problem? How many souls are lost because the evidence is not presented? True one doesn't want to accuse some one of such a serious crime without being sure and only then when there is a serious enough issue and a reasonable chance of correcting some of the wrong by presenting the facts.

One of the greatest dangers to a traditional Catholic is that of falling into schism. By the nature of the situation there is no avoiding the danger, but with vigilance and indeed the grace of God one can persevere. There is Hope.

Sedevacantists

The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "Schism is regarded by the Church as a most serious fault, and is punished with the penalties inflicted on heresy, because heresy usually accompanies it." In the case of the Thuc bishops the possible heresy (if and when it is so proclaimed) may be that of Sedevacantism.

The glue that binds the Thuc group together is the fact that they are Sedevacantists. This fact struck home while speaking with a nun who had been with Bishop Musey. During our telephone conversation I asked her who came to the chapel where she is, now that Bishop Musey has died. She said, "Totally Sedevacantists." No other requirement was given.

The Thuc line (those following the Thuc bishops) disavows the pope and the Society of St. Pius X because the Society acknowledges the Pope and therefore is not Sedevacantist.

This is not simply another split in traditionalists. It is a split in the Church, a division of faith. Is this not an establishment of a parallel church?

A definition of sedevacantism couldn't be found so an attempt will be made to explain it. Basically a Sedevacantist believes that the Chair of Peter is vacant, even though there is a man occupying the chair, that there is no one occupying the position of pope. This is to an extreme different than when a pope dies, for the whole church knows the chair is vacant at that time. The idea stands against the visibility of the Church which is one of the major functions of the Church so one can find and follow the faith. I believe the idea is very contrary to the faith. (See Pray for the Pope or Is Sedevacantism Catholic?)

This subject is very difficult to study or discuss. There isn't any information readily available on sedevacantism. I don't know of there ever being such a legitimately claimed case and don't believe such a thing can happen.

The basic confusion comes when people see, for instance, the things that are being done by the hierarchy of the church which are contrary to tradition. They reason that the pope couldn't possibly do things contrary to the faith and be a Catholic therefore how could he be the pope. If he isn't the Pope the Chair of Peter has to be vacant.

The flaw in this reasoning is that indeed the Chair of Peter **can** be occupied by an informal heretic and **has been** in history. The pope is infallible only when he speaks ex cathedra (from the chair). He can be a real skunk and still sit in the position of pope but God would strike him dead, or such, if he was to attempt to speak contrary to the Faith from the chair - ex cathedra.

A similar situation would be for the President of the United States to be a foreigner in the case of an Internationalist. He would still hold the position of President of the United States and, until he was removed, would remain so regardless of what he did.

The Pope is the pope and will sit in that position until God removes him. No one is to judge the pope. Councils are not to judge the Pope for a council acts by individual vote.

Isn't it common sense that one doesn't reject one's father? Even the corrupt state recognizes that the father is not rejected. In divorce the father is still tied to the family. Its recognized in civilized society that one owes allegiance to one's father, even one's father in industry. If a business trains a worker, that worker owes allegiance to that business. If a religious is trained in an order it is perverse for that religious to run down his superiors. The simple fact is that if you run down your father you are in fact running yourself down. The sage point being that the student is less than the teacher. The pope is our spiritual father put in place through the Holy Ghost. Our Lord renamed Simon, Peter, which means rock, then said "upon this rock I shall build my Church". The pope is the Vicar of Christ. And some

men are so ??? to judge their Holy Father who came to that position by way of the Holy Ghost. To discuss whether or not it is possible for a pope to fall into formal heresy and what might happen to him in the eyes of God is one thing (which some saints have done). But then to judge a pope is quite another issue, which no saint has done or ever will.

Those that maintain that the chair of Peter is vacant have two logical conclusions which lead them to schism; #1. That all ecclesiastical restraints are gone and they can basically do as they wish as long as they look Catholic; #2. They believe it is their place to rebuild the Church and replace the pope. Both of these conclusions lead them further down the dark path of schism.

Schuckardt – Mt. St. Michael's

Brother Francis and Brother Dennis in the late '60s and very early '70s traveled around the country talking to various conservative Catholic groups about the problems in the Church and one's duty to have devotion to the Blessed Mother. They started a group called the Legion of Mary Immaculate in order to promote devotion to the Blessed Mother and to promote traditional Catholic ideas.

The Schuckardt / Mt. St. Michael's group is particularly interesting to study in order to see the effects of schism. As was stated above this group was quite spiritual when it was started. Then in October 1971, Brother Francis Schuckardt was ordained a priest by an Old Catholic bishop, Bishop Brown. Old Catholics had been declared schismatic in the late 1800s and this led Schuckardt down the path to schism and possibly worse as the Old Catholics were heretics because they wouldn't accept the dogma that the pope can be infallible. In November of the same year (1971) the now Father Schuckardt was consecrated a bishop by Bishop Brown. Note: Possibly the sacraments given were valid but very illicit or illegal which made them an extreme sacrilege. Also the group took a sedevacantist position which rejects the Pope. From this point forward one can mark the deterioration of Schuckardt and his organization spiritually. True, the organization grew to great proportions. What it built was at the cost of the Church, not just in a financial sense but in the souls who went to Schuckardt for Catholic instruction and sacraments, neither of which they received. The sacraments received were without grace and the instruction was of a church built by man; a church that failed to teach a fear of schism and a love of the true Church. Of course one would not expect a schismatic to teach a fear of schism.

Being without the true sacraments it was only a matter of time until things would become so foul that even one with a clothespin on the nose could tell that something was seriously wrong. His underlings removed Schuckardt from his position (a real democratic group) and a search was made for someone to take the place of the ousted Schuckardt. Note: From a pious Legion of Mary Immaculate to a common criminal because of schism?

Bishop Musey

The background of Father Musey, although not bad, was not that which one would expect of a man destined to become a bishop. But nevertheless, in April 1982, Bishop Carmona of Mexico, who had been made a bishop by Bishop Thuc in October 1981 consecrated Father George Musey a bishop.

By the end of August 1982 Bishop Musey had consecrated another to bishop, Father Louis Vezelis.

Those of the faithful of Colorado first heard of this arrangement by a separate sheet of paper bearing the announcement enclosed in Father Dan Jones' newsletter. The announcement stated that Bishop Musey was the head of the Western Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A. (and Florida), a nice sized kingdom, and that all true Catholics within the territory were to put themselves under his jurisdiction or be schismatics and heretics.

Bishop Musey wasn't alone he had appointed Bishop Vezelis bishop of the Eastern half of the USA who had in turn appointed Father Altenbach Vicar General of the Eastern Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A.. October, 1993 was evidently the kick-off date for these bishops' proclamations because a copy of a complimentary first issue of the Official Publication of the Western Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A. is dated so. And in October 1993, in an open letter to his friends, Father Altenbach as Vicar General states, "You and every traditional Catholic are here-by warned against the heresy and/or schism of attending Divine Worship conducted by any priest who is not under the only available Bishops with genuine Apostolic Succession thru valid and licit consecration, namely, His Excellency Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM (East of the Mississippi) and His Excellency Bishop George J. Musey, (West of the Mississippi and Florida)." What could they have done to be more explicit in establishing a parallel church there/by establishing a schism?

Dean of Canon Law at the Catholic Institute of Paris, a Father Patrick Valdrine was quoted as saying, "It is not the consecration of a bishop which creates a schism; what constitutes a schism is to confer afterwards upon these bishops an Apostolic mission. For this usurpation of the powers of the sovereign Pontiff would be the proof that a parallel Church would be thus formed."

Bishop Mark Pivarunas

The subject of this article as a whole is sad and depressing but of all so far covered, nothing is as sad as the circumstances that take a young boy to the position of Bishop Mark Pivarunas. The fruits of schism and the way in which schism steals souls from the Church and among them souls that have the potential of great saints is a scenario worth studying.

At about the age of thirteen, Mark and his parents heard Brother Dennis (of Schuckardt fame). No doubt they were impressed by what Dennis had to say. Mark went to Bishop Schuckardt's boarding school to study.

In speaking with Bishop Pivarunas he said that while at Schuckardt's he had gone to Masses offered by an older priest and had had no worry as to being schismatic. One of the older priests had told Mark and others that Bishop Brown, who had consecrated Bishop Schuckardt had gone to confession and had been forgiven for his schism (Who knows what one confesses?). Did he then put himself under the pope? Did Schuckardt put himself under the pope? How did Bishop Schuckardt propose to get out of the doghouse (while holding this bad dogma)? There was not only schism but also that of the heresy of not accepting Papal infallibility, a proclaimed dogma of the Church, which is part of the theories that support sedevacantism.

In his historic Formula of Hormisdas of 519, Pope Hormisdas required of the schism of Acacius a profession of faith and a condemnation of the leaders of the schism in order to bring it back to the

Church. Note: This information is to be found in the Catholic Encyclopedia under articles of Hormisdas, schism, and abjuration.

At Schuckardt's Mt. St. Michaels, schism was considered simply a sin and that confession was all that was needed to correct the problem. This was not just a personal sin but a very public sin with hundreds or thousands of Catholic souls being led astray.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the Church to perform a solemn ritual when schismatics are brought back into the Church is to impress all with the gravity of the situation.

In the conversation with Bishop Pivaranus, he repeatedly emphasized that there was no intent to be separated from the Church. But yet they subscribed to sedavacantism which rejects the pope and sets about building a parallel church.

Most traditional Catholics easily understand that a Protestant who goes to hell goes mainly because he didn't care enough about the truth to seek it out. In other words he is condemned because he didn't search the truth earnestly enough to find the Faith. The same principal would seem to apply to schismatics who just follow the leader all the way to hell by sticking their heads in the sand and not earnestly seeking the truth.

But in spite of all the condemnation above it is easy to see how there would be an atmosphere of trust and awe toward Bishop Schuckardt and the beautiful catholic-looking organization. The beautifully sung Masses, the sixty or so Sisters, the two hundred-plus students, all were to be found nowhere else in America and perhaps not in the world. So why would one stop, look and listen? Because it was one's duty.

At any rate, Mark progressed to the point of entering Bishop Schuckardt's seminary and was awaiting ordination when Bishop Schuckardt was exposed and voted out as head of the group.

Because of its schismatic history (therefore lack of understanding of schism) and probably because of its unwillingness to understand the seriousness of its past wrong the Schuckardt group asked Bishop Musey to come and correct its errors in order to clear its name.

The fact that the Schuckardt group asked a bishop to reconcile it says volumes concerning the true understanding of the group as to the fact that they were indeed schismatic.

The sad part is that these poor souls asked a schismatic bishop, Bishop Musey to correct their schismatic situation. Evidently after Bishop Musey had done his thing the group felt secure and proper so promptly went back to sleep, failing to study the situation.

Bishop Musey re-ordained the priests of the Schuckardt group and in 1985 ordained some of the seminarians, among whom was Father Mark Tarcisius who was destined to become Bishop Mark Pivarunas.

In 1986 the Schuckardt group (now calling themselves Mt. St. Michael's) split with Bishop Musey because of problems that arose among them and because they didn't want to obey Bishop Musey's commands. In 1989 the former Brother Dennis, now Father Dennis, was removed as leader of the group and Father Mark Tarcisius took over leadership of Mt. St. Michael's. In 1991 Bishop Carmona of

the Thuc lineage and who had consecrated Bishop Musey, visited Mt. St. Michael's and later consecrated Father Mark Tarcisius as Bishop Mark Pivarunas.

During our telephone conversation I had expressed to Bishop Pivarunas my concern about his orders which came from Bishop Musey. He said that Bishop Musey had tried to get him to give a written statement that Bishop Musey had not claimed to himself a territory. Bishop Pivarunas said he couldn't give such a document since Bishop Musey obviously did take a territory to himself.

The reason for bringing up Bishop Musey's attempt to cover his tracks is that it shows to me that he knew he was wrong but either didn't know how to correct the error or didn't care to go to the trouble of correcting it in a proper manner. Once a man has burned his bridges he can't go back without a great deal of trouble. The Sedevacantists have burned their bridges and have no realistic way of returning to the Church without flat admitting that they made a mistake. They can't go to the Society of St. Pius X for reconciliation because they claim that St. Pius the X Society is heretical since it does not reject the Pope.

So the Sedevacantists are to some extent trapped in their error. Bishop Musey evidently, to some extent, wanted to make amends and I believe Bishop Pivarunas is in the same position. He has moved from the Mt. St. Michael's group and started a convent separate from that group. But he can't get away from the past because he himself is the number one person continuing to carry the schism forward.

Bishop Pivarunas consecrated Father Dolan (a priest trained and ordained in the Society of St. Pius X) a bishop in 1993. This removes a barrier to a whole new group of traditional Catholics who can be infested with schism. Those who had before been isolated from 'Thucites' and 'Schuckardtites' by the ideals, teachings, priestly training of the Society of St. Pius X are now subject to schism.

News Flash

As of June of 2002 Father Sanborn was consecrated bishop by a Bishop McKenna (a Thuc Bishop). Father Sanborn was one of the nine priest who were trained and ordained by the Society of St Pius X and who left the Society because they refused to pray for the Pope in the Mass as they believed John Paul II was not the Pope (Sedevacantists). Some of the nine priests, who had left the SSPX, were ill at ease working with Bishop Dolan because of the history of the line coming from Schuckardt and Mt. St Michael's.

The illicitness of his line still comes back to Thuc and his masquerades. Plus Bishop Sanborn, although possibly he doesn't publicly state that he is a sedevacantist (out of prudence as he puts it), is a sedevacantist.

Conclusion

The controversy basically started with the question of the validity of the Thuc consecrations. Validity seems to be a smoke screen. The real issue is whether or not the Thuc consecrations were of the quality to fulfill the spirit of the law to justify Epikeia. The answer seems to be a resounding 'No'. And when one considers the fact that the Thuc line includes almost exclusively (and as far as I know exclusively) sedevacantists, it appears this schism may be accompanied by a heresy of sedevacantism. Not a formal heresy and possibly not even what one would clearly define as a heresy at this point. But as time goes

on and the Sedevacantists continue to entrench their ideals of a new church including a pope, which is unquestionably their goal, that probably would be the point at which they would become formally schismatic and heretical. Note: Some have already been declared popes by themselves or their group. Sedevacantism is probably the #1 issue of importance.

The secondary issue (and no small one by any means) is whether Bishop Dolan should be approached for any sacraments. Bishop Dolan's bishopric comes from the Thuc line that appears to be illicit because it apparently did not even care to try to fulfill the spirit of the law in order to comply with Epikeia. The fruits of the Thuc line have been disastrous and of which fruits sedevacantism is probably the worst.

The Thuc lineage leading to Bishop Dolan includes Bishop Musey who set up a territory to himself and which appears to be schismatic, which would make the ordination to the priesthood of Father Mark Tarcisius (the future Bishop Pivarunas) illicit and probably schismatic. Bishop Pivarunas is possibly three times schismatic; #1 Old Catholic which couldn't have been reconciled by a schismatic Bishop Musey; #2 ordained a priest by a schismatic Bishop Musey who further made himself so by setting up a parallel church; #3 consecrated bishop by an illicit, Bishop Carmona who was illicit because the Bishop Thuc consecrations did not qualify for Epikeia. True, there is no way for me to know this to be true beyond a doubt but, for sure, there are some incredibly serious questions. And there is a safer course.

Over time one gets frustrated with the information and misinformation and it tends to wear one down to the point of despair. In reading The City of God by Mary of Agreda there is found the statement which was told to her by Our Lord, (Note: It is understood that just because she says Our Lord said it and there is an imprimatur that doesn't mean Our Lord did actually say it. Also it is understood that the imprimatur only states to the reader that the one giving the imprimatur did not find anything contrary to the Faith in the book.) "The existence of different opinions regarding these sacraments and other mysteries in the Church, arises from the fact that I manifest and give light concerning one set of mysteries to some teachers and illumine others concerning other mysteries..." So we should not expect all Catholics to take the exact same position on non-dogmatic issues. A little further on the same piece says, "Therefore they must acquire it by means of study and the use of letters and science." Study...that is our duty. And with that we shall see that we are to follow the faith and not men regardless of how nice they seem.

Keep the faith!