



LETTER TO PRIESTS

Letter to Priests from the Asian District of the Society of Saint Pius X

FIRST LETTER FROM FATHER KARL STEHLIN

Dear Reverend Father!

This letter is primarily intended for all those priests who have made contact with the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X. Some have known us for many years; others have only received a publication from us or have met us on one of our missionary trips. But whoever might read this, I thank Divine Providence for giving me, perhaps by the means of elaborate secondary causes, the honour of addressing you.

Our Unity

One reason why I dare to write to you is this great truth: that, essentially, all priests share the same Priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, we are essentially united in our source, in the sacramental character, which made you and me an "*alter Christus*" (another Christ) – a participant in his Eternal priesthood. However, if we are united in Him, it is only logical that we should be united among ourselves. How much Our Lord desired this spiritual union, when, in His sacerdotal prayer, He asked the Eternal Father that "they may be one, as you in me, and me in them!" (Jn. 17:21)

Our Isolation

Today, however, it seems that many

priests are isolated, maybe not physically, but spiritually. True union among priests depends upon their union to the Eternal High Priest. And the more we encourage one another to be united with HIM, the more we are able to help one another in this dangerous world.

You know probably better than me the attacks made on the Holy Priesthood. From all sides (particularly in the modern secular media) we hear of the priesthood being held up to ridicule, or being denounced for its opposition to progress, to women, to human rights, to the dignity of man, to freedom, or being a sanctuary of the most despicable perversions etc.. The world seems not to understand us anymore. We have become strangers and suspect individuals because somehow we do not fit the patterns of the world's ideals. "*Vae soli*", says in Ecclesiastes (4:10): "woe to him that is alone", because it is almost too difficult to resist such pressures always and everywhere. Hence, the necessity to join and help one another, to keep or to find again the beauty and greatness of our priesthood, to fix our eyes constantly upon Jesus Christ, our "One and All", according to the motto of Saint Francis of Assisi: "*Deus meus et omnia!*" (My God and my All).

We Need Faith

There are two means by which we keep our priesthood alive in our souls and vanquish the attacks of the world; St. John teaches us the first means with great clarity: "this is the victory which overcometh the world, *our faith*" (1 Jn. 5:4)!

Unfortunately, faith is in great decline in the world today. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI spoke many times about the crisis of the faith. It is easy to see that, in the last 50 years, we have lived through a total change of orientation within the Church. Generally, the message of the hierarchy is now turned towards the world, towards man's life, his sorrow and joys in this world. The eternal truths are no longer on top of the list of subjects to be meditated and taught, and a number of these truths are even considered to be outdated. Just two examples amongst many: over the last 50 years, only once did a pope (Benedict XVI) use the term "Church militant". Similarly, the doctrine of the "*novissima*" (the Last Ends) has been totally eclipsed - a profound silence envelops the important truths about judgment, hell, purgatory, consequence of mortal sin, the permanent wounds of original sin left in us etc..

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We cannot survive as priests if we do not try to lift our hearts towards eternal truths. The truth must occupy us, fascinate us. If we do not keep the flame of faith alight, we will no longer understand our own priesthood, which is eminently a mystery of faith. It follows, therefore, that “the world does not understand us, because it does not understand Him” (1 Jn. 3:1).

I think that it is not temerity if I say that we need to be strengthened in our faith. You certainly know the deep crisis of the priesthood: so many priests have abandoned their priesthood, so many priests live in a state of depression and disillusionment in front of a frustrating collapse of Christian life.

Another reason why our faith is at risk is because we are all in danger of seeing things on a merely natural level: “others live an easy life and can be Christians, so why do I have to be alone and despised? Others have legitimate pleasures and compensations for their efforts, so why should they be forbidden for me?” Therefore, some priests demand that they be allowed natural comforts that were forbidden before: for example, so many no longer want priestly celibacy. Others fall because they gratify themselves to excess with things that are not expressly forbidden: it is so sad to see so many of our confreres addicted to alcoholism, dependent on the internet and movies, always looking for money, for holidays and for a comfortable life... The consequences are often disastrous: a double life, the abandon of priesthood, apostasy.

It is so important to strengthen our faith, to enter the high regions of eternal light and truth given by Our Lord! This supernatural REALITY of the faith will

open our eyes and give us the light to detect the illusions and false ideologies which undermine the faith and make the people slaves of evil.

We Need Holiness

The second means by which we keep our priesthood alive in our souls and vanquish the attacks of the world is sanctity. In St. John’s Gospel, Our Lord begs the Father: “*Sanctifica eos!*” (Sanctify them!) (Jn. 17:17). The priest is a consecrated being; he holds in his hand and keeps in his heart the MOST HOLY. To him particularly, Our Lord says: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). If we are aware of the awesome greatness of our priesthood, which puts us above all the angels and makes us accomplish miracles that no man and no angel can accomplish, then we must have an immense desire to “imitate, what we accomplish” (*Imitami quod tractatis*). Hands, which touch the Most Holy, should be hands of a holy man. Therefore, above all we must have a profound desire of union with God and lead a life of prayer and so “taste and see how good He is” (Ps. 33:9). With admiration we consider our elder brother priests who lived a holy life. In times past, such priests converted whole countries and brought millions of souls to eternal salvation. We have a lot to learn from them, and if we follow their footsteps, Our Lord promises that we may accomplish similar things.

The Source of Faith and Holiness : The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Now, the most perfect expression and means of realization of both faith and sanctification is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here we are at the very heart of our priesthood, here we are at the rea-

son of our being, as revealed to us by Our Lord on Maundy Thursday. On this day, He ordered us to accomplish exactly what He showed us: “*Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*” (Do this for a commemoration of Me) (Lk. 22:19).

The Church Needs Faithful and Holy Priests

Saint Gregory the Great wrote: “the greatest harm for the Church are unfaithful priests; the greatest good for the Church are fervent and holy priests.” Our Lord wanted His kingdom to be hierarchical, and His holy will is to give God’s light and graces mainly through the priests, who are called by St. Peter “*forma gregis ex animo*” (a pattern of the flock from the heart) (1 Pet. 5:3): the souls of our flock depend upon the pattern we give them.

You have probably heard of the saying of Saint John Mary Vianney: “Holy priest – good parish; good priest – average parish; average priest – bad parish; bad priest – no parish”.

The Church needs holy priests with a firm faith perhaps more than ever before. The Church needs us to console her and heal the wounds inflicted upon her (from inside and from without). The Church needs us to win back her children who have been betrayed by unfaithful priests, she needs us to restore her and work for her increase.

The Mother of Faithful and Holy Priests

Wherever we see faithful and holy priests with an edifying and successful apostolate, we can be sure, that every one of them relies expressly upon the help of their priestly mother, Our Lady, the Immaculata! There are many priests who I know personally who declare

openly that, without HER, they would have abandoned everything, and others, who say that they overcame terrible crisis thanks to the Rosary, etc.

Spread the Word

To strengthen the bond between us by helping you see and realise the grandeur, the beauty, the necessity and the foundations of your priestly life is the

reason why I dare to send you this letter, dear confrere. If this letter pleases you and you think that it might do spiritual good to any of your fellow priests, then please pass it on to be read, or send me addresses so that it may be sent directly. If possible, I would prefer to contact you via email as it is the easiest, quickest and surest way to communicate.

Asking humbly your prayers, I promise you mine; wishing you grace and strength from Our Lord Himself, that He may fortify you in all your trials and console you in your sorrows, and that Our Lady, the best of all mothers, may constantly protect you from all enemies of our salvation.

Yours thankfully,
Fr. Karl Stehlin

Spiritual Texts

Under this title are found spiritual readings to nourish our priestly soul and to fill our hearts with a love of God and a burning apostolic zeal.

St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE PRIESTHOOD

Book 3 No. 4

4. For the priestly office is indeed discharged on earth, but it ranks among heavenly ordinances; and very naturally so: for neither man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any other created power, but the Paraclete Himself, instituted this vocation, and persuaded meanwhile still abiding in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels. Wherefore the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves in the midst of those powers. Fearful, indeed, and of most awful import, were the things which were used before the dispensation of grace, as the bells, the pomegranates, the stones on the breastplate and on the ephod, the girdle, the mitre, the long robe, the plate of gold, the holy of holies, the deep silence within. But if anyone should examine the things which belong to the dispensation of grace, he will find that, small as they are, yet are they fearful and full of awe, and that what was spoken concerning the law is true in this case also, that what has been made glorious has no glory in this respect by reason of the glory which excels (2 Cor. 3:10). For when you see the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshippers empurpled with that precious blood, can you then think that you are still among men, and standing upon the earth? Are you not, on the contrary, straightway translated to Heaven, and casting out every carnal thought from the soul, do you not with disembodied spirit and pure reason contemplate the things which are in Heaven? Oh! What a

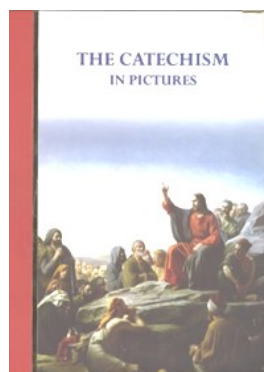
marvel! What love of God to man! He who sits on high with the Father is at that hour held in the hands of all, and gives Himself to those who are willing to embrace and grasp Him. And this all do through the eyes of faith! Do these things seem to you fit to be despised, or such as to make it possible for anyone to be uplifted against them?

Would you also learn from another miracle the exceeding sanctity of this office? Picture Elijah and the vast multitude standing around him, and the sacrifice laid upon the altar of stones, and all the rest of the people hushed into a deep silence while the prophet alone offers up prayer: then the sudden rush of fire from Heaven upon the sacrifice:— these are marvellous things, charged with terror. Now then pass from this scene to the rites which are celebrated in the present day; they are not only marvellous to behold, but transcendent in terror. There stands the priest, not bringing down fire from Heaven, but the Holy Spirit: and he makes prolonged supplication, not that some flame sent down from on high may consume the offerings, but that grace descending on the sacrifice may thereby enlighten the souls of all, and render them more refulgent than silver purified by fire. Who can despise this most awful mystery, unless he is stark mad and senseless? Or do you not know that no human soul could have endured that fire in the sacrifice, but all would have been utterly consumed, had not the assistance of God's grace been great. Ω

Book Review

In this section we would like to present literature which might be of interest - not least for the deepening of your priestly life, for your apostolate and for your work with special groups of faithful (children, youth movements, vocations, families, etc.) If you would like to buy any of the books proposed, please contact me at the address below.

CATECHISM IN PICTURES



by Rev. Father Bailly, 144 pages, hard-cover, 66 full-colour pictures. Ribbon.
Price SGD 35

This beautiful book is a catechism of 66 chapters, each covering a different topic of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Commandments of the Church, Prayer, the Last Things, Sin, Virtue, and the Works of Mercy. All of the basic truths of Faith and Morality are covered.

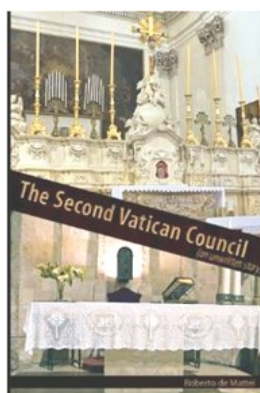
The Faith is presented via 66 huge (12in x 8.5in) full-color nice classic pictures. The text facing the picture explains the Church's teaching on the matter and then explains the applicable symbolism of the picture. The book is an excellent way to pass the Faith on to children who will find the pictures

very engaging. Saint Pius X considered Catholic instruction the most pressing duty of a priest. This book will be a perfect instrument for any dedicated pastor in the building up of the faith of his flock.



THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

An Unwritten Story



by Professor Roberto de Mattei,
640 pages, Loreto Publications
(December 8, 2012) SGD 45

A must read! The following excerpt of a comment on the book by Cardinal Walter Brandmüller, should convince any priest and layman alike of the necessity of studying this mine of information on what went wrong at Vatican II and on why the Church is currently undergoing

a radical change of identity :“No event of the 20th century produced a greater effect upon the Catholic Church than Vatican II, the 21st Ecumenical Council... Vatican II opened fifty years ago on October 11, 1962. Since it ended in 1965, the council has been written of in countless books, articles, scholarly journals, magazines, and newspapers all over the world. Things said and done since the council, in the name of the council and in opposition to it, have affected the lives of everyone living since that time. As with any significant historical event, it is only after considerable time has elapsed that a fuller story of exactly what happened in those years before, during, and after the event can be engagingly told and wisely summarized. Professor de Mattei's genius lies in the application of a lucid, literate, and philosophical mind to thorough scholarly research and mountains of documentation. From this framework he has presented us with a story; a story of an event, a previously unwritten story that has been begging to be told for many years. This book will unfold for you the answer to the question, What happened at the Council? A work that is as erudite as it is relevant.”

Events

All priests are welcome to attend. For more information, please write to me at the email address below.

2014

22–27 Sept. PHILIPINES (ILOILO): Retreat for religious brothers and priests.

06–11 Oct. PHILIPINES (DAVAO): Retreat for priests.

05–07 Dec. INDIA (CHENNAI): Recollection weekend for all faithful (The Role of Our Lady in our times).

19–21 Dec. SINGAPORE: Recollection weekend for all faithful (the role of Our Lady in our times).

2015

18–23 Jan. INDIA (TAMIL NADU): Retreat for priests.

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