THE ATHANASIAN

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CAPSULE COMMENTS

Fr. Francis E. Fenton and John Kenneth Weiskittel

By now many of our readers are aware of Father Fenton's recent hospitalization. Within a span of two months he has undergone three separate surgeries, and presently is unable to carry out his duties at *The Athanasian*. Nevertheless, it is Father's wish that the newsletter continue publication, and has named me editor in his absence. All prayers for Father Fenton are deeply appreciated.

Before going on, I want to pledge in no uncertain terms that as long as I hold this position, the newsletter is always going to retain the same character that our faithful readers have come to expect over the years. This means, of course, that our aims here will continue to be the same: a total, unequivocal commitment to Catholic traditon that strives militantly against the pseudo-Catholic Vatican II sect, an unabashed love of country (warts and all) that steadfastly opposes those subversive forces moving in it ever closer to an atheistic New World Order, an equally fervent commitment to the cornerstone of society — the family — which is beset by insidious attacks from every side, and an exposure of the anti-Christian enemy that is behind these assaults on God, family, and country.

There will, however, be some changes unrelated to the newsletter's editorial stands, beginning with the next issue. Two important factors have come into play in this decision. First, as I now wear two hats — editor and chief writer — it will be nearly impossible to publish eight issues a year. (Manuscripts are welcome, as always, preferably preceded by a query letter.) Second, the total number of subscriptions has been slowly declining for some time, despite the fact that the vast majority of our readers are supportive of our hard-line, no-nonsense approach and the quality of our articles.

As a solution to both of these problems, I am implementing a bold new direction for *The Athanasian*. Starting in 1994 it will be published quarterly, contain more than twice the current number of pages, and benefit from a much more lively design, including photos and other pictures. The subscription rate will also be raised (for the first time in several years) to $20 for the USA, Canada, and Mexico and $24 for other countries (bulk order rates are yet to be decided). The first issue will be mailed sometime in February or March. I apologize ahead of time for this inconvenience, but the simple fact is that during the transition I will really be wearing a third hat as well — graphics designer. If *The Athanasian* is to enjoy even the modest growth Father Fenton long had sought, I am firmly convinced that it must acquire a more visually stimulating look, and it will be up to me to give it that look.

Finally, I am sure that some readers will feel anxious over the changes — I know that I do! Some may even be hesitant about renewing their subscriptions. This is understandable, It is with this in mind that I make the following *risk-free offer* to all readers of *The Athanasian* whose subscriptions are up for renewal between now and March. Make your usual $12 (or $16) payment, and then wait until you see the *new* issue. If you are as delighted with it as I am confident you will be, simply mail in the remaining amount due. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with it, your payment will be promptly refunded in full, and you can keep the copy at our expense. Until the March unveiling, may God bless you. — J.K.W.

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"If the United Nations succeeds, then there is indeed hope for the future." So declared John Paul II during his visit to Denver in August. But the U.N. is a godless organization that seeks to impose upon the world's population an equally godless, inhuman, tyrannical organization (the New World Order) where unheard-of terror will be the order of the day. When that becomes a reality, then, according to John Paul II, there is hope for the future. Satan could have said the same thing! — F.E.F.

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For the past several years a number of armed forces bases around the USA have been closed, and thousands of people compelled to seek other employment. Chances are that you live near one of these bases or know of someone who has been adversely affected by the closings. You may have read about debates between civic leaders as to the best uses for the former camps. Perhaps your life or that of someone in your family has been changed as a result.

But do you know why the closings are taking place? Something about a "peace dividend," you say? After Ronald Reagan assured us that the "evil empire" known as the USSR had become a "good neighbor" under Mikhail Gorbachev, it was decided that America had more bases than were needed in a post-Cold War world. Well, that's what we were told, all right; that was the pretext, but there was something else behind it barely known to most Americans. In

1961, President John Kennedy signed a document, *Freedom From War,* that calls for *total disarmament* of all nations. One of the steps proposed there reads as follows: "The dismantling or the conversion for peaceful uses of certain military bases and facilities wherever located..." Don't feel bad if you've never heard of *Freedom From War*; the State Department declared it "out of print" not long afterwards, when patriots began exposing its dangerous proposals to their fellow citizens. The matter was quickly forgotten.

Today, some three decades later, these same proposals are now being implemented as essential steps to the establishment of the New World Order (NWO). American soldiers are now being merged into a United Nations army which has as its objective *not* the defense of the nation, but of the global government rapidly being set in place. Again, this dismantlement of our armed forces, and its reassembly as part of a U.N. "Peace Force" is mapped out in advance by *Freedom From War.*

In short, the fight to preserve U.S. sovereignty has reached the eleventh hour, *and it is a struggle that is being lost.* If large numbers of Americans are not awakened *immediately,* the country soon will pass the point of no return. It is with this in mind that *The New American* magazine has devoted its November 29th issue to a single theme: "The New World Army." Included with it is a complete copy of *Freedom From War.* We believe the issue is so important as an educational tool in the fight against the NWO that, in a departure from our usual "no endorsements" policy, we are urging readers to get a copy, read it, and then see that others read it too. If it is not at a newsstand near you, please write to *The New American,* P. O. Box 8040, Appleton, Wisconsin 54913. Ask for "The New World Army," special issue, and enclose $2.50 plus $2.00 postage and handling per copy (special rates are available for orders of ten or more). Readers should be aware that this in no way changes our serious objections to the magazine's policy of omitting any reference to Masonry's and John Paul II's links with the NWO. Nevertheless, the information that *is* provided in the issue presents a *substantially* complete picture of the evil confronting us. Hence, misgivings aside, a warm recommendation is given to it. — J.K.W.

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Over the past couple of months, the average monthly income to the TCA has decreased by some thirty percent. This unpleasant development is almost surely the result of certain articles that have appeared in recent issues of *The Athanasian,* such as "Strange Alliances — What Price Catholic Restoration?" in the July 15 issue and "Pan-traditionalism" in the September 1 issue. Because I firmly believe that they contain nothing but the truth, I have no regrets whatsoever in having carried them in the newsletter. If we are to be honest and consistent, compromise with the enemy — in this case, the Conciliar Church — in any manner is completely out of the question. We must oppose and fight that enemy all the way with every morally lawful means at our disposal.

Just thought I would mention the substantial loss in financial support we have experienced. Perhaps it's only a temporary situation though. We'll see. — F.E.F.

[Recent developments have already begun to vindicate us. In July "Father" Carlos Cassavantes, who was mentioned in the "Strange Alliances" article, took part in an "ecumenical" wedding held at a Methodist church. This and other developments will be covered in a future issue. — J.K.W.]

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Notes Concerning The "Episcopal Consecration" Of Father Dolan

John Kenneth Weiskittel

The article that follows, taking as it does a definite stand on a very constroversial matter, is bound to receive mixed reviews. We expect as much. A few readers will probably write wishing to know why The Athanasian *has insisted on carrying it, because such a study: 1) takes space away from articles concerning more important subjects; or 2) is unnecessary, since the issue has already been settled. Generally, those expressing the first of these objections are Catholics who have read for the past year or more tracts from priests either defending or attacking topics closely connected to the issue at hand. We certainly can sympathize with all who have grown weary from the experience, but the disputed consecration of a traditional bishop has now taken place and it is vital that others know where we stand on this.*

As to the second of objections, it comes from critics who have read what they believe are conclusive arguments in favor of the consecration. And why shouldn't they believe them; after all, priests they trust have told them that the hundreds upon hundreds of hours spent researching the critical question "all lead to one unavoidable conclusion: we are obliged to regard as valid the episcopal consecrations Archbishop P. M. Ngo-dinh-Thuc conferred on M. L. Guerard des Lauriers and Moises Carmona Rivera." (AC2, p. 4. See list of works following this introduction.) This study will show that a subject vital to settling the issue was neglected in their research, a topic that they have even sought to stifle open discussion of.

One last point. The consecration controversy has primarly been debated between two main groups: the Fathers Dolan and Cekada camp (pro) and the Fathers Kelly and Jenkins camp (anti). Lest our opposition be misconstrued, the following clarification needs to be made. We at The Athanasian *in no way seek to enter into what amounts to the equivalent of partisan politics — the truly lamentable division of priests who should be united for the good of the Church. Where some of our articles have been critical of other traditional Catholics, we have always tried to do so in a constructive way. We have always assumed the good intentions of those with whom we disagreed — and have said so! We feel that the step Father Dolan has taken is one he sincerely believes will benefit the Church. In short, our opposition here, as elsewhere, is not the product of favoritism toward one camp at the expense of the other (it should be recalled that we have also taken exception to certain policies of Father Kelly and his Society of Saint Pius V), but based solely on upon our perception as to the most prudent course for Catholics to take, as well as the perils to avoid, when crossing the post-Vatican II minefield.*

A number of frequently cited works are abbreviated (using authors' initials) as follows:

AC1 — Father Anthony Cekada, "Two Bishops In Every Garage," (October/November, 1990 *Roman Catholic* reprint of a January, 1983 article in the same journal under the pseudonym "Peregrinus").

AC2 — Father Anthony Cekada, "The Validity Of The Thuc Consecrations," (1983 *Catholic Restoration* reprint of an article in the Spring 1992 *Sacerdotium*).

WJ — Father William Jenkins, "The Thuc Consecrations: An Open Appeal To Father Donald Sanborn," (November, 1993 Society of Saint Pius V booklet).

CK — Father Clarence Kelly, "Tragedy and Travesty," (*The Bulletin*, October, 1993).

DS — Father Donald Sanborn, "The Thuc Consecrations: A Postscript," (a September, 1993 *Catholic Restoration* pamphlet).

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Throughout the Christian Era the consecration of a bishop — the elevation of a priest as a successor to the Apostles — has always been an occasion for great rejoicing in the Church. But today, in a time of terrible crisis, there is reason for the faithful to be even more jubilant at word of such an event, since a truly traditional Catholic bishop is so desperately needed. And we here at *The Athanasian*, along with so many others, have long hoped and prayed that a strong, courageous, and thoroughly orthodox bishop, free from any ties to the Conciliar "Catholic" Church, would emerge to lead the cause of restoration.

On the evening of November 30, a solemn ceremony took place at Saint Gertrude the Great Church in the Cincinnati suburb of Sharonville that has given some of the faithful what they believe is reason for rejoicing. For it was there that Father Daniel L. Dolan was consecrated a traditional Catholic bishop. Or *was* he? As with so many issues facing us today, the apparent consecration has proven to be controversial. Many of Father Dolan's followers are trumpeting it as a great triumph for traditionalism, but other supporters speak in less enthusiastic terms. One of the best-known of these, Father Donald Sanborn, editor of *Catholic Restoration (CR)*, declares that Catholics should both "rejoice and lament" in it (that is, be happy to get a bishop, but sad at the circumstances surrounding the act).

Meanwhile, those questioning the "consecration" have also been divided as to details. Not only have some declared it invalid, decried it as scandalous, or even expressed doubts about Father Dolan's qualifications for the office, but Father Clarence Kelly of the Society of Saint Pius V has gone so far

as to denounce it as a "sacrilege." (CK, p.8) The remainder of this article will reveal some of the factors that are causing this wide divergence of opinion, give Father Fenton's view of the consecration, show why the rite's validity is definitely suspect, and offer recommendations.

A "Rite" Confusing Mess

Over the past decade, two of the most divisive issues bedeviling traditional Catholics have been a group known as the CMRI (Congregation of Mary Immaculate) and the various lines of dubious bishops established in the mid-1970s to early 1980s by "Archbishop" Ngo-dinh-Thuc [1897-1894, RIP]. (Although he was made a bishop as early as 1938, the title *Archbishop* is in quotation marks because it came from a doubtful Pope — John XXIII — in 1960. I will refer to him as Monsignor Thuc.) The supposed consecration of Father Dolan has brought these controversies together as the inevitable culmination of years of unsettled dispute, since the man from whom it is claimed he received the episcopacy, Mark Pivarunas, is both a "Thuc bishop" and the rector of CMRI's Mater Dei Seminary. Much ink has been spilled — and, unfortunately, much hostility generated — by those seeking to defend the validity of the Thuc lines and uphold the status of the CMRI, and those who attack the same propositions.

It is the interweaving of these two elements (Thuc and CMRI) that has given rise to differences in both the pro- and anti-consecration camps. For example, while both Fathers Dolan and Sanborn agree on the validity of the rite, they do not do so regarding the CMRI. Father Dolan has hailed it as nothing less than the "wave of the future" for traditional Catholicism. (A remark made to JKW during a phone conversation in the late summer/early autumn of 1992.) Father Sanborn, however, while defending the group's involvement at the "consecration" as a "circumstantial evil" that is tolerable, refused to attend the ceremony due to its presence, and says he has changed neither his Communion rule prohibiting CMRI adherents from receiving the Blessed Sacrament at his chapels nor his pronouncement that because of its "bad reputation," the CMRI "should...be dissolved for the sake of protecting the reputation of the Roman Catholic Church and of the traditional movement." (March-April, 1992 *CR*, p. 37, and November, 1993 phone conversation with JKW)

In the ranks of the opposition, as mentioned above, some foes deny the "consecration's" validity, while others protest Father Dolan's involvement with a group they charge with being schismatic or, at very least, checkered with scandals. Then there are naysayers who arrange these and other objections into various combinations. And between these pro- and anti-consecration camps are yet other faithful who have read the arguments batted back and forth by both sides, and still unable to decide between the respective merits, throw their hands up in frustration, crying: "What is a Catholic to think in such a matter? What is he to do?

A similar dilemma has faced Father Fenton when evaluating the position papers of the different sides. He has had to ask himself: "Which side has the preponderance of truth on its side? What response shall I give to Catholics who inquire about this? After a careful and unbiased examination, Father has concluded that neither the pro- nor anti-consecration side has provided *conclusive* proof concerning the validity or invalidity of the "Thuc bishops" (such as "Bishop" Mark Pivarunas, and his own "consecrator," Father Moises Carmona), which leaves the issue in a sort of theological limbo, the consequences of which will be covered at the end of this article. The specific word that Father Fenton used to describe the "consecration" of Father Dolan is "*questionable*." While Father also sees the status of the CMRI as unclear, this article will be limited to a specific facet of the *validity* question.

For anyone other than a dyed-in-the-wool supporter of the "consecration," Father Fenton's caution makes a lot of sense. Despite effusive assurances by its defenders of the open-and-shut case favoring its validity, opinion in Catholic circles is just as divided as when the debate commenced. If the validity of Mgr. Thuc's consecrations is crystal clear as they claim, why did the pro-consecration priests have to spend up to *a thousand hours* (their count — AC2, p. 6) searching the shelves of seminary libraries to prove the "obvious"? And if, despite their painstaking investigation, they neglected to examine adequately the plausible line of inquiry raised in the next section, what other areas may also have been overlooked? It is easy to see, then, why Father Fenton has reached his conclusion: For all the talk about definitively resolving the Thuc controversy, certain questions just have not been satisfactorily addressed. One of the biggest unanswered problems involves the disputed mental state of the monsignor.

Mgr. Thuc: Was There Madness To His Method?

Of the various controverted points surrounding the "Thuc bishops," none is so delicate as the one concerning the prelate's mental state between 1975 and his death in 1984. Doubts have been raised about his habitual lucidity then, which in turn would cast definite doubts about the validity of the consecrations he attempted during those years. It is a line of inquiry upon which pro-consecration writers have said very little. Interestingly, they have also sought to render others silent on the subject by suggesting it is somehow wrong for Catholics to even consider the possibility that Mgr. Thuc suffered mentally from the ravages of old age.

It is the position of Fathers Cekada and Sanborn that there is absolutely no basis in fact for this contention. Father Cekada files it under "dubious objections," and "'negative' doubts." He maintains that "[t]he objectors have produced not even *one* witness or document to support their charge that Abp. Thuc was 'insane' or 'senile' when the consecrations took place." (AC2, p. 22) He then spends a couple pages defending Mgr. Thuc's sanity, and after satisfying himself of it, ominously warns that "Catholic moral principles dictate that one cease repeating baseless calumny that he was incapable of conferring a valid sacrament." (p. 24) Father

Sanborn echoes this, but takes the premise to its logical conclusion: "It is a *mortal sin* [italics added] to continue to repeat it." (DS, p. 8) By declaring it off limits, they seek to impose a gag rule on the subject.

Certainly what the reverend fathers are saying would be accurate if there were no witnesses or evidence to support assertions of mental imbalance. Then it *would* be a negative doubt, upon which we are forbidden to act. But it is not accurate, because their research is not complete. Father Cekada cites a number of witnesses in defense of Mgr. Thuc's reason, but not *one* questioning it. The reader is led to believe there were none, because surely one would have been mentioned if there had been. What is provided is a theory from French traditionalist Father Noel Barbara that "the Conciliar Church started the rumor attacking Abp. Thuc's sanity." (AC2, p. 23) What could that sect possibly gain from doing this? Challenge the validity of his consecrations and ordinations? That would be a plausible explanation considering the source, but four pages earlier Father Cekada quotes a Novus Ordo official who speaks of a Thuc consecration being *valid*. (p. 19) On the other hand, Father Sanborn gives a couple of flawed witnesses as being representative of the poverty of the argument. (DS, p. 5) Neither priest comes even close to the whole story.

Before getting to the evidence, a few words are in order to show the Church's teaching concerning the mental state of her priests. Insanity is considered an "*irregularity*... [which] is a canonical impediment of a permanent nature which directly renders it unlawful to receive ordination and indirectly forbids the exercise of orders received." (Rev. Heribert Jone, *Moral Theology*, Newman Press, 1953, pp. 454, 458) Not only does the Church insist upon mental integrity as an absolute obligation for those men seeking the priesthood and for those already ordained to continue functioning as priests, but the same is required before it is even *possible* for them to administer the sacraments validly. In *The Sacraments: a Dogmatic Treatise*, the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Joseph Pohle writes that the confection of a valid sacrament "*require*[s] *a minister who has the full command of reason. Hence* lunatics, children, *and others who have not the full use of reason are incapable of administering a Sacrament.*" (Cited, CK, p. 5) A moment's reflection is all that is needed to grasp the ramifications this has on the Thuc consecrations: If a prudent (or *positive*) doubt about his rationality is established, then the doubt is carried over to his sacraments.

Monsignor Thuc's activities are in themselves sufficient reason to begin an inquiry of this sort: When a person advanced in years displays erratic behavior on many different occasions it warrants investigation, especially when such behavior could have detrimental effect on his episcopal powers. Considering these many horrid acts (attempted ordination and/or consecration of a felon, a sexual deviate, two false mystics, several men belonging to non-Catholic sects, etc.), Father Jenkins counters the "calumny" charges by stating that it may, in fact, be *charitable* to believe that Mgr. Thuc was *not* lucid at the time he performed them; otherwise, he is to some degree culpable of unspeakable crimes against the Church. (WJ, p. 12)

Curiously, none of the priests writing on either side of this debate saw fit to avail themselves of any texts dealing with psychiatry or geriatrics. I am dumbfounded that while the term *senile* was tossed freely about, no one saw fit to consult those texts that pertain to that condition. True, everyone has a general idea of what it entails, but that idea often includes inaccuracies. I decided to find out how close (if at all) Mgr. Thuc's behavior fit the *clinical* profile of someone suffering from that malady. Did he or did he not exhibit textbook symptoms?

Before analyzing the monsignor, a bit of clarification about senility (or senescence), is in order. While the term is broadly related to old age and its various infirmities, it is mental deterioration — *senile dementia* — that most associate with the word. (There are other senile psychoses, such as Pick's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease, but the symptoms are not suggested in Mgr. Thuc's case.) Senility is fairly rare — one estimate puts the number of all people over 65 years of age suffering mild senility at ten percent, and five percent having a severe form of it. (See Siegfried Kra, M.D., *Aging Myths*, McGraw-Hill, 1986, p. 10.) Senescence typically involves (to use a lay term) *the shrinking of the brain*, but researchers differ as to the cause: theories vary, from poor diet to a specific disease, from abnormal brain chemistry to a lack of mental "exercise." Better known are the symptoms, a few of which include (though not necessarily all in the same person): loss of short-term memory, loss of long-term memory, paranoia, depression, diminished judgment, isolation, etc.

My contention is that Mgr. Thuc most definitely exhibited some of these symptoms. Considered alone they mean little, but when taken as a whole they are compelling proof that he was assuredly not *compos mentis* (that is, of sound mind). Although senile, his impairment was relatively mild, else he would not have been able to compose his autobiographical reflections (written between 1982 and 1984). And he never displayed the symptoms of full-blown senility (such as delirium, erosion of motor skills, vegetative state, etc.) But it must be remembered that the mildly senile person is still one who, however slowly, is *losing his mind*. The "full command of reason" required of her priests by the Church is not present.

What follows is evidence found to back his contention, uniting testimony, Mgr. Thuc's actions, and the pertinent symptoms.

I. "In and out of lucidity"

According to one priest at the time who met him, Mgr. Thuc "went in and out of lucidity." (Cited, DS, p. 5) Although Father Sanborn raises reasonable doubts about that cleric's talent at psychiatric diagnosis, the "in and out of lucidity" is consistent with senility in its early stages and also with the monsignor's perplexing caprices (outlined below). For example, Dr. Lawrence C. Kolb, in *Modern Clinical Psychiatry*, a standard text in the field, states: "The transition from usual old age to senile dementia is ordinarily

gradual, and any decision as to when the imaginary line is passed must often be an arbitrary one." (Ninth ed., W. B. Saunders, 1977, p. 251) Giving the case history of a successful artist's descent into senescence, Kolb notes that "[t]he failure in his mental functioning proceeded slowly," distinguished by "periods of disorientation" and "some beginning failure of memory." (p. 255) Florence Safford, D.S.W., a specialist in geriatrics, similarly writes of a "gradual disintegration." (*Caring for the Mentally Impaired Elderly*, Henry Holt, 1986, p. 2) Kra talks about "progressive" memory loss. (p. 26) And Professor Alexander Pilcz, in an article in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, refers to "increasing dementia." ("Pathology," Vol. XI, p. 544) It is quite possible, then, that Mgr. Thuc seemed normal to the untrained observers cited by Fathers Cekada and Sanborn. Yet those witnesses labored under three disadvantages: they 1) saw him only for short visits, which prevented them from getting a real feel for his condition; 2) knew him only as an old man, so they had no way to directly assess whether his current mental state differed greatly from earlier years (it did as will be shown directly); and 3) regarded him as strange but lucid, because of their failure to recognize subtle but unmistakable signs of senility. Hence, the testimony of those claiming his lucidity must be measured against the gradual, episodic, almost imperceptible nature of early stage senescence, and against the whole matrix of his behavior.

II. Faulty judgment

Late in 1975, when he was living in the Italian village of Arpino, Mgr. Thuc was visited by a priest who came to him unannounced. The monsignor recounted their conversation:

> *"Your Excellency* [the priest said], *the Holy Virgin sent me to bring you to Spain at once to render her a service. My car awaits you at the door of the rectory, and we shall depart at once to be there for Christmas." Flabbergasted by this invitation, I said to him: "If it is a service requested by the Blessed Virgin, I'm ready to follow you to the ends of the earth..."* (Cited, AC1, p. 18)

As it turns out he went no farther than Palmar de Troya, Spain, where he complied with the service requested by the "Holy Virgin." What "she" was telling him, writes Father Cekada, "[was] that he should ordain laymen to the priesthood (whom he had just met, and who had done no ecclesiastical studies) and then consecrate them as bishops — *all in three weeks time.* [italics added] (AC1, p. 18) Father Cekada aptly describes this as "a truly colossal lack of common sense...") In 1978, one of these men demonstrated the "authenticity" of the apparition when he announced to the world that he was "Pope Gregory XVII." It is difficult to say which aspect of this incident is the greater manifestation of Mgr. Thuc's credulity: His lack of discernment in trusting a dubious apparition or his lack of prudence in attempting to pass on Holy Orders to total strangers! Whatever the case, this is but one of numerous occasions in which the monsignor demonstrated an utter lack of good judgment. Again, quoting Father Cekada:

> While everyone is entitled to a few mistakes, one is forced to say that those made by Father Ngo [Thuc] were very grave indeed — objectively, they were inexcusable, *especially for a bishop with great pastoral experience and a brilliant academic background in theology, philosophy and canon law.* [italics added] (AC1, p. 20)

On the same page is a quote from a newsletter backing the monsignor; that accounted for his abberant behavior by calling him a "timid [A]siatic who was easily influenced," "psychologically worn out," and who had "acquired some complexes." And it added, "[his] age doesn't help things." (In some cases, timidity can be a personality change brought on by senility. Kolb relates causes for this that mirror Mgr. Thuc's double agony: Vatican II and the Communist takeover of his beloved Vietnam. See p. 253) This same impression is evident when Father Sanborn relates that two men acquainted with Mgr. Thuc said he "had the mind of a child," meaning that "he was guileless and somewhat naive in dealing with others, a fact which explains why he did certain consecrations which he later regretted." (DS, p. 7) The expression "mind of a child," in the sense Father Sanborn interprets it, *cannot* reasonably be used to describe the intellect of a man who had three doctorates in very demanding disciplines, and taught at seminaries and universities (including the Sorbonne, recognized as one of the world's greatest institutions of higher learning). When this truly *formidable* intellect is combined with "great pastoral experience" it is impossible for any objective person to believe their possessor capable of being either "naive" or "easily influenced" in such vital matters as the determining of worthy candidates for the priesthood or episcopacy. The fact of the matter is that it was *not* the same intellect at work, but a mere *portion* of that intellect. The passages above are all clues to solving the mystery, but only if one knows what they are looking for. In particular, the "mind of a child" expression is instructive, for it unintentionally conveys a sense similar to "second childhood," the term used to describe elderly who have passed into dotage. When senility is allowed as an explanation, Mgr. Thuc's acts immediately become fathomable, because diminished common sense is one of its symptoms. Describing the different ways the senile person's judgment becomes impaired, Kolb notes: "He may become the victim of unscupulous persons, particularly if their technique involves an appeal to the patient's vanity, in matters of either competence or sex." (p. 254) In Safford we read:

> People can make mistakes in judgment all through their lives, *but when poor judgment reflects errors based on normally simple associations, it is then a symptom of an illness.* [italics added] This mental loss affects such potentially hazardous areas as the ability to drive a car, to handle finances, or to protect oneself from crime. (p. 26)

Finally, Pilcz observes: "By reason of the disturbance of memory and...suggestibility, these patients often fall victim to unprincipled scoundrels, who swindle them out of their

entire fortunes, induce them to make foolish wills, etc." (p. 544) The only reasonable explanation for why this prelate with "great pastoral experience" and a "brilliant academic background" allowed himself to fall prey again and again to the suggestions of spiritual cranks and swindlers (only to later rue these unsavory associations) is that his mind had become addled.

III. Impulsiveness

Closely related to the loss of judgment is impulsiveness. Safford writes: "When someone who has usually behaved in a mature and rational manner be[gin]s to behave impulsively, it may also be a symptom of mental change. The change may not be noticeable *unless it is related to imprudent decisions*... [italics added] (p. 41) What could prompt a bishop, on impulse, to drive across Europe with a stranger simply because he is told of an apparition, and then attempt to ordain and consecrate other total strangers, based not on his knowledge that they had vocations, *but merely because an alleged apparition told him to do so*? A bishop, I submit, whose mind has lost its cutting edge.

Answering three objections will help clarify the degree of Mgr. Thuc's mental impairment. Father Cekada brings up the fact that the facsimiles of the bishop's handwriting from late in life revealed a hand that was "clear, firm and more legible than my own." (AC2, p. 23) This he advances as a proof of mental competence. It is true that the "handwriting becomes tremulous" in the senescent, but only in those suffering from "advanced forms" of the illness. (Kolb, p. 254) The monsignor does not appear to have ever been anything worse than mildly senile, and would thus not be notably affected in his motor skills. But how, some may ask, could Mgr. Thuc have written his autobiography if he were senile. The "autobiography" mentioned, lest anyone get the wrong idea, was really a series of fragments covering no more than fifty pages or so. But be that as it may, mild senility only disturbs *short-term* memory, so recollections from years back would be no problem. (See Kra, p. 25) Again, Father Cekada quotes the prelate's regrets for having taken part in a Novus Ordo service as demonstrating that he "clearly had his wits about him." (AC2, p. 24) In senility's early stages there is no deadening of the capacity for remorse, and, "periods of reactive depression following some specific event are common." (Kolb, p. 251)

Valid Doubts = Doubtful Validity

As far as witnesses questioning Mgr. Thuc's lucidity, there is Father Barbara, who also defended it on another occasion. For reasons already outlined above, Father Barbara's two short visits (in 1981 and 1982) with the bishop are hardly sufficient for a verification of sanity. "What is needed to assure the habitual lucidity of Archbishop Thuc," writes Father Jenkins, "is not a couple of brief interviews, but the testimony of a reliable person who has spent enough time with him to judge his normal state of mind." (WJ, p. 12) Less than a year after his second visit, Father Barbara became incensed when he learned that Mgr. Thuc attempted to confer the episcopacy upon yet another non-Catholic, and openly stated in his publication *Fortes in Fides* that it was not rash to wonder about the monsignor's sanity: "Perhaps he was in possession of his faculties, and perhaps he was not. That would leave a doubt hovering over the censures incurred [from the Conciliar Church — JKW], *but also over the validity of all these consecrations*." [italics added] (Cited, WJ, p. 14)

Conciliar Bishop Gilles Barthe, with whom Mgr. Thuc once publicly concelebrated the New "Mass" and in whose diocese he finally settled, told in the French monthly *la Documentation Catholique* (February 21, 1982) of his concerns surrounding the elderly pelate's activities. "I voice the most express reservations about the value [validity] of these ordinations," he stated, then going on to question Mgr. Thuc's lucidity during the rites: "It is even less [clear] for the ordinations done in his house at Toulon. It is permitted to ask oneself up to what point he was well aware of the acts which he did and to what point his liberty went..." (Cited, WJ, P. 16. Mgr. Thuc's liberty of thought was surely markedly impaired as early as 1975, when he was drawn into the Palmar fiasco.)

Regarding many of Mgr. Thuc's scandalous misadventures, Father Jenkins writes: "Such erratic behavior certainly gives rise to a prudent doubt about Archbishop Thuc's mental ludicity." (WJ, p. 12) Even champions of the "Thuc bishops" have been known to say such things. Father Cekada actually once gave "advanced age" as a partial reason fo the prelate's mistakes, and Father Sanborn, referring to his "bizarre behavior," declared: "It is true that Archbishop Thuc was either insane, senile, or extremely gullible in order to have done the things he did." (AC1, p. 20, and, cited, WJ, pp. 11, 17) So how is it, with so much corroborative evidence strongly pointing to senility, that they can accuse their opponents on this issue of "calumny" and mortal sin"? After reading the proofs assembled here, it is hoped that they will cease to hurl such groundless charges.

On the contrary, they should be asking themselves if they can continue to argue for the validity of sacraments emanating from a mentally impaired bishop. Since serious doubt to his power of reason from 1975 has been established, then there is equally serious reason to distrust the power of his sacraments over the same span of years. It makes no difference whether he performed the rites; without "full command of reason" it was impossible for him to confect the sacraments in the first place. Such a "consecration" is as fundamentally flawed as the will a senile person naively rewrites at the request of a swindler. *How, then, can the consecration of Father Dolan even* begin *to be considered valid so long as those performed by his "episcopal great-grandfather" are debatable?*

Catholics are forbidden to approach a sacrament when there is *prudent doubt* about its validity. Although Father Dolan was undoubtedly sincere in this enterprise, it does not

change its dubious nature. Because of this *The Athanasian* advises the faithful to abstain from attending St. Gertrude's and affiliate chapels until such time as he is prepared to relinquish his ill-founded claim to the episcopacy. It is with a mixture of sadness and resignation that we reflect on "The Great Consecration Controversy of 1993." That disagreements arise in these times is inevitable, but let us pray that they not be at the expense of charity. Simply because there is a division over a controverted issue does not — or should not — mean that the other side is to be demonized. Unless confronted with clear evidence to the contrary, the good intentions of fellow traditional Catholics should always be assumed. Our motto should always be, to borrow from Lincoln: "With malice toward none, with charity for all." May we always continue to pray for closer unity within our ranks as a step toward the restoration of the Church, but never should we join in the activities of those who, out of desperation, have taken unacceptable means to reach this end. †

The Traditionalist Case

Fr Oswald Baker (England)

Obedience. Vatican II. The Mass. Three cardinal components in the Catholic traditionalist standpoint.

Traditionalists are accused of disobedience. But critics who bring this charge accept Vatican II, even though it proclaimed a universal right to follow a dictate of conscience, the right being rooted, we were told, in the very dignity of a human being. All manner of disobedience is tolerated by the new Conciliar Church; traditionalists being selected for rebuke and repression. Priests and bishops who reject the promulgation of God's law in delicate matters are not even rebuked. We cannot accept changes which have brought about what Paul VI himself deplored as the Church's "self-destruction" and the "smoke of Satan" in her, a sorry condition for which John Paul II has apologized (February, 1980) to the Catholics of the world. Both ought to have perceived that in remaining faithful to Catholic truth and discipline traditionalist Catholics are right and exemplary.

But it is important to keep pointing out that what we are disobeying is quite certainly no longer the Catholic Church. Millions of Catholics are now Catholic in name only, for to accept the pronouncements of Vatican II is to cease to be a Catholic. In the pursuit of ecumenism, preoccupied with the appeasement of non-Catholics, the Council presented a new concept of the Church of Christ, portraying it as, in the phrase of a delighted Anglican observer, "something bigger than the Roman Catholic Church." Vatican II passed a new, un-Catholic, erroneous judgement on the status of heretical sects, on the meaning of religious freedom, and on united services, and bracketed the Catholic Church with those "searching for truth." Ecumenism brought about compromise with error, compromise quite flagrant in the notorious "Agreed Statements." Catholic claims and Catholic truth being no longer proclaimed, Catholic morality was soon no longer imposed, and became widely resented and repudiated — by Catholics. The late Archbishop Dwyer of Oregon wrote Paul VI, in 1976, objecting that very few bishops were teaching authentic Catholicism. By reason of ecumenism, which is an illusion and betrayal that can only lead, as Pope Pius XII warned, to unity in common ruin, Vatican II gave birth to a new Church, a new, ecumenical, false religion, a satanic foundation, whose purpose is to destroy and replace Catholicism.

Integral to the new and false religion is a new and false Mass. Only the Pope may make changes in the Mass, but not even the Pope may dismantle the Mass and substitute a Protestant prayer service. Whereas the traditional Mass echoes the Council of Trent, *Quo primum* being based on that Council's infallibly defined doctrines, the new "Mass" echoes the fallible Second Vatican Council. But the responsible liturgical Commission, appointed by Vatican II, went far beyond what even the Council had envisioned. It is well known that the new "Mass" is closely modeled on Cranmer's "Mass," which was composed with the express purpose of illustrating Protestant rejection of the Catholic Sacrifice of the Mass. The cooperation of Protestants in the concoction of the new "Mass" ensured the exclusion of whatever was not acceptable to non-Catholics. Even the words of Consecration were changed, and the act of Consecration was changed into the mere reading of a narrative. Transubstantiation was tacitly depreciated by elimination of rubrics indicating the Real Presence. The new "Mass" is compatible with denial of the Real Presence, and is in fact used by Protestants who do deny it.

A meal rather than a sacrifice, the new "Mass" is directed to the satisfaction and enjoyment of the people. This led to jollification, and then to buffoonery. The first mistake, the change from Latin to the vernacular, contributed disastrously to the misunderstanding of the meaning of the Mass. Cardinal Benelli himself, rejecting the petition for "parity of rites," admitted — nay, insisted — that the two Masses, the old and the new, connote two different Churches. The two Masses are totally incongruous and mutually exclusive. Attendance at both is not merely absurd. Attendance at the new "Mass" is morally wrong, gravely sinful. One will perceive the logical, inevitable consequence. One must not come to Holy Communion at the old and true Mass until having promised never again to be present at the new "Mass." Attendance at the old Mass is not a mere pleasant change. It is an exclusive obligation. If the true Mass had been preserved, the Church could have held together. The traditional Mass is the perfect expression of Catholic doctrine in its purity and integrity. †