

Michel Davi

# The Mass at Lille

Chapter XIII of my book, *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre*, is entitled "The Mass at Lille." It describes an event of considerable historical significance, one of the most impressive and moving ceremonies in which I have ever participated. During the aftermath of Vatican II, Catholics found that the Church into which they had been baptized had changed, often beyond all recognition. The faithful were confronted by a new Church, described by its own spokesmen as the "Conciliar Church." They were informed that it was to the Conciliar Church that their unquestioning loyalty must be given.

In the hitherto unknown hamlet of Ecône in Switzerland, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre had established a seminary where priests would be formed to uphold the traditional faith by offering the traditional Mass, administering the Sacraments in their traditional form, and teaching traditional Catholic doctrine. The success of this seminary was such that the Conciliar Church could not remain inactive. Sufficient pressure was brought to bear upon Pope Paul VI to insure that Archbishop Lefebvre's new priestly Fraternity, the Society of St. Pius X, should be suppressed together with its seminary. This was such a travesty of justice that the Archbishop refused to submit. On 29 June 1976 he ordained new priests. He was suspended by the Vatican; forbidden to offer Mass, to preach, to administer the Sacraments. But because the Archbishop would not accept the justice of the original suppression he would not accept the justice of the suspension. What would the re-

action of the faithful be? They were forbidden to be present at any Mass celebrated by Archbishop Lefebvre. Their answer as given at Lille on 29 August 1976 when more than 10,000 Catholics crammed themselves into the auditorium of the International Fair for a Mass which had only been announced a few days before. Where they all came from and how they all knew about the Mass no one will ever know—but come they did. They prayed and sang the traditional Mass with such fervor and devotion that from then onwards those who wished to suppress it must have known that they could never succeed. I have described that Mass in detail in my book, it would be pointless to repeat the description here.

What my book does not mention is that the Mass at Lille was professionally recorded. British traditionalists (and some in other countries) are familiar with the recordings of the traditional Catholic liturgy made by the Coimbra Recording Company to the very highest professional standards—recordings which have been acclaimed for their excellence even by secular critics. The man behind Coimbra recordings is my very good friend Harvey Omerod and Harvey is a man who simply could not stand back and allow an event like the Mass at Lille to remain nothing more than a memory in the minds of those who had the privilege to be present.

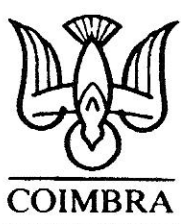
He phoned me the day before the Mass and said that he hoped to get over to France to record it. He later phoned me back to say that it couldn't be done. He had contacted every major record company in France but not one would co-operate. They all said that at such short notice it was a complete impossibility and, in any case, 29 August came during a period of public holiday and if it hadn't been impossible already it would have

been impossible in any case (this is known as Gallic logic). But Harvey did not give up. He had made an arrangement by phone to meet an independent recording engineer at Lille. He didn't know the engineer, the engineer didn't know him; neither one knew if the other was in good faith, and they were to meet in the parking lot at Lille where Harvey would look out for a grey Citroën car.

Harvey Omerod duly arrived in Lille on the morning of 29 August, went to the parking lot of the International Fair, and found several thousand cars there already including hundreds of grey Citroëns. He virtually abandoned hope. Seconds later there was a tap on his shoulder and a smiling Frenchman greeted him. He took Harvey to a recording van from which cables let into the auditorium through a freshly made hole in the brick wall. Only a French engineer would have overcome the problem of gaining entrance to the auditorium in such a direct manner.

Suffice to say that the recording proved a triumphant success. Those who read the chapter in my book and then listen to the cassette can close their eyes and imagine that they were there. I can truly conceive of no recording of greater historical significance that any traditionalist could ever possess. Unfortunately, various problems (principally financial) arose to delay production of a commercial cassette. This recording has now been gathering dust on the shelves of Coimbra's offices for three years but now, with the cooperation of The Angelus Press, it will be made available in the Fall of 1979 to coincide with the publication of the *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre*. It is a recording that no Catholic with a sense of history can afford to be without.

To order the cassette recording *The Mass at Lille*, return this form to  
Dept. CR, The Angelus Press, Box 1187, Dickinson, Texas 77539



Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *The Mass at Lille* for which I enclose \$6 per recording. This covers air mail postage from Great Britain. I understand that recordings will be sent during the Fall 1979. Customers living outside the USA order directly from Coimbra Recordings, Highbury Studios, Swan Yard, London N1 1SD, enclosing the sterling equivalent of 3.00 which includes air postage to any address in the world.

Name .....

Address (including zip code) .....

8/79