

## Letters

### Lefebvre Conflict

Why is it that Catholic affairs more often than not are being reported in the press with so little factual knowledge? A case in point is Reuters' dispatch on French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's conflict with his Roman authorities (IHT, Aug. 9).

This prelate's open rebellion is not primarily motivated by his saying Mass in Latin. The issue is rather whether the Mass ought to be celebrated in accordance with the new Latin rite instituted by Pope Paul VI or in accordance with the now outdated rite of Pius V. The former was promulgated in accordance with the instructions of the Vatican Council 10 years ago. The new Latin Mass differs but little from the old one and fully preserves the traditional substance. Of course, the vernacular now is being used worldwide and accepted everywhere by the overwhelming majority of the faithful.

Bishop Lefebvre, however, does not only refuse to abide by these new regulations. He violently opposes fundamental decisions of the Council regarding religious liberty, inter-faith ecumenical relations and the collegiality of the bishops. He charges that these progressive reforms amount to a "protestantizing" and "democratizing" of his church and to what he calls "neo-modernism". He goes as far as to pretend that

"freemasons have infiltrated the Church, undermining its basic tenets and traditions." He has challenged the very validity of traditional church law whereby he was enjoined from ordaining priests, administering the Sacraments and even preaching.

Contrary to claims of his adherents the Roman authorities have given him extensive hearings in a most tolerant and charitable manner. Nevertheless he continues to ignore their orders. This is the real reason why he now was suspended from his priestly functions. If he persists in his stubbornness he will face formal excommunication for his defiance of church discipline which causes a serious split among his coreligionists and may even cause a new schism.

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### Soviet Obsolescence

Re "Kremlin Spins Its Wheels" (IHT, Aug. 5): The Soviets seem to have adopted another capitalistic automotive feature—built-in obsolescence. When asked why there were so many new taxis in Budapest, the local cabbie explained, "These things [mostly Ladas and Zsigulis—Russian-made Flats] only last about a year, then we have to buy a new one."

Budapest.

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