

The Roman Catholic

Special Edition

1995





Pope St. Pius X



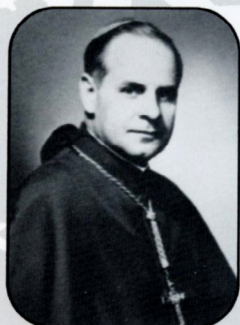
Pope Benedict XV
Consecrated by Pope St. Pius X
December 22, 1907



Pope Pius XII
Consecrated by Pope Benedict XV
May 13, 1917



Cardinal Francis Spellman
Consecrated by Pope Pius XII
September 8, 1932



Bishop Alfred F. Mendez
Consecrated by Cardinal Francis Spellman
October 28, 1960

**Line of Succession
of
Episcopal Orders**

The Roman Catholic

"So the faith was planted: so must it be restored."

Special Edition

1995

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Editor: Rev. William Jenkins. Associate Editor: The Most Rev. Clarence Kelly. Contributors: Rev. Thomas Mroczka, Rev. Martin Skierka, Rev. Joseph Greenwell, Rev. Paul Baumberger. Typesetting/Graphic Design for this *Special Edition*: Mrs. Rita Bertram, Art work: Miss Anne Baumberger.

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"SI DILIGIS ME..."

When I was called to Santo Domingo in 1960 by the Apostolic Delegate I was stunned when he told me the Pope had chosen me to be Bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico - first Bishop - a new Diocese. I asked permission to offer Mass before accepting.

It was the Si Diligis Mass: "Si diligis me...pasce agnos meos, pasce oves meas." Although the designate Mass of the Pope, the Pope is Bishop of Rome and spiritually shares the "fullness of the Priesthood" with all Bishops consecrated to that "fullness." I had gone direct to God with the problem and His first words were the direct answer: "Si diligis me..."

The fullness of the priesthood is an awesome responsibility. It conferred on the Bishop of Arecibo, as on the Bishop of Rome, the responsibility for priests and laity to "fidei integritate laetetur.... et in religionis integritate persistat."

And although I retired from Arecibo in 1974, I remain a Bishop, still responsible in my lifetime to do all in my power to feed the lambs and sheep, which means to secure for them the Sacraments of the Church. And in these days when the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being abandoned all over the world - Tolle Missam, Tolle Ecclesiam - I have secured, as far as possible, the Sacraments for the Faithful by the ordinations of two Society of St. Plus V priests for them on September 3, 1990, and, to continue the priesthood, the consecration of a Bishop for them on October 19, 1993.

+ Bishop Alfred F. Mendez

Alfred F. Mendez, C.S.C., D.D.
Retired Bishop of Arecibo

Subscribed and Sworn to Before Me this
26th day of NOVEMBER 1993
Billy J. Shahan
(Signature)
BILLY J. SHAHAN
(Print or type notary's name)
Notary Public in and for the State of
California, with commissions issued for the
County of SAN DIEGO



A Message of Encouragement to Traditional Catholics

from a Roman Catholic Bishop

†

Vatican Council II and the changes that followed from it have proven a disaster for our dear Roman Catholic Church. I fell ill during the first session of Vatican II and did not return until the closing days of the council. I was surprised and saddened by what I saw when I returned.

Since the conclusion of Vatican II, there has been an epidemic of marriage annulments. The liturgy has become a kind of show rather than the true Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Once- Catholic institutions, such as colleges and universities, have lost their Catholic character altogether. The number of religious sisters fell away sharply, and many of those remaining no longer lived like religious. Many priests left the priesthood. The number of seminarians fell drastically and many of those who remained hardly lived like seminarians.

As first bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, I had to send my seminarians away to study at various diocesan seminaries on the continental U.S. After visiting them later, I pulled them **all** out of those seminaries because their training was so liberal and so contrary to what a Catholic seminarian and Catholic priest should be.

The constant change has confused the Catholic faithful. Some have held firmly to the traditional Roman Catholic faith in these troubled times. I encourage them and I long for the restoration of the traditional Catholic faith, the traditional Latin Mass and the sacraments.

† Alfred F. Menley

July 9, 1994

BISHOP ALFRED F. MENDEZ AND THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOP CLARENCE KELLY

by Fr. William Jenkins

His Early Years

Bishop Mendez was born in Chicago on June 3, 1907. At his Baptism on June 23 he was given the name: Alfredo José Isaac Cecilio. He took the name Francesco at his Confirmation. It was the name he always favored and he used it consistently for his middle initial. Thus, with Gonzalez, his mother's maiden name (which is included in every Spanish name), he became Alfred Joseph Isaac Cecilio Francis Mendez y Gonzalez.

His mother was the Catholic strength in the family. As a boy of about nine years old, Bishop Mendez was called downstairs by his mother to meet an elderly nun who had come to the Mendez home in order to thank his mother for her selfless work in supporting Catholic charities. That religious was Mother Cabrini, now known to the world as Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini – the first American citizen to be canonized a saint. Mother Cabrini tapped him on the head, and that tap left an indelible impression upon him. He said afterward that it was at that moment of Mother Cabrini's "tap on the head" that he knew he would become a priest. For the

rest of his life, he always harbored a great devotion to Mother Cabrini.

Studies For The Priesthood

Bishop Mendez attended school in Chicago, in New York, in Barcelona, Spain, and finished high school in Evansville, Indiana. In 1925, he entered the postulancy of the Congregation of the Holy Cross at Holy Cross Seminary at Notre Dame University, and made his novitiate there in 1926 at Saint Joseph's Novitiate. He graduated from Notre Dame University in 1931 and performed his theological studies at Holy Cross College of Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., from 1931 to 1935. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 24, 1935. He then returned to Notre Dame University for graduate studies.

First Assignments

In 1936, Bishop Mendez' religious superiors sent him to teach at Saint Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Father Mendez arrived in Texas at a crucial moment. The Catholic Church was suffering a fierce



Bishop Mendez with the author after the consecration of Bishop Kelly.

persecution by the Masonic government of Mexico; many of Mexico's religious, clergy and laity were being deported or driven into exile. It was in the course of this persecution that the courageous Mexican priest, Padre Miguel Pro, was martyred by firing squad for administering the sacraments. Father Mendez – or "Padre" as he came to be known to his people – devoted himself tirelessly to the Mexican immigrants. He became a missionary on American soil, establishing parishes and building churches for them, working side-by-side with them, during the late 1930's and early 1940's. Even on

their old pick-up truck.

From Texas To Arecibo

In 1945, Father Mendez was named the First Secretary of the Bishops' Committee for Spanish-speaking Catholics in the United States. He was instrumental in the founding of the new diocese of Austin, Texas in 1948 and, later that year, he was transferred to Notre Dame to assume administrative positions at the university.



The Mendez family. Bishop Mendez is in the back row, first from the left.

his death bed 50 years later he made the comment: "I love the Mexican people." In retrospect, one wonders if those were not the happiest days of his life.

He was himself always a missionary and a man of great simplicity. He had no regard for pompousness and pretense. He remarked about how poor his Mexican parishes were, but also how generous. He fondly told of how his people in one parish would decorate the church for a wedding and then, as soon as the last person had processed out of the church behind the bride and groom, a work crew would swarm into the church to gather up the decorations and rush them to the neighboring parish for the next wedding there. And Padre rode with them in

His religious superiors named him the first Director of Province Development for the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1956. In 1960 he was named to become the first bishop of the Diocese of Arecibo in Puerto Rico.

Consecration By Cardinal Spellman

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Alfred F. Mendez, was consecrated a bishop on October 28, 1960, in Sacred Heart Church at Notre Dame University by Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York. The co-consecrators were Archbishop Edwin Byrne of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Bishop Richard Ackerman of Covington, Kentucky. Bishop Ackerman had been a member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and was

a personal friend of Archbishop Lefebvre. (It is interesting to note that Father Joseph Greenwell, who was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Mendez for the Society of Saint Pius V, administered the Last Rites to Bishop Ackerman.) When Cardinal Spellman consecrated him, Bishop Mendez became part of an illustrious line of apostolic succession because Cardinal Spellman was consecrated by Pope Pius XII who was consecrated by Pope Benedict XV. And Benedict XV was consecrated by Pope St. Pius X himself.

Bishop Mendez And Vatican II

Bishop Mendez took possession of the new diocese of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, on November 25, 1960. The young bishop dutifully travelled to Rome for the Second Vatican Council but he and several others soon fell ill with hepatitis. Two of those bishops died, but Bishop Mendez recovered sufficiently to return for the closing days of the Council. He told one of our priests that what he found on his return shocked him. His reaction was: "They're all Protestants!"

Like so many others, Bishop Mendez tried to make the best of the situation after Vatican II. He tried to interpret everything in the Catholic sense and promote the Catholic Faith in the people of his diocese.

Retirement

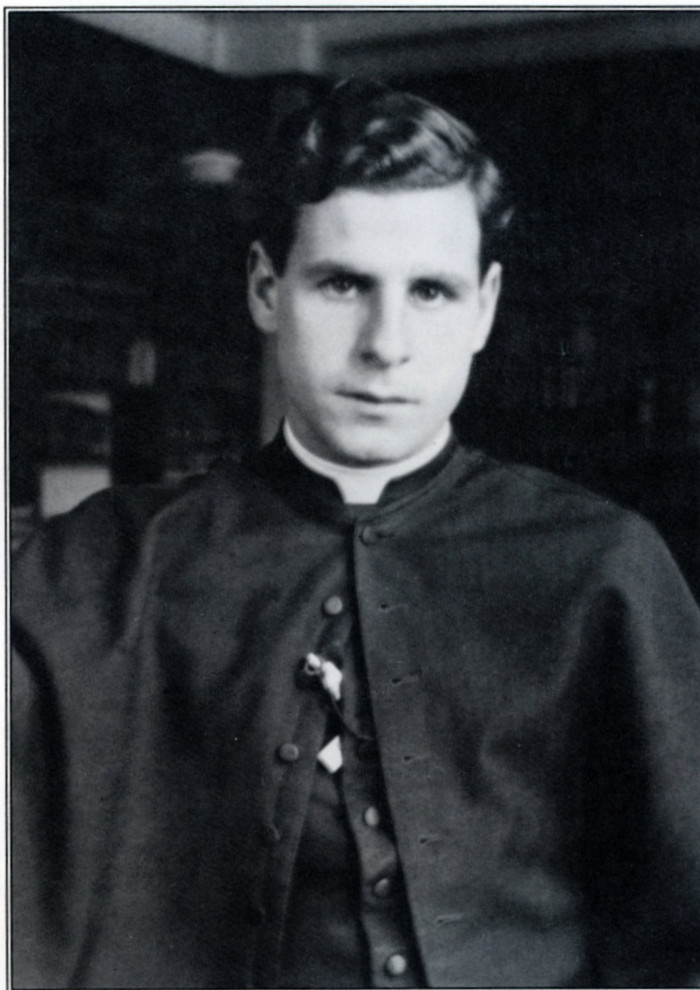
Finally, after only 14 years of active service as a diocesan bishop, he resigned in February of 1974. Numerous diocesan bishops in the United States invited Bishop Mendez to assist in their dioceses, but Bishop Mendez refused all such offers. From his retirement, however, he carried on a steady correspondence with other bishops and with the Vatican, in which he consistently urged the return of the traditional Roman Rite Mass.

Bishop Mendez And Archbishop Lefebvre

Bishop Mendez and Archbishop Lefebvre exchanged letters of encouragement. Bishop Mendez wrote to Rome defending Archbishop Lefebvre when the Vatican attacked him. Bishop Mendez tried to rally other bishops to support the traditional Mass and to ordain traditional priests. Archbishop Lefebvre wrote a letter to Bishop Mendez in 1987, which stands as testimony to the bishop's efforts for the traditional faith in the 1980's. (See page 16.)

In that handwritten letter of 1987, Archbishop Lefebvre thanked Bishop Mendez for his efforts with Rome on behalf of Catholic tradition. He told Bishop

Mendez that his petition for liberty for the traditional Latin Mass, and autonomy for those who offered it, was the solution they must seek. The Archbishop said that certain cardinals favored that autonomy, but the episcopal conferences were determined to oppose it. He asked Bishop Mendez to continue his efforts and prayers that the sacred traditions of the Catholic Church be respected.



Father Alfred F. Mendez

Understanding Abp. Lefebvre and Bp. Mendez

While we may disagree with the idea of conducting negotiations with the modernists in the Vatican for the sake of finding a place within the Vatican II Church for traditional priests to offer the traditional Latin Mass, it should, nevertheless, be kept in mind that men such as Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Mendez lived the first fifty years of their lives in the Church when things were orderly and well-disciplined. All of their training was in that atmosphere. Their lives were ordered by it and devoted to it. For them, "the changes" were tantamount to the world falling apart around them. It should,

therefore, not be surprising that such men did not have a perfectly formulated plan and program for proceeding in the face of such an overwhelming catastrophe. The quite normal approach of those like Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Mendez was to react and respond as they did to what the Vatican was saying and doing.



Bishop Mendez, standing in cope, at his consecration.

At one time Bishop Mendez favored the idea of a separate "Traditional Latin Rite" with independent status similar to the Eastern Rites of the Church. He abandoned that idea as unworkable. Then he entertained the notion of a Traditional Catholic Ordinariate which, like the U.S. Military Ordinariate, would be independent of bishops throughout the world. Bishop Mendez eventually judged that idea also to be unworkable.

Our Involvement With Bishop Mendez

My own contact with the bishop during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's was through my parents, who had met Bishop Mendez about 1964. The bishop even offered Mass in our home in Florida sometime in the mid-1960's. After I left home for the seminary, my father kept in contact with the bishop and would tell me every now and then of conversations with him.

Our priests' involvement with Bishop Mendez began growing into a closer association dating from the late 1980's. In 1988, Joseph Greenwell and Paul Baumberger, two former seminarians from the Society

of St. Pius X who were then associated with the Society of St. Pius V, travelled to California to see Bishop Mendez about the possibility of future priestly ordination. The bishop encouraged them and subsequently spent quite a bit of effort trying to find an active bishop who would ordain them to be traditional priests. Bishop Mendez occasionally informed us of his efforts on their behalf and his frustration that all his efforts were in vain. His attempts reminded me of Archbishop Lefebvre's quest for a good Catholic seminary to recommend to the seminarians who approached him in the late 1960's. The Archbishop could not find any seminary to recommend, so he decided to establish one himself and he came out of retirement to direct it.

The Bishop Of Ponce

Then, on April 25, 1990, Bishop Mendez called Bishop Fremiot Torres Oliver, the Bishop of Ponce, to ask him to supply a "canonical cover," to use Bishop Oliver's expression, for traditional priests. Bishop Oliver declined. In a follow-up letter written that same day Bishop Oliver wrote: "I have given much thought to the idea and I am conscience-bound to decline your proposal." He went on to say:

But there is an important element that cannot be left out of this consideration. All the priests would exercise their ministry in the continental United States, and as you propose, would theoretically respond to the Bishop of Ponce. That is an awkward situation, and I cannot dismiss lightly the possibility that some Bishops may feel that their authority would thereby be undermined.

I am sorry that I must respond negatively to your well-intentioned proposal.

Bishop Mendez Decides To Ordain

Another door had been closed. In the mind of Bishop Mendez it was perhaps the final straw because three months later, in July of 1990, he decided that he, himself, would ordain Paul Baumberger and Joseph Greenwell without the ordinary authorizations that would be required under normal circumstances. It was a momentous decision for him.

On August 1, 1990, the Feast of Saint Peter's Chains, Bishop Mendez ordained the two young men to the diaconate in a small chapel in southern California. He then immediately made plans for their ordination to the priesthood. After considering a number of

possibilities as to where the priestly ordinations would be done, he decided on the chapel at St. Gertrude Academy – the very chapel where his body would be waked after his death. He set the date for September 3, 1990 – the Feast of Saint Pius X.

On September 2, Bishop Mendez arrived in Cincinnati and the following morning, with about four dozen people present, including five priests assisting and the Greenwell and Baumberger families, Bishop Mendez ordained Father Greenwell and Father Baumberger to the holy priesthood for the Society of St. Pius V.

The Years Following The Ordinations

During the few years following the ordinations, Bishop Mendez was a prominent supporter of our work – especially of our television program *What Catholics Believe*. His assistance came in the form of financial support (were it not for his help, the program could not have stayed on the air as long as it did) and also by his letters of encouragement and advice. In fact, a letter from Bishop Mendez to Pat Buchanan invited Mr. Buchanan to be a guest on our show. Bishop Mendez also sponsored the two high-profile programs we made with Pat Buchanan and his name appeared at the end of each program as its sponsor.

Some Serious Problems

However, during this time we were facing some serious problems. The parents of our Catholic children were regularly asking us how their children could ever receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Furthermore, some of our priests had become inordinately anxious about the future and were being drawn in the direction of the scandalous and doubtful Thuc bishops.

Our worst fears were realized when some of our priests began little by little to justify what they had up until then condemned as absolutely unacceptable: the so-called Thuc consecrations. For them, sadly, necessity

became the mother of invention. One of the priests even began making regular visits to a Thuc bishop in Italy and offering Mass in his chapel.

Providing for the Future

In an effort to provide for the future, and moved by the desire to secure the sacraments for our traditional Catholic faithful, in late 1993 Father Kelly and I decided to visit Bishop Mendez in order to ask him to consider the possibility of consecrating a bishop.

We were very uncomfortable about asking Bishop Mendez to consider such a thing, since it might seem so presumptuous and also because he had been so ill-treated after the priestly ordinations. Yet, we also knew that he was most concerned about the future of our work. He was quite devoted to the work of the Society of St. Pius V and had spoken to us about his concern for the future. He earnestly wanted more priests to offer the traditional Mass and to confer the true sacraments. Thus, despite our trepidations about raising the point with him, Father Kelly and I went to visit Bishop Mendez for the sole purpose of asking him to consider the possibility of consecrating a traditional Catholic bishop.



Bishop Mendez giving his first episcopal blessing.

We Never Even Had The Chance

As it turned out, we never even had the chance to bring up the subject of a possible episcopal consecration. On September 7, 1993, Father Kelly and I flew to California, and the following day we visited with the bishop in his home. After lunch, during which nothing whatsoever about consecrating was mentioned, Bishop Mendez retired for a siesta. While Father Kelly sat in his living room, I sought refuge in the bishop's chapel. After a while Father Kelly came into the chapel, tapped me on the shoulder and said that the bishop was awake and wanted to talk to us. I lingered for a few moments, praying that all would proceed as God wanted, then I joined the bishop and Father Kelly.

Bishop Mendez Proposes To Consecrate A Bishop

When I entered the living room, I found that they were sitting in silence. I sat down across from the bishop. After a few seconds, Father Kelly turned to me and said that Bishop Mendez had just proposed consecrating him a bishop. I was taken completely by surprise. It was without question a most extraordinary sequence of events. We were afraid to bring the subject up to Bishop Mendez. But on the very occasion when we were determined to do so he brought it up himself before we had a chance to say a word. It was clear that Bishop Mendez had been thinking about the matter for some time. Startled, I looked up to see the bishop watching me expectantly. I responded to the bishop's suggestion: "Your Excellency, I think that would be wonderful."

The Question Of Excommunication

Bishop Mendez raised the question of possible excommunication. He did this because under normal circumstances in the Church there would be a penalty of excommunication for consecrating a bishop without the authorization of the Holy See. But he clearly saw that we were not living under normal circumstances. The abnormality of the situation in the Church together with the grave need of the people and of the Society of St. Pius V were the very things which prompted Bishop Mendez to act in the first place and ordain priests for us. If anything the need was now greater and the prospects for the future were dimmer; for we would under no circumstances have anything to do with the dubious Thuc bishops. Nor were the bishops of the Society of St. Pius X a possible source of ordinations for us.

We discussed the question of excommunication at some length and we even talked about the interview with Count Neri Capponi, the canon lawyer, that appeared in the May-June, 1993 issue of *The Latin Mass* magazine in which Capponi expressed the view that Archbishop Lefebvre was not excommunicated for consecrating

bishops without a papal mandate. Bishop Mendez asked to see a copy of the interview which we later sent to him. When we finished our discussion he said he would give the whole matter further consideration.



Bishop Mendez and Cardinal Francis Spellman.

That afternoon Bishop Mendez drove Father Kelly to look at a piece of property that the bishop thought might be suitable as a site for a future church and school. I followed behind them in the rental car. After looking at the property the bishop drove home in his own car and Fr. Kelly and I remained at the site and discussed the extraordinary events that had taken place that day. The next day, Father Kelly and I were back home in New York and Ohio.

Serious Thought And Sudden Illness

Shortly thereafter Bishop Mendez called both Fr. Kelly and myself to speak about the consecration. In fact, in one telephone conversation with Fr. Kelly he alluded to his boyhood meeting with Mother Cabrini, when she tapped him affectionately on the head and he became convinced of his vocation to the priesthood. "Perhaps I should tap you on the head," the bishop told Father Kelly. The bishop was clearly giving much serious thought to the consecration and soon thereafter he began making specific plans.

On September 30, the bishop's secretary called to inform me that the bishop was ill. He was having difficulty breathing, was running a fever and was in severe pain. We became quite concerned. The following day I received another call to inform me that the bishop had awakened during the night in terrible pain and struggling for breath. He was rushed by ambulance to the hospital emergency room. By the time I was notified about this he had already been assigned a hospital room and was in guarded condition. The doctors thought they had the situation under control.

That afternoon I spoke with Bishop Mendez by telephone. He sounded cheerful but weak. That was

Friday, October 1, 1993. Fr. Kelly phoned the Bishop from Oyster Bay to let him know that he had offered the First Friday Mass for him. His response was: "Let's hope it works so I can get out of here and consecrate you."

Critically Ill

On the evening of Saturday, October 2, although the pager I had was registering a low battery, it sounded off but registered no number to call. Suspecting it was the bishop's secretary, I called California. The bishop's secretary told me that she had paged me to tell me that Bishop Mendez was rushed into the critical care unit. That morning a nurse had entered the bishop's room and found him ashen gray and cold. The pneumonia was gripping his lungs.

When the bishop's secretary told the doctor that she would have a priest at the hospital to anoint the bishop by morning, the doctor told her that the priest must not wait until the morning. The doctor said that the priest must come tonight. I telephoned Father Kelly and explained the turn of events. His comment: "God's will. This is a clear expression of God's will. If the bishop dies, it will be clear God did not want the consecration."

Praying That The Consecration Not Take Place

With the news of the bishop's serious illness, I discovered that Father Kelly and I had both been praying for the same thing: rather than praying for the consecration to occur, we had been praying that God would prevent the consecration if it was not His will. We had sincerely been asking God to block the consecration if it was His will that the consecration not take place, and it *appeared* either that He was doing exactly that, or that He was testing our trust in Him. Whatever the case, I resolved to go and remain by the bishop's side until he either died or became well enough to return home.

It was impossible for me to get to San Diego that night. The last flight was leaving Cincinnati on time in 15 minutes and I was at least 30 minutes from the airport. Since the following day was Sunday, Father Kelly and Father Baumberger rearranged their Mass schedules so that I could fly to San Diego immediately after the 7:30 a.m. Mass in Cincinnati.

"O Lord God, Thou Knowest"

When I arrived at the hospital in Vista, California, the bishop was in CCU (critical care unit) with the ventilator tube carrying the life-sustaining oxygen into his lungs. He was quite unresponsive, and as I stood

beside him holding his terribly swollen, cold and gray hands I thought sadly: "Will these hands ever bless or consecrate again?" Immediately there came to mind the words of the Easter Vigil prophecy, Ezechiel's vision of the dry bones: "Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live?" And Ezechiel answered: "O Lord God, Thou knowest." (Ezechiel 37:3)

I anointed Bishop Mendez and gave him the Apostolic Benediction – the special blessing given to those in danger of death which gains for the individual a plenary indulgence at the moment the soul is separated from the body. Later on that night I anointed another man at the request of his relatives. The next day the pulmonary care doctor who was tending both the bishop and the other fellow approached me and, pointing to the Holy Oil stocks, said in all seriousness: "I don't know what you have in that container, but keep using it. It has brought back two of my patients from the verge of death." This told me how ill the bishop really was, but also that he was making progress.



Bishop Mendez after his consecration in 1960.

Every morning after my daily Mass in his private chapel, I commended the bishop to the care of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini and Saint Therese, the Little Flower. Our people at St. Therese of the Child Jesus Church in Parma, Ohio, had been praying for years that Saint Therese would obtain "the raising up of true traditional Catholic bishops to

shepherd the Catholic faithful and to ordain for them devout priests." With all of those invocations offered to her, it seemed only right to turn to her then. We also asked the people in our chapels and Mass centers to pray for a very special intention on Sunday, October 3.

Gradual Improvement

During the ensuing days, I stayed close by the bishop's bedside. Leaving him only to visit other patients at their request, and to get some sleep and offer Mass at his home. The first real mark of progress was the announcement by the doctor that the bishop's lungs were clearing and that it might be possible to remove the respirator within the next couple of days.

The bishop's condition gradually improved so that on the morning of Thursday, October 7, the Feast of the Holy Rosary, he was removed from the respirator. The bishop was breathing entirely on his own. By that afternoon, he was transferred to an ordinary hospital room on the 4th floor for recovery.

The Bishop's Primary Concern

The next day the bishop began to speak about his intention to consecrate Father Kelly. He told me that it was his primary concern in returning home and rebuilding his strength. He said he wanted to live long enough to perform the consecration.

Ready To Go Home

From this point on, the bishop's recovery was swift – too swift for the doctor to believe it so. The bishop was ready to go home, but the doctor was reluctant to release him at first. He objected that the bishop was not eating well enough to maintain his strength. I was convinced that the bishop would eat and rest better in his own home, so that his recovery would be more rapid. In light of the bishop's desire to return home, the doctor finally proposed a test. He proposed that the bishop walk (with the aid of a walker) from his room to the nurses' station and back. The bishop practically carried the walker to the nurses' station and kept going, until the doctor laughed and pronounced him fit to be released. That afternoon he returned home. It was Monday, October 11, the Feast of the Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the patronal feast of the Daughters of Mary.

Specific Plans For The Consecration

That night the bishop instructed me to get Father Kelly on the telephone for him. I did and the bishop spoke to him about the consecration. It was arranged

with the bishop that Father Kelly and I, with the other priests, would return on Monday of the following week fully prepared for the consecration ceremony. Two days later I flew back to Cincinnati. There was much work to be done, studying the ceremony and gathering all that was required for an episcopal consecration: pontificale, vestments, mitre, crozier, episcopal ring and gloves, etc., etc. Father Skierka (who had been Master of Ceremonies at the seminary in Connecticut) and Father Baumberger assiduously prepared the ceremony and obtained many of the items needed. I telephoned the bishop every day to inquire about his progress.

Excitement And Detachment

There was obviously a certain underlying excitement among the priests, but the events of recent days served as a constant reminder that all was in the hands of God. The priests were full of anticipation, amazed at the sequence of events, and impressed by the significance of what was about to happen. Yet, they went about their daily affairs with a simple acceptance of whatever the Divine Will might decree. I believe that if the priests had all arrived in San Diego to find that the bishop had relapsed into sickness and died that they would have readily accepted it without complaint as a clear manifestation of God's will.

Arriving For The Consecration

Our six priests arrived in San Diego on Monday, October 18. We visited the bishop in the afternoon at his home and he informed us that he wanted to do the consecration the very next day, October 19, the Feast of St. Peter of Alcantara. That evening, the night before the consecration, Fr. Kelly visited with Bishop Mendez. They talked about the consecration and its great significance. Bishop Mendez spoke about the consecration in a very serious way. He fully realized the significance of what he was about to do. He had always cherished the virtue of obedience from his seminary days. And what he was about to do would certainly be denounced as disobedience and as a flagrant disregard for authority. But he was also profoundly moved by the plight of Catholic people whose faith and morals were being destroyed by the modernist clergy. We had actually seen him weep for the Church. On the day he ordained Father Greenwell and Father Baumberger to the diaconate, during lunch after the ceremony he spoke of the condition of the Church today. Suddenly, he put his hands to his face and began to weep audibly. In a moment he composed himself and said simply: "I'm sorry, but the Church is in such terrible shape." The following Sunday's Gospel told of Jesus weeping over

Jerusalem. Bishop Mendez was determined to do what he believed had to be done for the good of souls. He would feed the lambs and sheep. He was convinced that in consecrating Fr. Kelly he was doing what was right and necessary.

The Consecration

On the morning of the consecration all the priests were gathered at the residence of Bishop Mendez. As we finished setting everything in place for the ceremony, Bishop Mendez counselled Fr. Kelly. He especially emphasized that as a bishop he should encourage the people and give them hope. And then on the morning of October 19, 1993, in the chapel of his residence, Bishop Mendez consecrated Father Kelly a bishop according to the traditional Roman Rite of Episcopal Consecration. Father Thomas Mroczka and I served as Assistant Priests; Father Skierka was Master of Ceremonies; Father Baumberger was attendant to Father Kelly. Father Greenwell took photographs of the ceremony for the benefit of posterity.

The consecration was kept secret out of our concern for Bishop Mendez and because, at first, he wanted it that way. Our priests made a promise in writing not to speak of the consecration as long as Bishop Mendez remained alive – a period of time that we commended entirely into God's hands.

One great benefit of our silence until God called Bishop Mendez was that we had the opportunity to consider preparations for the future: for a seminary and the training that would have to be imparted. We wanted to reflect on the new circumstances of our work together as priests and on the bond that united us. In other words, we were determined to provide a good solid foundation for all that would follow from Father Kelly's episcopal consecration. Subsequent to the consecration we visited with Bishop Mendez on numerous occasions and kept in regular contact with him by phone.

Last Christmas Night

Last Christmas night, I telephoned Bishop Mendez from the home of Larry and Alva Priest in Traverse City, Michigan, to wish him a blessed Christmas. He told me that he wanted to visit Cincinnati the following week but, as it turned out, he postponed his trip because he was not feeling well.

The next week I decided to fly to California to see him and arrived in San Diego on Thursday, January 12. In the course of my visit we discussed his coming to

Cincinnati and the possibility of his moving to St. Joseph's Novitiate in Round Top, New York. He was interested in moving to Round Top but wanted to visit Saint Joseph's Novitiate to see for himself what it was like before making a decision. He also wanted to be with the priests on Long Island at the time of their quarterly meeting.

The Trip To Cincinnati And New York

And so that very night Bishop Mendez decided to return to Cincinnati with me the following morning. Thus, on January 13, the bishop and I flew together from San Diego to Cincinnati and, the following Monday, we continued on to Long Island, New York, for the priests'



Bishop Mendez with his family.

meeting. During that week Bishop Mendez wanted to visit Saint Joseph's Novitiate and did, in fact, visit the Sisters at Round Top on January 18. By that time, however, all thought of His Excellency staying there was put aside because we realized that he would need a young gentleman to assist him much of the time.

Seriously Ill

On Friday, January 20, the bishop and I were slated to fly through Cincinnati back to San Diego. I saw that the bishop was in considerable discomfort and I suggested that he might want to stay with us in Cincinnati for a time, so that he could visit Doctor Lichter, one of our chapel members. The bishop thought it was a good idea. That afternoon we were at Doctor

Lichter's office. The doctor immediately suspected cancer – a tumor of the liver or pancreas.

In the examination room the doctor told Bishop Mendez that, if his diagnosis was correct, he would die soon. His Excellency simply smiled benignly and gently nodded. I asked Bishop Mendez if he understood what the doctor had said. He replied that he had. I said that if the diagnosis was correct the disease would kill him very soon. He looked at me and said: "That's alright. I don't mind. I'm ready to die. But I am worried about Natalie." (Natalie was his convert, secretary and housekeeper of many years.)

Doctor Lichter recommended a CAT scan, and the bishop elected to remain in Cincinnati for that test. Over the Sunday, January 22, a half-dozen of the men of the chapel volunteered to stay with His Excellency while Father Greenwell and I travelled the mission circuit. Despite his pain, nausea and fatigue, the bishop enjoyed the company very much, so thereafter he had numerous visitors. On Tuesday his guests included the children in our first and second grade classes from St. Gertrude Academy. He loved the children and lit up when he saw them. At first they were awestruck at meeting a bishop, but he soon won them over.

The Final Diagnosis

After meeting the children early Tuesday afternoon, His Excellency went to the hospital for the CAT scan. The following morning the doctor called, asking me to bring the bishop to the hospital right away for conclusive tests and to attempt a procedure that he hoped would afford him some relief. While in the hospital room before the procedure I administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to Bishop Mendez and gave him the Apostolic Benediction. That afternoon the doctors confirmed that the bishop was suffering from a pancreatic tumor which was choking the life out of his liver. The specialist told me that had we boarded the plane for San Diego the bishop might well have died on the way. The specialist predicted that the bishop might have only two days to live.

The Final Days Of Bishop Mendez

On Thursday I telephoned Bishop Mendez' sister in Puerto Rico to inform her of his grave illness. About 4:30 that afternoon, His Excellency returned to the rectory. He was transported by ambulance. Father Kelly was with him in the ambulance. Later that day Fr. Greenwell brought Holy Viaticum to Bishop Mendez. A local hospice organization sent a nurse that evening to

arrange for his medical care at the rectory. The nurse asked Bishop Mendez life-and-death questions about his own desires for medical care and resuscitation, which he answered quite clearly and precisely. She then witnessed while His Excellency signed a statement that he wished to be buried in the cemetery of Saint Joseph's Novitiate in Round Top.

The Death Of Bishop Mendez

On Saturday, toward evening, Bishop Mendez' condition was failing rapidly. Kneeling by his bedside, I repeated the Holy Name of Jesus in his ear. After a few moments, I saw his lips moving faintly in unison with mine. He was calling upon the Holy Name with me. That Name was the last word he spoke.

About 11:00 p.m. the bishop began what is medically called Cheyenes-Stokes breathing, gulps of air punctuated by long pauses. Father Kelly and I knelt by his bedside offering the prayers for the dying. Natalie, his devoted secretary and housekeeper of many years, had arrived from San Diego. She also sat by the bishop's bedside. Thus he died, peacefully, receiving absolution, at about 11:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 28.

Trouble Following His Death

With Bishop Mendez' death our priests were freed from their promise made sixteen months before, but we wanted to wait until the bishop had had a quiet burial before we announced Father Kelly's consecration to the episcopacy. We arranged for a January 31 Requiem Mass at the school chapel in Cincinnati. And in keeping with Bishop Mendez' express wishes, his body would be flown to New York for the Solemn Requiem Mass and burial in the cemetery of Saint Joseph's Novitiate in Round Top. The bishop's family was making arrangements to attend the Mass and burial at Round Top, and even the bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, planned to attend. But when he learned who we were and what Bishop Mendez had done, the trouble began. A court restraining order prevented the bishop's remains from leaving Hamilton County, Ohio, until a court hearing on February 7. The judge dismissed all the evidence of the bishop's request for traditional Catholic burial and released the body to the family.

Announcing The Consecration

Having done all we knew possible to secure Bishop Mendez' own wishes, we announced the consecration of Bishop Kelly to our congregations that week. Over the ensuing days, our Catholic people have been rejoicing in the great blessing which God has bestowed upon us.

This consecration means that their children can receive the sacrament of Confirmation and that men who are called to the priesthood can now realize their vocations. It means that there will be priests to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for future generations – which was Bishop Mendez' principal concern.

"God Will Provide"

The expression "God will provide" comes to us from the Old Testament scriptures. In the book of Genesis we read that Abraham was ordered by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. As father and son were



Bishop Mendez with his mother.

approaching the altar where Isaac was to be slain, the boy – still unaware of God's command – asked his father: "Where is the victim for the holocaust?" It was then that Abraham responded: "God will provide Himself a victim for an holocaust, my son." On that occasion, God sent an angel to stay the upraised hand of Abraham and to spare Isaac's life; God then provided a ram as a victim to be slain in the boy's stead.

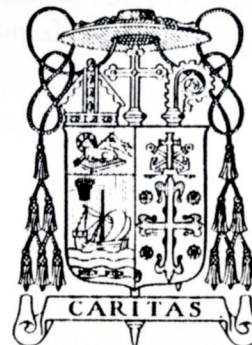
We trusted that God would provide for us and He did. But we must never forget that every great grace does require some sacrifice. We should not be surprised that God will expect us to be willing to make that sacrifice

now that our prayers have been answered so wonderfully, nor should we be surprised if the devil stirs up against us great opposition.

Notice what Bishop Mendez said in his statement "SI DILIGIS ME..." about his consecration of Bishop Kelly, which is printed on page 3 of this issue of *The Roman Catholic*: he said that the consecration was performed *for* the faithful so that they would have the Mass and the sacraments. The consecration was, no doubt, also performed *because of* the faithful.

God has not turned a deaf ear to the prayers and sacrifices of His faithful people. He has not been unmindful of their refusal to compromise and of their determination to "stand fast" and to "hold the traditions" as St. Paul says. And thus He has rewarded the faithful with this great grace of the consecration of a true traditional Roman Catholic bishop, whose orders derive from Pope Saint Pius X himself.

When we were being pressured to "take the easy way out" of a seemingly impossible situation, when we had no visible hope of finding a means to obtain priests for the present or future and others were jeering at us for refusing the false answer of the scandalous and dubious Thuc bishops – we all determined to stand fast and wait for God's solution. Saint Pius X's standard answer to all who were overwhelmed in the face of problems was this: *Deus providebit* – God will provide! And in this, truly, God has provided. Deo gratias!



+ Ecône, le 26 oct. 1987

+Ecône, the 26 Oct. 1987

Very dear Bishop Alfred Mendez.

We thank you very much for
your courageous intervention to Holy See.

In Rome we heard that your proposition to give a good solution for the problem of the tradition was in the desk of the Pope, and now some Cardinals in Rome agree with this solution.

The attitude of the Curia for us is really changing after my 29 June's allocution, and we hope have a Cardinal Visitor to look after a solution. We ask a real autonomia, as yourself you propose.

Is the time to pray, because the Bishops' conferences are against this autonomia and they prepare a true

p.2
^(fight)
fight against this solution.

We are waiting the nomination of the Cardinal Visitor and more or less in the Christmas time, he must give a relation to the Pope! -

Thank you again for your efficient help and for your prayers!

God keep you and bless you.

Devotedly in Jesus Christ and Mary

+ signed Lefebvre

MARCEL LEFEBVRE

Very dear Bishop Alfred Mendez,

We thank you very much for your courageous intervention to Holy See.

In Rome we heard that your proposition to give a good solution for the problem of the tradition was in the desk of the Pope, and now some Cardinals in Rome agree with this solution.

The attitude of the Curia for us is really changing after my 29 June's allocution, and we hope have a Cardinal Visitor to look after a solution. We ask a real autonomia [autonomy], as yourself you propose.

Is the time to pray, because the Bishop's conferences are against this autonomia [autonomy] and they prepare a true

p.2
fight against this solution.

We are waiting the nomination of the Cardinal Visitor and more or less in the Christmas time, he must give a solution to the Pope!

Thank you again for your efficient help and for your prayers!

God keep you and bless you.

Devoutly in Jesus Christ and Mary

+Marcel Lefebvre

N.B.: Bishop Mendez did the underlining in this letter.

Letter of Archbishop Lefebvre to Bishop Mendez.



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

No. 314.100

FROM THE VATICAN, October 28, 1976

Dear Bishop Méndez,

I write to acknowledge your kind letter and its enclosure regarding the case of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

In this regard one or two clarifications need to be made. In the first place, it is not a matter of the use of the Mass of Pope St Pius V or the use of Latin, but a question of ecclesiological errors expressed in the Archbishop's attitude. In particular, he rejects the authority of the Second Vatican Council and of Pope Paul VI: he does not feel bound to obey either of them, but continues to obey only the predecessors of Paul VI and the previous Councils.

By ordaining priests without dimissorial letters, that is to say, outside the communion of the hierarchical Church, he has committed acts which are materially schismatical. We do not know if they are also formally schismatical.

You will readily appreciate, therefore, that the problem goes far deeper than may appear at first sight.

I have the honor to transmit to you the Holy Father greetings and prayerful good wishes, and to convey his Apostolic Blessing.

Assuring you of my fraternal regard, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

r. J. Benelli
(to: Benelli)

N.B.: Archbishop Benelli's letter was written on two pages which are here combined into one page for considerations of space.

Archbishop Benelli's response to Bishop Mendez' letter defending Archbishop Lefebvre.

The picture to the right was taken at the end of the ceremony of Bishop Mendez' Episcopal Consecration which took place in Sacred Heart Church at Notre Dame University on October 28, 1960.

The two bishops in mitres are the co-consecrators of Bishop Mendez: Bishop Richard Ackerman of Covington, Kentucky and Bishop Edwin Byrne of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

To the right of the two bishops is Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York.

Bishop Alfred F. Mendez is seated to the right of Cardinal Spellman.





THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOP CLARENCE KELLY



Bishop Mendez and Bishop Kelly after the consecration - October 19, 1993

CONSECRATION CEREMONY



Bishop Mendez seated with mitre.



The imposition of hands by Bishop Mendez.
This is the matter for the consecration of a bishop.



The bishop imposes hands and says: "Accipe Spiritum Sanctum" – Receive the Holy Ghost.



The Assistant Priests impose hands on the head of Fr. Kelly.

THE MATTER AND FORM

On November 30, 1944 Pope Pius XII issued his Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Consecrationis* which dealt with the role of the co-consecrators at an episcopal consecration. In the first sentence of this Apostolic Constitution Pope Pius XII declared:

It is beyond all doubt and proven by long-standing practice that the minister of an episcopal consecration is a bishop and that one bishop alone, who with the required intention of mind performs the essential rites, suffices for the validity of the consecration. [*Episcopalis Consecrationis – The Rites and Ceremonies of Sacred Ordination*, THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA CANON LAW STUDIES No. 394 (Wash., D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962), p. 97.]

On November 30, 1947 Pope Pius XII issued another Apostolic Constitution which is known by the name *Sacramentum Ordinis*. The purpose of this Apostolic Constitution was to determine, by the supreme authority of the Catholic Church, the essential matter and form for the Diaconate, the Priesthood and the Episcopate.

That this had not been done by the supreme authority of the Church led theologians to speculate as to which rites were essential for validity and which were not. The situation "gave rise to doubts and anxieties in particular cases," Pius XII said, "and therefore time and time again the request has been humbly directed to the Apostolic See that those things which are required for the valid conferring of the sacrament of Orders should be declared by the supreme authority of the Church." [*Sacramentum Ordinis – Ibid.*, p.101.]

And so to dispel all controversy, to eliminate anxieties of conscience and to remove grounds for future doubts, Pope Pius XII proclaimed, declared and ordained in virtue of his Supreme Apostolic Authority the essential matter and form for the ordination of a deacon and a priest and for the consecration of a bishop. The matter for the Diaconate is the imposition of one hand; the form is as given by Pius XII. The matter for the ordination of a priest is the imposition of two hands; the form is as given by Pius XII. As regards the consecration of a bishop, the essential matter is the imposition of both hands by the consecrating bishop. And the essential form consists of a sixteen-word formula as specified in *Sacramentum Ordinis*. Pope Pius XII says:

Regarding the matter and the form used in the conferring of each of the Orders, We, by the same Apostolic Authority, ordain and decree the following: ... in the ordination or consecration of a bishop the matter is the imposition of the hands which is done by the bishop consecrator. The form consists in the words of the 'preface,' of which the following are essential and therefore required for validity:

'Comple in Sacerdote tuo ministerii tui summam, et ornamentis totius glorificationis instructum coelestis unguenti rore sanctifica.' [*Sacramentum Ordinis – Ibid.*, pp. 103, 105.]

The English translation of the form is:

Fulfill in Thy priest the completion of Thy ministry, and adorned in the ornaments of all glorification sanctify him with the moisture of heavenly unguent. [SOURCES OF CATHOLIC DOGMA, Denzinger, Translated by Roy J. Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, B. Herder Book Co., Copyright 1957, p. 631]



Bishop Mendez anointing Bishop Kelly's hands.



"Accipe baculum pastoralis officii..."
The new bishop receives the crozier.



"Accipe annulum fidei scilicet signaculum..."
The new bishop receives the ring which is a special sign of faith.



"Accipe Evangelium, et vade..."
The new bishop receives the Gospel and is told to go and preach to the people.



Bishop Kelly receives the mitre from Bishop Mendez.



After the imposition of the mitre.



The bishop blesses the new gloves.



Bishop Kelly with mitre and crozier.

LITTERÆ



CONSECRATIONIS

Nos Alfredus F. Mendez
FIDEM FACIMUS ET TESTAMUR, IN CONSECRATIONE HABITA IN SACELLO AUT IN ECCLESIA REPARATA
SITO(A) Carlsbad (CA) DIE 19 MENSIS Octobris ANNO 1993
DILECTUM NOBIS IN CHRISTO DNUM Clarentium Jacobum Kelly
PRAEVIIS SPIRITUALIBUS EXERITIIS AC PRAEVIIO EXAMINE IDONEUM REPERTUM ET ADMISSUM, CUM CEREMONIIS
ET SOLEMNITATIBUS NECESSARIIS ET OPPORTUNIS, JUXTA RITUM S.R.E. AD Episcopatum
TITULO servitii ecclesiae PROMOVISSE.
IN QUORUM FIDEM, HAS LITTERAS, SIGILLO NOSTRO MUNITAS, EXPEDIRI JUSSIMUS.

DATUM Carlsbad

DIE 20 MENSIS Octobris ANNO 1993

SKILLUM

Alfred F. Mendez

Consecration certificate of Bishop Kelly

DECLARATION OF EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

I, Bishop Alfred F. Mendez, retired Bishop of Arecibo, declare, profess and testify in truth, before Almighty God, that I bestowed Episcopal Consecration on Father Clarence Kelly on October 19, 1993 at Carlsbad, California according to the traditional rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

Alfred F. Mendez

Bishop Alfred F. Mendez

Retired Bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico

Given at Carlsbad, California November, 10 1993

OATH OF WITNESSES

We the undersigned profess, testify and swear before Almighty God that Bishop Alfred Mendez did personally sign the above declaration in our presence.

Kathleen E. White

William J. ...

Paul J. Baumgartner

Given at Carlsbad, California November, 10, 1993

N.B.: All the certificates reproduced here have been reduced in size for considerations of space. They all bear the embossed seal of Bishop Mendez even though the seal is not visible in these reproductions of the originals. The seal of Bishop Mendez contains his Coat of Arms which is represented on page 15.

LITTERAE ORDINATIONIS

Nos. Alfredus F. Mendez, DD Episcopus Emeritus, Arecibensis

FIDEM FACIMUS ET TESTAMUR, IN ORDINATIONE HABITA IN SACELLO AUT IN ECCLESIA privata

SITO(A) Cincinnatiense DIE Tertia MENSIS Septembris ANNO 1990

DILECTUM NOBIS IN CHRISTO DNUM Joseph Greenwell

PRAEVIIS SPIRITUALIBUS EXERCITIIS AC PRAEVIIO EXAMINE IDONEUM REPERTUM ET ADMISSUM, CUM COEREMONIS ET

SOLEMNITATIBUS NECESSARIIS ET OPPORTUNIS, JUXTA RITUM S.R.E. AD Presbyteratum

mensae communis TITULO PROMOVISSE.

IN QUORUM FIDEM, HAS LITTERAS, SIGILLO NOSTRO MUNTAS, EXPEDIRI JUSSIMUS.

DATUM Cincinnatiense DIE Tertia MENSIS Sept. ANNO 1990

SIGILLUM + *Alfred F. Mendez, S.D.*
Bishop Emeritus of Arecibo

Ordination certificate of Fr. Joseph Greenwell

LITTERAE ORDINATIONIS

Nos. Alfredus F. Mendez, DD Episcopus Emeritus, Arecibensis

FIDEM FACIMUS ET TESTAMUR, IN ORDINATIONE HABITA IN SACELLO AUT IN ECCLESIA Privata

SITO(A) Cincinnatiense DIE Tertia MENSIS Septembris ANNO 1990

DILECTUM NOBIS IN CHRISTO DNUM Paulum Baumberger

PRAEVIIS SPIRITUALIBUS EXERCITIIS AC PRAEVIIO EXAMINE IDONEUM REPERTUM ET ADMISSUM, CUM COEREMONIS ET

SOLEMNITATIBUS NECESSARIIS ET OPPORTUNIS, JUXTA RITUM S.R.E. AD Presbyteratum

mensae communis TITULO PROMOVISSE.

IN QUORUM FIDEM, HAS LITTERAS, SIGILLO NOSTRO MUNTAS, EXPEDIRI JUSSIMUS.

DATUM Cincinnatiense DIE Tertia MENSIS Sept. ANNO 1990

SIGILLUM + *Alfred F. Mendez, S.D.*
Bishop Emeritus of Arecibo

Ordination certificate of Fr. Paul Baumberger

THE PASSING OF BISHOP ALFRED F. MENDEZ

by Bishop Clarence Kelly

A Simple Man And A Humble Priest

Bishop Mendez was a simple man and a humble priest. He was an unpretentious bishop. He especially loved children and the poor and was especially loved by them. Because of his work among the Mexicans he came to be called Padre. His close friends affectionately referred to him this way. Padre was, for them, a synonym for Bishop Mendez.

Some Background

Bishop Alfred F. Mendez was born in 1907. He was ordained a priest in 1935 and was a member of the

Congregation of the Holy Cross. It was the Holy Cross Fathers who made Notre Dame the great Catholic University it once was. Bishop Mendez was consecrated in 1960. He was the first Bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico. He retired in 1974 and lived a life of relative obscurity.

Bishop Mendez knew the parents of Fr. William Jenkins from the mid 1960's. And through them Fr. Jenkins and the priests of the Society of St. Pius V came to know him. In time Bishop Mendez became an enthusiastic supporter of our television program *What*



Bishop Alfred F. Mendez.

Catholics Believe and of the Society of St. Pius V. He supported our work by his prayers, his encouragement and his financial support. In 1990 Bishop Mendez ordained Fr. Joseph Greenwell and Fr. Paul Baumberger for the Society of St. Pius V. And then in 1993 he consecrated me a bishop.

The Death And Wake Of Bishop Mendez

Bishop Mendez died on Saturday, January 28, 1995, at about 11:30 p.m. A Solemn High Requiem Mass was scheduled for Tuesday, January 31. I was to be the celebrant. Fr. Baumberger and Fr. Greenwell, the two priests Bishop Mendez ordained for the Society of St. Pius V, were to be the deacon and the subdeacon of the Mass. Fr. Jenkins was to be the celebrant at the Solemn High Mass that was scheduled to be offered at Round Top on the day of burial according to the final request of Bishop Mendez.

On the Monday following his death, Fr. Jenkins, Fr. Greenwell and I went to the funeral home to clothe his body for burial. We dressed the body in the garb of a bishop and in the beautiful violet vestments which were provided by Fr. Baumberger. We put the simple mitre on his head. And we placed the crozier that Bishop Mendez presented to me in the ceremony of my consecration in the casket with him.

That same day, Monday, the body was taken to St. Gertrude Academy. The open casket was placed in the center aisle of the chapel in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The priests and people gathered there in the evening to pray the fifteen decades of the Rosary for the repose of his soul. The Rosary was followed by Vespers of the Dead. Throughout the night the people came to pay their last respects and to pray for the repose of his soul.

The Night Before

When we finished our prayers on Monday night I returned to the rectory. It was the same rectory where Bishop Mendez had died the previous Saturday night. I returned to prepare a sermon for the Requiem Mass the next morning. I wondered what I might say at the funeral of a bishop. I wondered what I would say at the funeral of this bishop who had done so much for us and our people.

As I wondered about these things, I lifted a book from Fr. Greenwell's bookshelf. It was volume 6 of a 13 volume set entitled *STORIES FOR SERMONS*. I opened it to the Topical Index at the back of the book. My eyes

fell on the word "DEATH". Directly under the word "DEATH" was the word "Priest". I opened to page 122. And there I found the story of a Catholic priest who was a Navy chaplain during World War II. It was entitled "Memorial of [an] Heroic Priest." Here is what it said:

When the battleship OKLAHOMA was hit during World War Two, 150 men and their chaplain, Father Aloysius Schmitt, were trapped in a hallway. With superhuman strength one sailor shouldered open a hatch and shouted: "Gangway for the padre! Let him out." But the heroic chaplain called out: "Pull out the men nearest the hatch. I'll stay with the rest of the boys."

Father Schmitt stayed "with the rest of the boys". Of the one hundred and fifty men trapped in that hallway only six were saved. The good Padre was not one of them. He went down with the ship and died with his boys. That good Padre was a good shepherd. He was like his Divine Master who laid down His life for His sheep.

A Good "Padre" To Us

I could not help seeing a certain parallel between the two "Padres." When those sailors were most in need their Padre stayed with them. When we were most in need our "Padre" ordained priests for us. And then he really went out on a limb for us when he decided to consecrate a bishop. He risked humiliation, vilification and the condemnation of his former colleagues, as well as the wrath of the "Novus Ordo" hierarchy.

He did not take lightly what he proposed to do. He understood very well the gravity of consecrating someone without a papal mandate. He knew that under normal circumstances in the Church it would mean automatic excommunication. He spoke of these things just moments after he first brought up the subject of the consecration.

He resolved the question of excommunication by concluding that he would be justified in consecrating a bishop without a papal mandate because of the situation in the Church and because of what he perceived to be a grave necessity. Once he definitively resolved the matter in his own mind he was peaceful and quite happy about the consecration.

Subsequent to the consecration he often referred to the fact that he was happy that he had done it. For example, in March 1994 we had dinner with Bishop

Mendez at the Quail's Inn not far from his home in California. And as we left the restaurant Bishop Mendez, speaking about the consecration, said to me: "They will criticize me but I will laugh at them from heaven."

He did not say this in a presumptuous or contentious way. He said it as one who believed that what he had done on October 19, 1993 was the right thing to do. He said it with a certain satisfaction that accompanies the fulfillment of an important mission. He saw the consecration as the means of providing for the future.

Grateful For Bishop Mendez

We are very grateful for Bishop Mendez. In our time of need he risked disgrace and the wrath of friends and former colleagues to help us. He stayed with us to the end. He did not desert us. He became our "Padre." And as we mourn his death as the death of one we loved, we thank God for the gifts He bestowed on us through "Padre." We are grateful for these blessings just as we are grateful for the blessings that God bestowed on us through Archbishop Lefebvre – for whom Bishop Mendez had great admiration.

Grateful For Archbishop Lefebvre

In the wake of Vatican II there took place a general disintegration of faith and morals. This destruction was foreseen by important members of the Roman Curia who had warned John XXIII about what would happen if he went ahead with the Council. The reaction of John XXIII was to attack these men who warned him of the coming disaster. He did this in his opening address to the Council on October 11, 1962. He attacked them as "prophets of doom" even as he declared that henceforth he would use only "the medicine of mercy" on teachers of error.

History demonstrates that the "prophets of doom" were right and John XXIII was wrong. The Council and the post-conciliar reforms produced an unprecedented disaster in the Church. Every aspect of Catholic life was changed. A widespread destruction of faith and morals occurred. The external institutions of the Church were reduced to a

shambles. Heresy and false moral teaching became the common fare dished out in Catholic universities, colleges and seminaries.

In the face of this universal disintegration of everything Catholic and the discouragement that it caused among so many, Archbishop Lefebvre raised a beacon of hope for all the world to see. He said "No" to the destruction of faith and morals. He said "No" to the New Mass. He said "No" to the Modernist attack on the divinity of Christ. He proclaimed fidelity to the Catholic Faith, to Catholic morals and to the Catholic Mass. He defended the Kingship of Christ. He did these things not with mere words, but with deeds as well. He acted. He did something concrete. He established a seminary. He trained priests to say the true Mass. He sent these priests out to assist Catholics throughout the world who were holding fast to the Catholic Religion. And in his finest moment he stood Athanasius-like against the world.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Archbishop Lefebvre for what he did. And we also owe a debt of gratitude to Bishop Mendez who followed in the footsteps of Archbishop Lefebvre. He did something. He ordained priests and consecrated a bishop for the faithful in their



Bishop Mendez with the priests of the Society of St. Pius V in the chapel at Oyster Bay. From left to right behind Bishop Mendez: Bishop Kelly, Fr. Thomas Mroczka, Fr. Joseph Greenwell, Fr. Paul Baumberger

time of need. We are grateful for the fact that Bishop Mendez provided for the future of our work. We are grateful for the part he played in our lives. And we are grateful for the part we played in his life and for having had the opportunity to assist him at the time of his death when no member of his family was able to be there.

Round Top was going to be changed into a residence for Bishop Mendez.

Bishop Mendez arrived at Lagueardia Airport the afternoon of Monday, January 16. Fr. Jenkins was with him. I picked them up at the airport and drove them to



Bishop Mendez and the Daughters of Mary on his visit to St. Joseph's Novitiate. Fr. Baumberger is on the far left; Fr. Jenkins is to the far right.

THE LAST DAYS OF BISHOP MENDEZ

The Trip To New York

The priests of the Society of St. Pius V scheduled their first quarterly meeting of 1995 for the week of January 17 through January 19. The meeting was to take place at Oyster Bay, New York. Bishop Mendez wanted to visit with the priests at that time. He also wanted to visit St. Joseph's Novitiate at Round Top. He knew the Sisters, regularly corresponded with them, and had a high regard for them. He was actually considering the possibility of moving to Round Top. The Sisters, knowing that this was a real possibility, had already started to make preparations. A Sister on Long Island, who is a registered nurse, was to be transferred to Round Top to look after the Bishop. One of the buildings at

Oyster Bay. Later that day the other priests arrived. The priests visited with Bishop Mendez on Monday and Tuesday. And on Wednesday, January 18, we made the trip to Round Top to visit St. Joseph's Novitiate.

The Visit To Round Top

The Bishop was quite determined to make the trip to Round Top even though he was not feeling well. It was a three hour drive and Bishop Mendez stayed awake the whole time. He took in the winter scenery along the New York State Thruway and seemed to enjoy the drive very much. When we arrived at St. Joseph's he rested for a while and then we had lunch.

The Sisters had patiently awaited his coming and were anxious to see him. But before visiting the Sisters

he wanted to see their beautiful chapel which was still adorned with Christmas decorations. The altar was covered with red, white and pink poinsettias. The Infant Jesus was still in His manger above the tabernacle. The Christ Child seemed engulfed in a sea of red and white flowers. It was quite a beautiful sight and Bishop Mendez was clearly pleased.

We then met with the Sisters who were as happy to see the Bishop as he was to see them. They talked with him. They sang hymns for him. He counselled them to be good, holy religious. At one point he became quite serious and told the Sisters that he would not be with us much longer. It was not easy to hold back the tears. The Sisters presented him with a beautifully wrapped tray of cookies which they had baked for him. Each knelt before him to kiss his ring. Bishop Mendez blessed the Sisters. Goodbys were exchanged and we departed their company.

Back At Oyster Bay

We drove back to Long Island that evening. And the following day the Long Island Sisters met with Bishop Mendez. They too sang for him and had a wonderful visit with him. The Cincinnati Sisters visited him the following week.

The chapel at Oyster Bay is very beautiful, especially at Christmas time. When Bishop Mendez was there in January the Christmas decorations were still in place. He was very impressed with the chapel and said so. He took special delight in the beautiful Spanish Nativity set. And as we stood before the crib admiring it I lifted the Infant from the manger. Bishop Mendez took the figure into his hands. And then in a very moving way he called upon Our Lord to help the priests of the Society of St. Pius V. Tightly grasping the Infant Jesus in both hands, he prayed with great emotion and evident sincerity: "Help these priests. Provide for their needs."

It was there before the crib, that Bishop Mendez told me in a most emphatic way that I must begin to wear the episcopal cassock and to function as a bishop. He made it very plain that, as far as he was concerned, he did not care what the consequences would be for him.

On To Cincinnati

The priests' meeting adjourned on Thursday, January 19. The following day Bishop Mendez left for Cincinnati with Fr. Jenkins. I drove them to the airport. We said our goodbys. And as I knelt to kiss the Bishop's ring he seemed to be in exceptionally good spirits.



"Help these priests. Provide for their needs."

Fr. Jenkins had arranged for Bishop Mendez to see a physician in Cincinnati, Dr. Lichter by name, who was in contact with the Bishop's doctor in California. Dr. Lichter examined the Bishop that very Friday afternoon. The results were not encouraging. A CAT scan was done the following Tuesday. On Wednesday the Bishop was admitted to Mercy Hospital for a surgical procedure which the doctors hoped would afford him some relief. The specialist then informed Fr. Jenkins, who was at the hospital, that Bishop Mendez was certainly dying.

His Last Days

Fr. Jenkins called me from the hospital. I was at Round Top at the time. He told me that Bishop Mendez was dying and asked me if I could fly out right away. I was able to get a flight that afternoon and arrived in Cincinnati that evening. I met Fr. Greenwell at the hospital. We visited with the Bishop and then decided that Fr. Greenwell would spend the night at the hospital with Bishop Mendez and that I would relieve him the next day after the school Mass.

On Thursday morning I said the school Mass at St. Gertrude Academy and then took the Blessed Sacrament to the hospital in the hope that Bishop Mendez would be able to receive Holy Communion. But he was not able to do so. Fr. Greenwell took the Blessed Sacrament back to the chapel and I stayed with the Bishop. That afternoon Bishop Mendez and I returned to the rectory by ambulance. He was coming home to die.

Holy Viaticum

A hospital bed had been installed in one of the rooms at the rectory and a hospice nurse was scheduled to visit. We made the Bishop as comfortable as possible. The pain medication that had been ordered by the doctor had not yet arrived. When the medication that the Bishop had received at the hospital wore off, he became quite alert and cheerful. He very much wanted to receive Holy Communion. Fr. Greenwell rushed off to the Academy chapel to get the Blessed Sacrament.

When Fr. Greenwell returned he gave Bishop Mendez his Last Holy Communion. The Bishop received his Viaticum. He received the Bread of Life to take with him on his journey into eternity. It was the last time that he was able to receive, and as he received, Father Greenwell pronounced the words for the reception of Holy Viaticum. He said to the dying Bishop who was his father in the priesthood:

Accipe, frater, Viaticum Corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui te custodiat ab hoste maligno, et perducatur in vitam aeternam. Amen. (Receive, brother, this Viaticum, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may protect thee from the wicked enemy and lead thee unto everlasting life. Amen.)

From Thursday to Saturday the priests kept vigil by his bed. They were assisted at times by dedicated lay people. On Friday the condition of Bishop Mendez worsened. Saturday saw no improvement. It was evident that death could come at anytime.

Devoted To Mother Cabrini

Bishop Mendez was very devoted to St. Frances Xavier Cabrini. He had met Mother Cabrini when he was a boy. In fact, she visited his home and at one point affectionately tapped him on the head. He told us that it was from that point on that he knew he was going to be a priest.

It is, therefore, interesting to note that on the Saturday of his death the Sisters in New York visited the shrine of Mother Cabrini, as well as the tomb of Cardinal Spellman at St. Patrick's Cathedral. And about the time they were praying for Bishop Mendez at the shrine of Mother Cabrini, a very remarkable thing happened.

A Moment Of Great Joy Before His Death

I was with Bishop Mendez at the time. It was about 4:30 in the afternoon. I had stepped out of his room for a moment as he slept. When I returned he was awake. He had a remarkable look on his face. I asked him if anything was wrong. He said to me in a very strong voice and with a sweet sigh and a bright face: "NO! NO!"

He said that he was filled with an inexpressible joy. I asked him if he had had a dream. He said he had. I asked if he had seen anything in the dream. He said no. It was just joy – an immense and overwhelming joy. That was about seven hours before his death. It occurred as the Sisters prayed for him at the shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini. Though weak and frail and so close to death, he could hardly contain the joy that he felt. I was very moved by what he said. And I was very moved by what I saw in his face.

A Crucifix For The Dying Bishop

But his condition steadily worsened. His breathing was interrupted. It seemed that death could come at any moment. Fr. Jenkins asked me if I had a small crucifix. There was a large crucifix in the room that Bishop Mendez could see from his bed when he opened his eyes. I had a small crucifix in my sick call kit. I went to get it. It was a crucifix with the medal of St. Benedict in the center of the cross.

Kneeling By His Bed

We pressed the crucifix to the lips of Bishop Mendez and then set it down upon his breast above his heart. We knelt by his bed to pray. We prayed many prayers. Fr. Jenkins led the prayers for a departing soul. He knelt to the left of the bed by the side of Bishop Mendez. To the right was the devoted secretary and housekeeper of Bishop Mendez who had flown out from California to see him before he died. I knelt at the foot of the bed. Fr. Jenkins began *The Litany for the Dying*. He then prayed the beautiful prayer that begins:

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this sinful world, in the name of God, the Father Almighty who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered and died for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; in the name of the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God ...

Calling upon Our good and merciful God to forgive his sins and to graciously remit his guilt for past offenses, Fr. Jenkins absolved Bishop Mendez and recommended him to Almighty God. He asked God to receive him:

Receive Thy servant, O Lord, into the place of salvation, which he hopes to attain through Thy mercy.

Fr. Jenkins then called upon the Most Blessed Virgin Mary to come to the aid of this departing soul. He prayed:

May the most clement Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the most loving consoler of the afflicted, commend to her Son, the soul of this servant Alfred, so that through her maternal intercession he may not fear the terrors of death, but in her company may joyfully enter the desired heavenly home. Amen.

He Died As We Prayed

It was as we knelt there, it was as we prayed there by his bed that Bishop Mendez died. He died as we commended his soul to the care of Our Lord, Our Lady, St. Joseph, the Angels and all the saints.

And the last thing that Bishop Mendez did this side of eternity was to struggle to say with his dying lips the Holy Name of Jesus. He died with the Holy Name upon his lips and in his heart. He died a very holy death. It is the kind of death that we pray for. He died well fortified with the Sacraments of Our Holy Mother the Church.

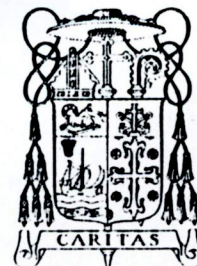
Trusting In God For His Salvation

We believe in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We believe in a merciful Savior. And we confidently trust in Him for the salvation of the soul of Bishop Mendez. For he had the true Faith. He received the true sacraments. He loved Our Lord and the Blessed Mother. And he loved the Catholic Church. We priests saw him weep over the situation in the Church. We saw him bury his face in his hands and weep for the Church, for the Holy Cross Fathers and for his beloved Notre Dame.

Grateful For Our "Padre"

As we commend the soul of Bishop Mendez to the care of Our Lord and Our Lady, I think of that Navy chaplain who loved his boys so much. "Gangway for the padre! Let him out," they said. But the Padre did not go. He said: "I'll stay with the rest of the boys."

In a very real sense Bishop Alfred F. Mendez is our Padre who stayed with us. He came to our aid. He supported us. He ordained priests for us. And in order to continue the priesthood, he consecrated a bishop for us. Because of him we shall have our seminary. And for this we are profoundly grateful. We are grateful even as we mourn his passing. We are grateful even as we commend his soul to the mercy of the Great High Priest and Good Shepherd of our souls and to Our Most Blessed Mother. May he rest in peace!



THE FINAL REQUEST AND LEGACY OF BISHOP MENDEZ

by Bishop Clarence Kelly

THE FINAL REQUEST OF BISHOP MENDEZ

Bishop Alfred F. Mendez was a friend and supporter of the Society of St. Pius V. And he was devoted to the Daughters of Mary. He died on Saturday, January 28, 1995, at our rectory on Montana Avenue in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was supposed to be buried at St. Joseph's Cemetery at the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Mary in Round Top, New York. The burial was scheduled to take place on Thursday, February 2, 1995 – Candlemas Day and the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Bishop Mendez requested that he be buried at St. Joseph's and put this request in writing on January 26, 1995, the Thursday before his death. He signed it in the presence of witnesses; one of whom was a registered nurse from a hospice association in Cincinnati. She later testified under oath that Bishop Mendez was in possession of his faculties when he signed his last request.

The Family Agreed

Fr. William Jenkins called the family of Bishop Mendez to inform them that the Bishop was seriously ill and close to death. When he died Fr. Jenkins called them again. He told them of the death of Bishop Mendez and of his request to be buried at Round Top. Bishop Mendez had appointed Fr. Jenkins the executor of his will and Fr. Jenkins was simply fulfilling his responsibility. The family agreed to the burial at Round Top.

When the Bishop of Arecibo found out about the death of Bishop Mendez, he tried to get the family to have the burial in Puerto Rico. The family, however, wanted to do what Bishop Mendez requested. And so they made plans to fly to Albany. The Sisters at Round Top were prepared to make the necessary hotel reservations for them and to provide for their transportation from the airport.

The Bishop Of Arecibo

When the Bishop of Arecibo saw that the burial was going to proceed according to the request of Bishop Mendez and in spite of the pressure he put on the family, he accepted the fact of the burial at Round Top and even

made plans to attend the funeral. In fact, we were told by his priest representative that he wanted to concelebrate the Mass. But we informed him that such a thing would not be possible. The Bishop of Arecibo, we said, was welcome to attend the Mass but there would be no concelebration nor would he be allowed to attend the Mass in the sanctuary. The funeral Mass was to be a traditional Requiem Mass as requested by Bishop Mendez. It would be a Solemn High Requiem Mass with a celebrant, a deacon and a subdeacon. The priest representative of the Bishop of Arecibo seemed not to grasp what was being said. We wanted to avoid a scene at Round Top if in fact the Bishop of Arecibo were to come for the funeral. And so to make the situation as plain as possible we informed him that I was ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre and consecrated by Bishop Mendez on October 19, 1993. Still, he seemed not to fully grasp what was being said. He informed us that he would talk to the Bishop of Arecibo and get back to us. He did not get back to us.

Pressure And Accusations

We later found out from Bishop Mendez' sister that the priest had understood exactly what he was told. Pressure on the family was renewed. Accusations of schism were hurled against us. The Holy Cross Fathers from Notre Dame got involved. The family was turned against the priests who were so close to Bishop Mendez, against those who looked after him day and night during the last weeks before his death. The family reversed its position and a law suit was filed in Hamilton County, Ohio, to prevent the burial at Round Top.

The Real Plaintiff

The law firm that was engaged by the family of Bishop Mendez to prevent the burial at Round Top is the same firm, we were told, that handles legal matters for the Diocese of Cincinnati. The plaintiff was the sister of Bishop Mendez. But as time went by it became increasingly clear that the *real* plaintiff was the Vatican II Church. In fact, at one point in the proceedings, the lawyer for the family asked the judge for permission to consult his "client." When permission was granted the lawyer then walked right past the Bishop's sister, who was supposed to be his client, to two priests who were sitting in the spectators' part of the court room – both of whom are members of the Holy Cross Fathers.

The Decision

The judge, a Novus Ordo Catholic, completely discounted the written request of Bishop Mendez. He said that because Bishop Mendez was very ill and his request was made so close to his death he would give it no weight. But our attorney told us that from a legal standpoint the closer such a request is made to a person's death the more value it actually has. The judge ruled that the body of Bishop Mendez was to be turned over to the family for burial in Puerto Rico. He then refused our request to grant a stay of his order so that we could file an appeal.

We were, of course, tremendously disappointed with the outcome and were profoundly saddened that Bishop Mendez' request for a traditional Catholic burial was thwarted. At the same time, however, we felt that we had done all that we could to carry out the final request of Bishop Mendez.

THE LEGACY OF BISHOP MENDEZ

The request of Bishop Mendez to be buried at Round Top was consistent with his sympathy for Archbishop Lefebvre. It was consistent with his love for the Church and the Mass and his ever increasing disillusionment with the modern hierarchy. And it was consistent with his support of the Society of St. Pius V and his devotion to the Daughters of Mary.

Bishop Mendez' Sympathy For Archbishop Lefebvre

In the wake of Vatican II Archbishop Lefebvre emerged on the world scene as the foremost defender of the traditional Mass and of Catholic Tradition. By the mid-1970's the opposition to his work from the liberal French bishops was most intense. By 1976 it was at a fever-pitch. In the September 1976 issue of our Newsletter *For You and For Many* Fr. Sanborn wrote:

We have seen over the past few months the beginning of what is perhaps the culmination of this whole struggle in the Church. On May 24th, 1976 when Archbishop Lefebvre was in New York, Pope Paul VI severely criticized him by name, accusing him of rejecting his authority in the name of yesterday's papal authority. Paul VI lumped Archbishop Lefebvre and his "followers" in with the liberal, heretical theologians who reject Church teaching. Commentators were shocked by the fact that Archbishop Lefebvre was mentioned by name, as this was the first

time in memory that someone had been attacked nominatim. Not even Stalin received such a direct attack.

And yet in the wake of the growing opposition to Archbishop Lefebvre, Bishop Mendez wrote to the Vatican in his defence. The Vatican response was in the form of a letter from Archbishop Benelli of the SECRETARIAT OF STATE. Archbishop Benelli accused Archbishop Lefebvre of "ecclesiological errors". (Archbishop Benelli's letter appears on page 17.) But this did not dampen Bishop Mendez' support for Archbishop Lefebvre. He continued to hold him in high esteem. In October of 1987 Archbishop Lefebvre wrote to Bishop Mendez to thank him for his continued support. In that letter he said: "We thank you very much for your courageous intervention to Holy See." (See page 16 for the text of the letter.)

Love For The Church - Disillusionment With The Modern Hierarchy.

In April of 1982 Bishop Mendez delivered a talk at Notre Dame University in which we see his great love for the Catholic Faith and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In his talk he declared:

Let us reverse the trends of today, all in good faith I am sure, to popularize religion, to bring the sacred down to the people. On the contrary let us raise the people to the greatness of their sacred calling as followers of Christ, a calling to the divine, a calling to sacrifice.

He then went on to say:

The Mass is indeed the central act of our Catholic Faith! Remove the Mass as Sacrifice and you have left merely the appurtenances, the trappings of another Christian sect, a mere meal, a mere memorial – and Christ would have died in vain! ... Let us reestablish the priority set by God, the love and adoration of God through the Eucharistic Sacrifice "and all else shall be added."

But the "trends of today" were not reversed. Things became worse. They have become so bad, in fact, that the new Code of Canon Law (Canon 844) and the new catechism, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (nos. 1399, 1401) actually provide for giving Holy Communion to heretics and schismatics – which practice promotes the heresy of religious indifferentism

and sacrilege against the Blessed Sacrament.

Bishop Mendez saw the destructive effects of the reforms. He witnessed the loss of Faith and morals and the disappearance of the true Mass. He saw the ruination of Catholic institutions like Notre Dame. He saw that little or nothing was being done about these things. And more and more he saw the hierarchy, which was supposed to provide a solution to the problems facing the Church, as the problem. He wrote to Rome and it did no good. He looked to other bishops for support and did not find it. He was disillusioned with the modern hierarchy.

Bishop Mendez And The Society Of St. Pius V

On the other hand, Bishop Mendez was an enthusiastic viewer of our hard-hitting television program *What Catholics Believe* and a devoted supporter of the Society of St. Pius V. He supported our work and very much desired to see it prosper and grow. But he was also a realist. He knew that without more priests our work could not grow. He knew that without a way to insure priests for the future it would inevitably die. And so he decided first to ordain priests for the Society of St. Pius V in 1990 and then to consecrate a bishop in 1993. In doing these things he followed in the footsteps of Archbishop Lefebvre.

No Small Thing

It was no small thing for Bishop Mendez to do what he did. He understood the momentous implications of ordaining and consecrating without the ordinary authorizations for such acts. He had been a part of the hierarchy. He was the founding bishop of a diocese. But he decided to act because he saw it as necessary and good. He decided to act because of his love for the Mass, his love for the Church and his love for souls.

A State Of Denial

However, the Bishop of Arecibo, the Holy Cross Fathers and others are in a state of denial. They do not want to accept the fact that Bishop Mendez – the first Bishop of the Diocese of Arecibo – considered the situation in the Church to be so serious and the devastation caused by the reforms to be so great that he decided to follow in the footsteps of Archbishop Lefebvre and ordain priests and consecrate a bishop without approval. But he did.

He did these things because he wanted to do them. And he wanted to do them because he believed they were right and necessary. He understood that what was at

stake was the salvation of souls. And in the final analysis it was his love for souls that moved him to ordain priests for the Society of St. Pius V and to consecrate a bishop.

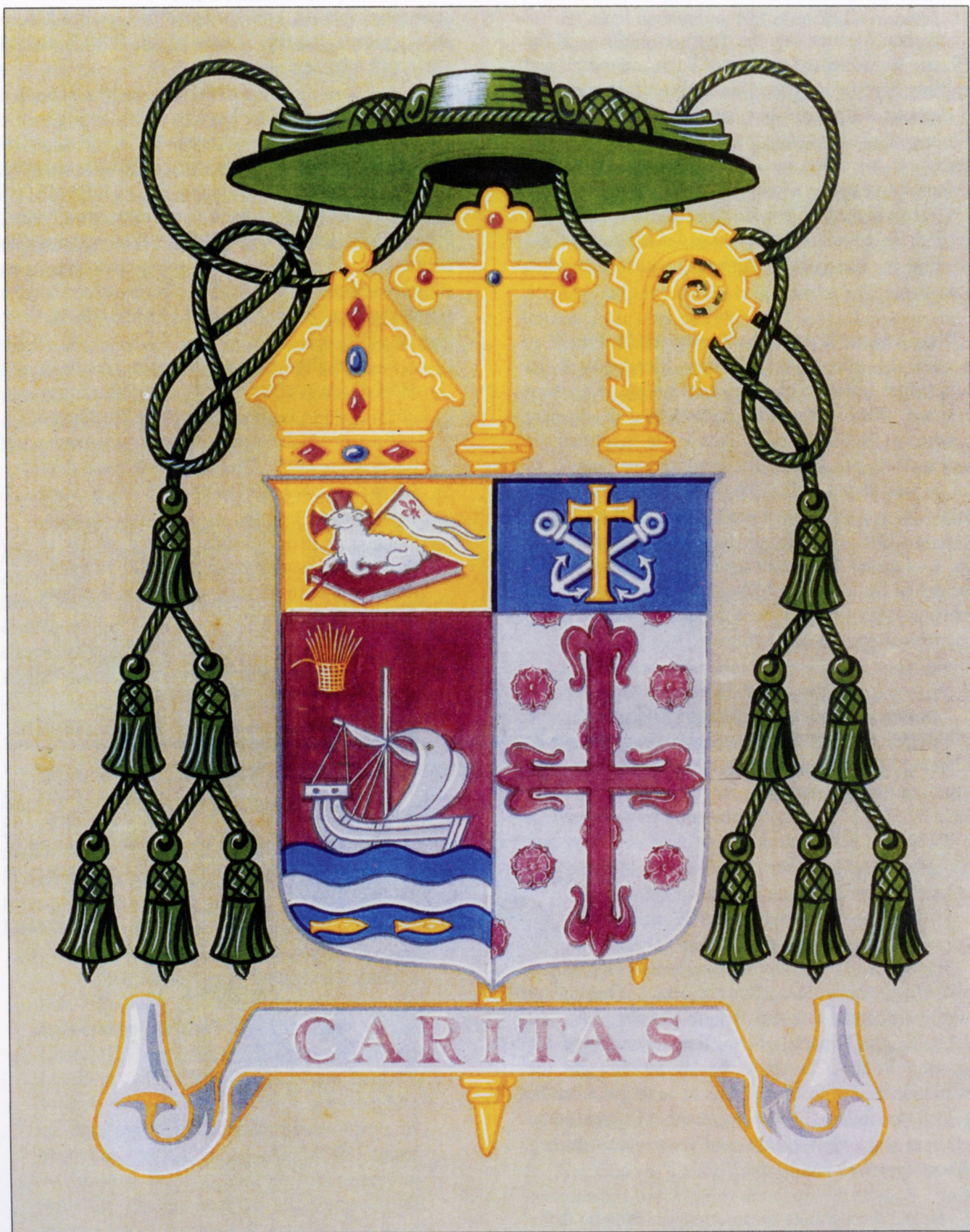
The Legacy

The sentiments expressed in Bishop Mendez' address at Notre Dame University in 1982 found their ultimate, logical conclusion in his "SI DILIGIS ME ..." statement which he signed and swore to before a Notary Public on November 26, 1993. In that statement he wrote that, "The fullness of the priesthood is an awesome responsibility." And then he explained why he ordained priests and consecrated a bishop. He said:

And although I retired from Arecibo in 1974, I remain a Bishop, still responsible in my lifetime to do all in my power to feed the lambs and sheep, which means to secure for them the Sacraments of the Church. And in these days when the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being abandoned all over the world – Tolle Missam, Tolle Ecclesiam – I have secured, as far as possible, the Sacraments for the Faithful by the ordinations of two Society of St. Pius V priests for them on September 3, 1990, and, to continue the priesthood, the consecration of a Bishop for them on October 19, 1993." (See page 3 for the complete statement.)

Bishop Mendez wanted to feed the flock of Christ with the true Sacraments and the true Mass. To secure "the Sacraments for the Faithful" he ordained priests; "to continue the priesthood" he consecrated a bishop. The seminary, therefore, that we will establish because of what Bishop Mendez did is his gift. It is his legacy – his bequest to the Faithful.





Coat of Arms of Bishop Alfred F. Mendez

CURRICULUM VITAE
OF THE MOST REVEREND ALFRED F. MENDEZ, C.S.C., D.D.

Born: June 3, 1907

First Profession of Vows
July 2, 1927

Ordained to the Holy Priesthood
June 24, 1935

University of Notre Dame
1935-1936

Holy Cross Missions
Austin, Texas
1936-1956

Director of Province Development
Indiana Province
1956-1960

Consecrated to the Episcopacy
October 28, 1960

First Bishop, Diocese of Arecibo, Puerto Rico
(Created July 30, 1960)
1960-1974

Founder and Director of the League of Prayer for the Captive Peoples
1963

Retired from the Diocese of Arecibo, Puerto Rico
1974

Consecrated Fr. Clarence Kelly to the Episcopacy
October 19, 1993

Died: January 28, 1995



Pax tecum.