

SSPX head claims pope is encouraging error

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY - The superior general of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X said Pope Francis, rather than denouncing errors in Catholic doctrine, has “encouraged” them.

“The Society of St. Pius X prays and does penance for the pope, that he might have the strength to proclaim Catholic faith and morals in their entirety,” said a statement published June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, patron saints of the church of Rome.

Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior general of the society, issued the statement after a meeting June 25-28 of the group’s leaders.

The society has been in talks with the Vatican in a search for a way to reintegrate it and its members fully into the life of the Catholic Church. Bishop Fellay met personally with Pope Francis in April, which seemed to signal that progress was being made.

Talks with the group began under St. John Paul II and continued throughout the papacy of now-retired Pope Benedict XVI.

St. John Paul had excommunicated Bishop Fellay and other leaders of the society in 1988 when they were ordained without papal permission. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the society and the bishop who ordained them, also was excommunicated; he died in 1991. Pope Benedict lifted the excommunications in 2009.

In the statement June 29, Bishop Fellay said that “in the great and painful confusion that currently reigns in the church, the proclamation of Catholic doctrine requires the denunciation of errors that have made their way into it and are unfortunately encouraged by a large number of pastors, including the pope himself.”

The statement did not specify the “errors” it was referring to or how the society believes Pope Francis is encouraging them.

While the society “has a right” to full canonical recognition, he said, its primary aim is to teach the fullness of Catholic faith, “which shows the only route to follow in this age of darkness in which the cult of man replaces the worship of God, in society as in the church.”

“The ‘restoration of all things in Christ’ intended by St. Pius X, following St. Paul (cf. Eph. 1:10), cannot happen without the support of a pope who concretely favors the

return to sacred tradition,” the statement said. “While waiting for that blessed day, the Society of St. Pius X intends to redouble its efforts to establish and to spread, with the means that divine providence gives to it, the social reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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