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\* Knights of Malta \*

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## Chancellor's Update

### *Vindication At Last*

Finally our efforts to explain the crisis in the Church have been accomplished by one of the living successors of the Apostles explaining the problem. Here in its entirety is an Open letter by His Excellency Archbishop Jan Pawel Lenga from *Rorate Caeli*.

*Rorate Caeli* has obtained an exclusive copy of the English version of a rare open letter from an Archbishop on the crisis of the Church.

The letter, written by His Excellency Archbishop Jan Pawel Lenga, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, hopefully will serve as a much-needed wake-up call to Catholics who have buried their heads in the sand for far too long.

Let us pray more of his brother bishops will have the faith -- *and the backbone* -- to stand up and be heard before there's nothing left to defend.

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### Reflections on some current problems of the crisis of the Catholic Church



I had the experience of living with priests who were in Stalinist prisons and camps and who nevertheless remained faithful to the Church. During the time of persecution they fulfilled with love their priestly duty in preaching Catholic doctrine thereby leading a dignified life in the imitation of Christ, their heavenly Master.

I completed my priestly studies in an underground Seminary in the Soviet Union. I was ordained a priest secretly during the night by a pious bishop who himself suffered for the sake of the faith. In the first year of my priesthood I had the experience of being expelled from Tadzhikistan by the KGB.

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Subsequently, during my thirty-year stay in Kazakhstan, I served 10 years as priest, caring for faithful people in 81 localities. Then I served 20 years as bishop, initially as bishop of five states in Central Asia with a total area of around four million square kilometers.

In my ministry as a bishop I had contact with Pope Saint John Paul II, with many bishops, priests and faithful in different countries and under different circumstances. I was member of some assemblies of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican which covered themes such as “Asia” and “The Eucharist”.

This experience as well as others give me the basis to express my opinion on the current crisis of the Catholic Church. These are my convictions and they are dictated by my love of the Church and by the desire for her authentic renewal in Christ. I am forced to resort to this public means of expression because I fear that any other method would be greeted by a brick wall of silence and disregard.

I am aware of possible reactions to my open letter. But at the same time the voice of my conscience will not allow me to remain silent, while the work of God is being slandered. Jesus Christ founded the Catholic Church and showed us in word and deed how one should fulfill the will of God. The apostles to whom He bestowed authority in the Church, fulfilled with zeal the duty entrusted to them, suffering for the sake of the truth which had to be preached, since they “obeyed God rather than men”.

Unfortunately in our days it is increasingly evident that the Vatican through the Secretariat of State has taken the course of political correctness. Some Nuncios have become propagators of liberalism and modernism. They have acquired expertise in the principle “sub secreto Pontificio”, by which one manipulates and silences the mouths of the bishops. And that what the Nuncio tells them appears as it would be almost certainly the wish of the Pope. With such methods one separates the bishops from one another to the effect that the bishops of a country can no longer speak with one voice in the spirit of Christ and His Church in defending faith and morals. This means that, in order not to fall into disfavour with the Nuncio some bishops accept their recommendations, which are sometimes based on nothing other than on their own words. Instead of zealously spreading the faith, courageously preaching the doctrine of Christ, standing firm in the defense of truth and of morals, the meetings of the Bishops’ Conferences often deal with issues which are foreign to the nature of the duties of the successors of the apostles.

One can observe at all levels of the Church an obvious decrease of the “sacrum”. The “spirit of the world” feeds the shepherds. The sinners give the Church the instructions for how she has to serve them. In their embarrassment the Pastors are silent on the current problems and abandon the sheep while they are feeding themselves. The world is tempted by the devil and opposes the doctrine of Christ. Nevertheless the Pastors are obliged to teach the whole truth about God and men “in season and out”.

However, during the reign of the last holy Popes one could observe in the Church the greatest disorder concerning the purity of the doctrine and the sacredness of the liturgy, in which Jesus Christ is not paid the visible honour which he is due. In not a few Bishop’s Conferences the best bishops are “persona non grata”. Where are apologists of our days, who would announce

to men in a clear and comprehensible manner the threat of the risk of loss of faith and salvation?

In our days the voice of the majority of the bishops rather resembles the silence of the lambs in the face of furious wolves, the faithful are left like defenseless sheep. Christ was recognized by men as one who spoke and worked, as one, who had power and this power He bestowed upon His apostles. In today's world the bishops must liberate themselves from all worldly bonds and – after they have done penance – convert to Christ so that strengthened by the Holy Spirit they may announce Christ as the one and only Saviour. Ultimately one must give account to God for all that was done and for all what wasn't done.

In my opinion the weak voice of many bishops is a consequence of the fact, that in the process of the appointment of new bishops the candidates are insufficiently examined with regard to their doubtless steadfastness and fearlessness in the defense of the faith, with regard to their fidelity to the centuries-old traditions of the Church and their personal piety. In the issue of the appointment of new bishops and even cardinals it is becoming increasingly apparent that sometimes preference is given to those who share a particular ideology or to some groupings which are alien to the Church and which have commissioned the appointment of a particular candidate. Furthermore it appears that sometimes consideration is given also to the favour of the mass media which usually makes a mockery of holy candidates painting a negative picture of them, whereas the candidates who in a lesser degree own the spirit of Christ are praised as open and modern. On the other side the candidates who excel in apostolic zeal, have courage in proclaiming the doctrine of Christ and show love for all that is holy and sacred, are deliberately eliminated.

A Nuncio once told me: "It's a pity that the Pope [John Paul II] does not participate personally in the appointment of the bishops. The Pope tried to change something in the Roman Curia, however he has not succeeded. He becomes older and things resume their usual former course".

At the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI, I wrote a letter to him in which I begged him to appoint holy bishops. I reported to him the story of a German layman who in the face of the degradation of the Church in his country after the Second Vatican Council, remained faithful to Christ and gathered young people for adoration and prayer. This man had been close to death and when he learned about the election of the new Pope he said: "When Pope Benedict will use his pontificate solely for the purpose to appoint worthy, good and faithful bishops, he will have fulfilled his task".

Unfortunately, it is obvious that, Pope Benedict XVI has often not succeeded in this issue. It is difficult to believe that Pope Benedict XVI freely renounced his ministry as successor of Peter. Pope Benedict XVI was the head of the Church, his entourage however has barely translated his teachings into life, bypassed them often in silence or has rather obstructed his initiatives for an authentic reform of the Church, of the liturgy, of the manner to administer Holy Communion. In view of a great secrecy in the Vatican for many bishops it was realistically impossible to help the Pope in his duty as head and governor of the whole Church.

It will not be superfluous to remind my brothers in the episcopacy of an affirmation made by an Italian masonic lodge from the year 1820: *"Our work is a work of a hundred years. Let us*

*leave the elder people and let us go to the youth. The seminarians will become priests with our liberal ideas. We shall not flatter ourselves with false hopes. We will not make the Pope a Freemason. However liberal bishops, who will work in the entourage of the Pope, will propose to him in the task of governing the Church such thoughts and ideas which are advantageous for us and the Pope will implement them into life".* This intention of the Freemasons is being implemented more and more openly, not only thanks to the declared enemies of the Church but with the connivance of false witnesses who occupy some high hierarchical office in the Church. It is not without reason that Blessed Paul VI said: *"The spirit of Satan penetrated through a crack inside the Church"*. I think that this crack has become in our days quite wide and the devil uses all forces in order to subvert the Church of Christ. To avoid this, it is necessary to return to the precise and clear proclamation of the Gospel on all levels of ecclesiastical ministry, for the Church possesses all power and grace which Christ gave to her: *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore, and teach all nations. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and I am with you always unto the end of the world"* (Mt 28, 18-20), *"the truth will set you free"* (John 8, 32) and *"let your word be Yes, yes; No, no: for whatsoever is more than these comes of evil"* (Mt 5, 37). The Church cannot adapt herself to the spirit of this world, but must transform the world to the spirit of Christ.

It is obvious that in the Vatican there is a tendency to give in more and more to the noise of the mass media. It is not infrequent that in the name of an incomprehensible quiet and calm the best sons and servants are sacrificed in order to appease the mass media. The enemies of the Church however don't hand over their faithful servants even when their actions are evidently bad.

When we wish to remain faithful to Christ in word and deed, He Himself will find the means to transform the hearts and souls of men and the world as well will be changed at the appropriate time.

In times of the crisis of the Church God has often used for her true renewal the sacrifices, the tears and the prayers of those children and servants of the Church who in the eyes of the world and of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy were considered insignificant or were persecuted and marginalized because of their fidelity to Christ. I believe that in our difficult time this law of Christ is being realized and that the Church will renew herself thanks to the faithful inner renewal of each of us.

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

+ Jan Pawel Lenga

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