

Michael Davies Final Report As FIUV's President

By Leo Darroch Secretary Una Voce International

Mr. Davies began by saying this would obviously be his final report as President and he commented on the fact that also in the hall were Dr. Eric de Saventhem, his Secretary of many years Mrs. Sally Gray, M. Jacques Dhaussy, Count Neri Capponi, and Dr. Helmut Ruckriegel who had all been with him since the very beginning of the Una Voce Federation. Perhaps this would be the last time all these would be together and, if members would excuse him, he intended to use the occasion to give a brief history of the Federation for those not familiar with the story.

The first initiative to preserve the Latin heritage of the Church came not from a predominantly Catholic country but from a lady in Norway, a nation with one of Europe's smallest Catholic populations. In the summer of 1964, Dr Borghild Krane, an eminent psychologist in Oslo, sent out an appeal to concerned Catholics to group together in defence of the Church's liturgical heritage. As a result of that appeal a number of national associations came into being in 1964/65, starting with France, where, by a most happy inspiration, it was named UNA VOCE. The official date of its foundation is 19th December 1964. Dr Krane, our foundress, died on 14 October 1997.

Realising the need for coordinating their efforts, delegates from six European associations met in Rome in early 1965 and agreed to create an appropriate supra-national structure. This was the beginning of the FEDERATIO INTERNATIONALIS UNA VOCE (FIUV). It was formally erected in Zurich on January 8th, 1967, when delegates from, by then, twenty associations approved the draft statutes and elected the first Council. At that meeting Dr Eric de Saventhem was elected unanimously as President. He was re-elected, again unanimously, at every subsequent General Assembly and would still be President today but for his decision to step down prematurely for personal reasons in January 1995 [much applause from the members for Dr. de Saventhem]. I was elected to succeed him. Today our third President will be elected.

The reason I give for resigning is that I believe it will benefit the association to have a new President who will bring fresh thinking to the position. If asked what I have contributed I would answer a radical change in the way that the Federation is administered. When I became president I had to administer the Federation single-handed. There was no Secretary, no Treasurer, and no effective role for the Council. We now have a hyper-efficient Secretary, Mr. Leo Darroch, a hyper-efficient Treasurer, Mr. Fred Haehnel, and when an important decision needs to be made the Council is consulted and a collective decision reached.

During my time as President I have managed to negotiate the admission of fourteen new affiliates from as far afield as Argentina. New Zealand, Singapore, Nigeria, Poland, Finland, Canada, and the Czech Republic. The membership of these associations tends to be very young. There are also the three new associations in waiting – from Columbia in South America, from Venice in northern Italy, and from a group in Basel, a German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Sometimes I am asked what does the Federation do. I can assure everyone that we do many things. Our negotiations with the Curia tend to be carried out behind the scenes and are not normally made public. For example, the Ecclesia Dei Commission stated unambiguously that its ultimate aim is that of “integrating the traditionalist faithful into the reality of the Church”. I informed the Commission that the Church in the west is disintegrating while the traditionalist movement is thriving and expanding, that we wished this expansion to continue, and would certainly not consider uniting ourselves with a body which is, as Father Louis Bouyer expressed in 1965, in a state of accelerating decomposition. It also became clear that the Commission wished us to modify the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal, not only by adopting the 1965 modifications, but by using the 1970 calendar and adopting such practices as Communion in the hand. In a lengthy correspondence with Cardinal Hoyos, conducted in conjunction with Frau Rheinschmitt, we made it clear that our members would not even contemplate accepting such innovations, and pointed out, with regard to the Motu proprio “Ecclesia Dei” that:

Any document making provision for a particular group within the Church should be interpreted for the benefit of this group, and it is quite certain that the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition would not be respected but gravely affronted by the authorization in celebrations of Mass according to the 1962 Missal of any mixing of rites, particularly the modifications found in the 1965 Missal, the use of the 1970 Lectionary, the employment of altar-girls, or the distribution of Holy Communion in the hand. I can assure your Eminence there is no demand whatsoever for any of these changes by any traditionalist laymen anywhere in the world.

I am pleased to say that these proposals have now been completely abandoned and that Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos is now proving himself to be a true friend of the traditional movement as was made clear by the Mass in St. Mary Major on 24th May 2003 for which we have to thank Dr. Cammarata [applause from the delegates for Dr. Cammarata].

I have had many meetings with Cardinals with very varied results. Cardinal Mayer, the first President of the Ecclesia Dei Commission, did everything in his power to help us achieve our aims. His immediate successors, Cardinals Innocenti and Felici, had not the least understanding or sympathy for our movement. I had regular meetings with them, and although they were polite and assured me of their support, I felt these meetings were a complete waste of time. Cardinal Hoyos is now very sympathetic to us. When I first met Cardinal Medina Estévez, until recently the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, it was evident that he felt that use of the 1962 Missal should be granted to all who requested it. He has now conferred the Sacrament of Ordination in the old rite, and has stated that on the basis of his personal research the rite of St. Pius V has never been abrogated. Cardinal Stickler, who has attended all our General Assemblies since I became President, is of the same opinion. He is 100% behind the work of the Federation. It is a cause of great sadness that very poor health prevents him from joining us this year and I am sure that he can rely on our fervent prayers for his recovery. In July Dr. Turrini Vita and I had a long meeting with Cardinal Arinze, the new Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship. He was very friendly and listened to all that I had to say with great attention. He is under the impression that if the

norms that he intends issuing before the end of the year result in the new Mass being celebrated without abuses, then opposition to it would cease, and so would the demand for the 1962 Missal. I made it absolutely clear to him that this was not the case, and that with or without abuses the 1970 Missal is completely unacceptable to members of the Federation.

Finally, I must make special mention of Cardinal Ratzinger. Although his personal inclination is for a reform of the reform and having the new Mass celebrated more reverently, which of course we are in favour of, I believe that the whole project is futile because it will never be done. What were abuses in the new rite are now institutionalised; Communion in the hand was an abuse and it was legalised, Communion under both kinds on a Sunday was an abuse and it was legalised, the use of altar girls was an abuse and this has been legalised, none of these things will ever be changed. If such a suggestion was made to the American bishops they would roar with laughter – there is no possibility of a reform of the reform, it is a complete waste of time. Cardinal Ratzinger has been unswerving in his support for the Federation and insistent that those who request Mass according to the 1962 Missal should be granted it. He even sent a message of congratulation to the Federation for all the work we are doing to have the traditional Mass celebrated. Although it does not come within the scope of the aims of the Federation I must mention the Cardinal's uncompromising defence of and affirmation of Catholic teaching on faith and morals. Throughout his time as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith he has issued a series of documents of unimpeachable orthodoxy making it clear that Our Lord is still with His Church in accordance with His promise to be with it all days even unto the consummation of the world. Unfortunately very few Catholics read these documents from the Congregation.

The progress of our Federation and the traditionalist movement in general since the new Missal was published in 1970 has been amazing, one might almost say miraculous. In 1971 the so-called English Indult was published allowing celebrations of the traditional Mass in England and Wales at the discretion of the bishops. Nowhere else in the world could the Mass of St . Pius V be celebrated with Vatican approval. Who would have dared to predict

that in those early days when Dr. de Saventem was President and he seemed to be working for an unattainable cause, and that the traditional Mass seemed to be the mother of all lost causes, that from the 1990s onwards Pontifical Masses would be celebrated by such members of the Sacred College as Cardinal Mayer, Cardinal Ratzinger, Cardinal Stickler, Cardinal Medina Estévez, and Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos? Who would have imagined that at the start of the third millennium there would be at least twelve priestly societies and monastic communities using the pre-Vatican II liturgical books with Vatican approval? Mention must also be made of the so-called Indult Masses being celebrated throughout the world by diocesan and religious priests. I will give just one example - that of St. John Cantius in Chicago where over a thousand faithful assist at the two traditional Masses celebrated there each Sunday. Perhaps the most amazing of all, I for one, would never have believed that the Vatican would extend recognition to the priests of the Diocese of Campos. This is, perhaps, the most significant and encouraging event to have taken place since 1970. If the priests of Campos have been recognised we have every reason to hope and pray that the same recognition will be extended to the Society of St. Pius X which had 170 priests at the time of the excommunications in 1988, and now has 450, with new seminaries and schools appearing everywhere. A very interesting point to make to your members is that the Ecclesia Dei Commission has conceded that assistance at Masses of the SSPX fulfils the Sunday obligation.

What is most encouraging of all is that the traditionalist movement is attracting so many young people that it might almost be termed a youth movement. The most dramatic manifestation of the youthful nature of our movement is the annual Chartres Pilgrimage during which 15,000 young people with an average age of 20, march from Notre Dame de Paris to Notre Dame de Chartres, camping out at night. Chapels where the traditional Mass is celebrated tend to be packed to the doors with a high proportion of young married couples with many children. Contrast this with the abysmal collapse of the mainstream Church throughout the first world. Archbishop Lefebvre once remarked that our future lies in our past. This has been the motivating

principle of my presidency and I pray that it will be the motivating principle of my successor.

We are honoured to have with us today Dr. Eric de Saventhem whose Presidency for almost thirty years is the reason that the Federation flourished and expanded during the decades when Catholic organisations throughout the world were dwindling and ceasing to exist. If you look in a year book for your diocese for 1960 and saw all the associations and sodalities for men and women practically none of them now exist. The debt that the traditionalist movement owes to him and to Madame de Saventhem cannot be exaggerated. Older members of the Council will remember her very influential role in our assemblies, her pithy comments, and the haze of cigarette smoke which rose from her seat. Dr. de Saventhem relied to a tremendous extent on his hyper-efficient secretary Mrs Sally Gray who we are delighted to welcome here today. Mrs Gray organised and directed our Assemblies so efficiently that they normally ran without a hitch. She had a particular talent for extracting money from all the delegates, and will be resuming this role today, ably assisted by Mr. Haehnel. Please do not even think of trying to bypass them without paying for your stay.

My final remarks will be on some practical matters. Our Secretary and Treasurer are determined to change some ingrained practices which cannot be allowed to continue if the Federation is to flourish in the future. The first of these is the practice of national associations not paying the subscription which our statutes require. Mr. Haehnel has, I know, become very frustrated at the fact that repeated requests to some associations for their subscriptions have been ignored. It is intolerable that he should have to write more than once on this matter. He is, of course, well aware that a few associations cannot afford to pay a subscription and he will not in any way pressure them to do so. When I became President the Federation's funds amounted to about \$15,000 and the figure is almost identical today. As I could not obtain sufficient funds from within the Federation to keep it financially viable I had to go outside the Federation to seek donations, and doing this was a source of constant worry and stress. I hope that my successor will not have the same problem. The General Assembly is our greatest expense as we pay for the fares and

accommodation of some delegates whose associations could not possibly fund them. At each General Assembly I have pointed out that we have had to spend far more than we receive and appealed for delegates to add something to the basic payment for their rooms and meals. In the four General Assemblies over which I presided only one delegation has ever given a donation. I hope that this year all those who can afford it will do so, even if it is only 50 euros. Discussing money is very distasteful and somewhat unbritish, so I will leave the matter there. Money is said to be the root of all evil, which may be true, but it is hard to manage without it.

My penultimate remark will be another admonition. When I stated that Mr. Darroch is hyper-efficient I was in no way exaggerating, and it would be impossible for anyone to be more dedicated to the interests of the Federation than he is. The work that he has undertaken to prepare for this assembly has taken up not days or weeks but months of his time, and like Mr. Haehnel he has been frustrated by the fact that so many associations do not answer his letters and fail to meet deadlines despite repeated requests. He was so distressed at this lack of co-operation that he gave serious consideration to resigning at this assembly. I can honestly not imagine how the Federation could continue without him. I have persuaded him to continue in his crucial office until the next assembly, and I beg you all, I mean it, I beg you all to show your appreciation for all that he does by giving him your full co-operation. I will conclude on this note, and give my renewed thanks to Mr. Darroch and Mr. Haehnel for all that they have done for the Federation in the past two years, and to beg you once more to give them your full co-operation in the future.

Let me conclude on a positive note. The fact that we were able to celebrate the traditional Mass in St. Peter's today must have been a cause of particular satisfaction for Dr. de Saventhem. I am sure that during the lean years of the Federation when he came to Rome for the General Assemblies, he and Madame Elizabeth did not even dream that in 2003 our meeting would be preceded by a Mass in the Basilica. We owe this, more than anyone else, to Dr. and Madam de Saventhem. I congratulate them on the achievement and thank them for it.

At the end of his report, the final report of his term of office, the delegates gave Michael Davies a resounding ovation in gratitude and thanks for his great work on their behalf.